

Lake Harriet Veterinary

HOLISTIC AND TRADITIONAL PET CARE

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Frequently Asked Questions About Kittens

What is the best way to house train my kitten?

Most kittens are litter box trained by the time you take them home. If you have more than one cat we recommend one litter box per cat plus one extra. Covered litter boxes tend to trap in offensive smells which may be an aversion for some cats. When choosing a litter the most important factor is choosing one your cat will like, so experiment a little. Scoop litter boxes daily and completely dump the litter and scrub the box every 1–2 weeks using hot water and natural cleaner. Be sure to place litter boxes in quiet out-of-the-way places so your cat will have some privacy.

How do I keep my cat from scratching?

Scratching is a normal activity in cats and kittens and in short you can't keep your cat or kitten from scratching. But you can try to modify where and what they scratch. In order to minimize damage to you and your furniture, be sure to trim your kitten's nails on a regular basis and encourage the use of a scratching post. Experiment with the types of surfaces your kitten prefers and use those to construct a scratching post. Some people have also found it helpful to cover their furniture with cloth, double-sided tape, or even foil until their kitten is trained to the scratching post. We do not recommend declawing due to the potential medical and behavioral complications.

How do I trim my kitten's nails?

It is a good idea to start trimming kitten's nails when they are first brought into the house. Purchase a good quality nail trimmer and a product called quick stop. Begin by trimming off the last 1–2 millimeters of the claw a couple of times over the course of a week. Avoid trimming the "quick" or the pink part of the nail that provides its blood supply. If bleeding occurs you can push the quick stop into the nail to stop the bleeding. If you do not have quick stop on hand you can use corn meal, or flour. Always give your kitten a reward of verbal praise or treat immediately after finishing. Most people trim them every few weeks to keep the nails from getting razor sharp.

What type of cat food should I feed and how often?

In terms of feeding schedule, we recommend feeding kittens at specific times of the day. A measured amount of food should be offered 3–4 times a day to a kitten 6–20 weeks of age. What is not eaten after 15–20 minutes should be taken away. After 6 months of age 2 meals will be sufficient for most cats. Many of the bagged and canned cat foods available do provide a balanced diet, however, there are certain foods we will recommend as better choices. Please see our list of recommended foods which we have listed on our resources page. Always allow cats and dogs 24-hour access to fresh water.

What are appropriate toys for my cat?

Some cats enjoy crumpled paper balls, crinkly balls, mouse or realistic prey animal toys, and anything that can be batted around. Others like things that fly through the air on a wand or on an automated arm. Laser pointers are a favorite for many cats and the ultimate toy may be the presence of another cat or dog companion. It is important to make sure that toys are not too small as to become lodged in the stomach and cause an obstruction.

Do I need to give my kitten medication for worms?

Eighty-five percent of all kittens have intestinal parasites or worms, and some of these present serious health concerns to children who can be infected with them. Therefore it is imperative that everyone washes his or her hands after playing with your kitten. At your initial visit we will evaluate a stool sample for parasites and start your puppy on an intestinal parasite control program as recommended by the Center of Disease Control. Additional fecal exams may be recommended at a later date if your puppy develops diarrhea or vomiting. We will also recommend an annual fecal exam to screen for parasites throughout the life of your pet.



Should I microchip for my kitten?

When considering a microchip for your pet you should know the following facts: More than 10 million pets are lost each year; 50% of dogs and 75% of cats arrive at shelters without collars; over 20,000 pets have been returned to their owners through the HomeAgain system. A microchip is a pet retrieval system that involves injection a small microchip, about the size of a grain of rice, under the skin between the shoulder blades of a dog or cat in much the same way a vaccine is administered. Each chip has a unique digit code that must be registered with AKC's program. When a lost pet arrives at a shelter or veterinary clinic a special handheld scanner is passed over the shoulder blades. The scanner can read the identification number and the shelter can then notify the AKC and the pet's owner or veterinarian.

What can we do for fleas and ticks?

