

Commonly Asked Questions About Your New Kitten

1) Why the need for all these vaccinations?!

Kittens need multiple vaccinations because every kitten's immune system develops at a different rate. Cells called maternal antibodies, passed from the mother's milk to fight infection, persist for long periods of time in a kitten's system and actually inactivate most vaccines. We commonly give vaccines at 2-4 week intervals to overcome these short term maternal antibodies, to ensure your kitten is protected against extremely debilitating and often-fatal diseases such as Panleukopenia (distemper), Rhinotracheitis, CaliciVirus, and Feline Leukemia.

Additionally, because Rabies is a disease that can be transferred to humans, this vaccine is a legal requirement of most municipalities in the state of Wisconsin.

2) Can I get worms from my cat?

Intestinal parasites, or "worms", can be transmitted to humans. The risk is greatest for children and immunocompromised adults. Soil (even microscopic amounts carried in on shoes) and fecal matter are the most common sources of these parasites. Open sores, cuts, and oral contamination are the most common modes of transmission. In a human these parasites may damage the skin (*cutaneous larval migrans*), the intestines (*visceral larval migrans*) or, rarely, the eye (*ocular larval migrans*) causing blindness.

Most kittens are born with intestinal parasites transmitted from their mother's milk, even when their mother has been "dewormed". With good hygiene, you can dramatically decrease your risk of these infections. It is important to have your cat checked annually for intestinal parasites, treated when infected, and protected every month with a preventative that includes intestinal parasite protection.

3) What does my pet need if it never goes outside?

Annual checkups, vaccinations, and intestinal parasite screening is necessary for all cats and kittens, whether they go outside or stay indoor. Viral diseases and parasite eggs are microscopic. They can be brought inside to your house-pets on your clothes, in the dirt on your shoes, in the air from other cats living outside, on or in the occasional rodent that sneaks inside, and on insects such as flies.

Additionally, rabies vaccinations for cats are a legal requirement of most municipalities in the State of Wisconsin!

4) Anything else that I really should do?

- We recommend that you **Spay or Neuter** your pet to prevent unwanted litters of puppies, to decrease the incidence of various cancers, and to minimize potential behavior concerns.
- Feed a **High Quality Diet**. For more information about what diet is recommended for your pet, ask the doctor at your pet's next visit.
- **Home Dental Care** is much more than shiny white teeth. Keeping your pet's teeth clean prevents stinky bacterial buildup and will keep your pet's breath fresh, it will keep your pet's mouth pain free by preventing plaque buildup which causes gum pain, bleeding and tooth loss, and finally, home dental care will prevent internal diseases caused by the constant swallowing of bacteria harbored in plaque and tartar.
- **Regular visits to the veterinarian**, so we can help you keep your pet healthy for a long and happy life!