



By Dr. Maria Krenz, DVM – The Zimmerman Veterinary Clinic 763-856-4848

Kitten Care

Are thinking of adopting a kitten? Kittens are fun, cuddly and cute. Visiting your veterinarian will keep your kitten healthy, and make sure they fit in as part of your household.

Veterinary Medical Care for Kittens

Bringing your kitten to the veterinarian is an important part of keeping your new pet healthy. A kitten should be brought to the veterinarian shortly after you adopt them. At the first visit, a stool sample will be checked for internal parasites and a feline leukemia/feline immunodeficiency virus (feline aids) blood test will be performed. Kittens will have 2-3 sets of vaccinations starting around 9 weeks of age and will be boosted every 3-4 weeks. These vaccines include a feline distemper combination, which usually includes coverage for panleukopenia, rhinotracheitis and calicivirus, along with vaccines for feline leukemia and rabies. During your veterinary visits your kitten will also start a monthly preventive program for fleas, heartworm and internal parasites. You will also receive information on many health topics that are important with kitten care.

Spaying and Neutering

Having your cat spayed (female) or neutered (male) is important to prevent unwanted litters and unwanted behaviors such as urine marking. Normally, cats will come into heat (be receptive to breeding) around 6 months of age. However, since cats are seasonal breeders breeding mainly in the spring and fall, your cat could go into heat sooner or later than that age. Usually, pets are spayed or neutered around 6 months of age.

Trip tips for your Kittens

Training your kitten can make your kittens' veterinary visits less stressful. A kitten should be trained to easily go in a carrier. Putting food or treats and leaving the carrier out can get a kitten comfortable with this. Putting a towel that smells like your household in the carrier can help calm your cat. Taking your cat for short car rides can accustom your cat for trips. If your pet is still stressed after using these training methods, Feliway, a pheromone spray should be used on the bedding in the carrier to calm your cat. When in the clinic avoid contact with dogs or other pets, which can distress your cat. If you cat does not want to come out of the carrier, the top can be removed to allow your pet to stay in the bottom half during the exam.

Common Behavioral Questions

Kittens can perform some behaviors that are normal for them, but unwanted for the owner. One common problem is scratching people and objects. Nail trimming, can be easily done to dull your pet's nails. In kittens, this may need to be done each week as their nails grow quickly. Make sure your new pet has a scratching post near the area where they like to scratch.

Another common problem is urine or defecation outside of the litterbox. Cats usually do not need to be trained to use a litterbox, as they naturally will dig in soft soil. Humans do many things to inadvertently discourage cats from using the box. To make sure your pet is a regular litterbox user, here are a few things cats prefer; litterbox cleaned daily, 1 litterbox for every cat plus 1 extra, unscented clumping litter

usually a couple inches deep, uncovered litterbox, large litterbox, away from busy area of the house and noisy things such as a laundry machine.

Disclaimer: This written content is meant to be educational and is not medical advice. Always consult a veterinarian about medical advice for your pet.