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New Cat Checklist

Congratulations! Your new addition to the family will provide you with years of unconditional love and companionship. Our job is to help you ensure those years are as healthy and happy as possible. Please read this checklist to make sure that all of these issues are addressed:

Vaccinations

The FVRCP (“distemper”) vaccine is ideally started at 8 weeks of age and is given every 3-4 weeks through 16 weeks (4 months) of age. At least two doses should be given (3-4 weeks apart).

Rabies vaccination can be done at a minimum of 12 weeks of age, but we recommend giving it at 16 weeks (4 months) or older.

Feline Leukemia Vaccination (FeLV) is recommended only for at-risk kittens and cats. These patients include, but are not limited to, those in close contact to the saliva or blood of infected cats. In other words, outdoor cats whose Leukemia status will forever be an unknown variable or, a multi-cat household with documented FeLV-positive cats. The feline Leukemia virus can also be transmitted from mother to fetuses during pregnancy. Annual vaccination protocols are customized for each patient’s unique level of exposure and differences between environments.

Spay/Neuter

Unless you have plans to show your cat or become a professional breeder, the spay or neuter procedure should be done by 5-6 months of age. This surgery will prevent a number of different diseases, including some types of cancer. It will also decrease your cat’s desire to roam around the neighborhood, looking for a mate. This drive is sometimes so high that cats have been known to break through or climb fences, run away, and be struck by cars crossing streets in an effort to find a mate. These behaviors can be drastically reduced by spaying or neutering your pet. A female cat’s first heat occurs at about 6 months of age but it can be slightly different for each cat. Spay your female cat before she has her first heat in order to maximize the health benefits.

Identification (Microchip)

Protect your furry family member! Ten million pets become lost every year and without identification, only about 4% of cats who end up in shelters are returned to their rightful owners. Approximately 30-60% of pets in shelters are euthanized because they cannot be properly identified and returned to their owner. Collars and tags are good, but they can easily fall off or be removed. Microchipping is permanent, completely unalterable, and does not harm or change the appearance of the animal in any way. The procedure is safe, inexpensive, fast, and virtually painless.

Heartworm & Parasite Prevention

All indoor and outdoor cats need to be protected against fleas, heartworm disease and intestinal parasites. Roundworms, hookworms, and whipworms are all contagious to humans. All of these

infections are easily and effectively prevented by giving your cat a small drop of liquid in the food (at home) &/or a medication to apply to the skin once a month, year-round. Our recommended heartworm preventative is Ivermectin &/or Advantage Multi, which also protects against fleas. Routine intestinal parasite screening is conducted every 6-12 months.

Retrovirus Testing

All indoor and outdoor cats with an unknown medical history must be tested for Feline Leukemia Virus (FeLV) and Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV). These are life-threatening diseases and can be very contagious to other cats. A simple blood test for both FeLV & FIV can usually be done in 10-20 minutes while at the office.

Training (yes, even for cats!)

Solid training provides a great foundation, protecting against many undesirable behavior problems. It will make the years you spend with your cat less stressful and more enjoyable. It all starts with proper socialization of young kittens with people and other pets. For more information, ask any of our staff or doctors for excellent tips or, visit <https://indoorpet.osu.edu/cats>.