Fleas are small, wingless, blood sucking parasites that can spread disease (Bartonellosis) and cause anemia in kittens and cats. There are several excellent flea-repelling medications (Frontline, Program, etc.) available for cats that are prone to fleas or have allergies to them. However, we generally do not advocate these medications unless a cat has visible signs of fleas or has had problems with them in the past. When fleas are present on a kitten it is essential that owners clean up the home environment to eliminate flea eggs before they hatch. Ticks are not a concern for urban cats and Lyme disease is rare in the species. We do not recommend prevention directed at ticks.

What is the best way to socialize my kitten?

The socialization period for kittens is between 4 and 12 weeks of age, and we encourage you to expose your cat to as many types of social events and influences as possible during that time. If a cat has good experiences with men, women, children, cats, dogs, etc., it is likely to accept them throughout life. If the experiences are unpleasant or even absent cats may become apprehensive and extremely difficult to socialize later in life.

How do I want my cat and children to interact?

Having children and a kitten/cat at the same time can be a challenge. Children often match a kitten's energy level and it can be difficult to convince your children that kitten needs his/her quiet time. In fact, you may spend more time teaching your children what is appropriate behavior around kitten than vice versa. We encourage parents to actively involve children in playtime, socializing, and feeding of the new kitten so they learn mutual respect.

One of the most frequently encountered problems with kittens is their interest in chewing and scratching on the hands, feet, and ears of children. It is very important that children do not encourage this behavior by continuing to give kitten attention (playing, giggling, pushing her away, etc). Have children stop playing with kitten when he/she gets too rough and is biting too hard. This will let kitten know that biting is not playing and that he/she will not get attention for that behavior. In addition, do not pet your kitten in short strokes on the head or face as that generally results in biting and scratching.

Special Considerations for the Outdoor Cat

Cats which spend time outdoors whether supervised or not are at greater risk for contracting infectious diseases, intestinal parasites, external parasites, and injuries than those cats that are kept indoors. Listed below are the more common threats and ways to protect your cat and family members.

Intestinal Parasites: Outdoor cats can become infested with intestinal parasites by hunting prey or coming into contact with already infected feces. Signs of intestinal parasites include diarrhea, dull coat, vomiting, pale gum color, anorexia and a pot-bellied appearance. If left untreated, intestinal parasites can result in a variety of health problems from anemia and malabsorption which may make the cat more susceptible to bacterial and viral infections.

External Parasites: External parasites are those parasites that live on the outside of the cat like fleas, ear mites, ticks and chewing lice. These



parasites live on the cat and feed off its blood. When left untreated, fleas can cause discomfort to the cat, skin problems and anemia. In the case of a large flea outbreak it is not uncommon for them to bite people. Ear mites live in the ear canals and are very itchy and uncomfortable and can cause hearing loss and self mutilation.

Feline Leukemia (FeLV) and FIV (Feline Immunodeficiency Virus): Feline Leukemia and FIV are viruses which affect the immune system of a cat. These viruses can be spread by direct contact such as fighting, mutual grooming, or nursing. Testing your young cat or kitten is vital in determining if your cat is infected with or a carrier of these viruses. There are no cures for these viruses, but there is a vaccine to protect against FeLV.

Impact on wildlife, poisoning and injury: The cat that is left outside unsupervised does have a negative impact on wildlife due to hunting. The songbird population can be affected greatly by the presence of even one cat in a neighborhood. The outdoor cat is also at greater risk to being hit by a car, animal attacks and toxic ingestion. It is recommended that outdoor cats wear some sort of identification or be microchipped so they can be returned to their owners if lost or injured.

Do I need to worry about heartworm disease?

Heartworms are large, thread-like worms that live in the heart of infected cats. Mosquitoes transmit heartworm disease and infected cats can develop coughing, lethargy, and serious heart disease. Alternatively, some evidence shows that most cats can live a normal lifespan as infected individuals. Given the current research we cannot recommend testing for and prevention of feline heartworm disease because the incidence is so low. There is no currently labeled treatment for feline heartworm disease. For more information visit the heartworm society website at www.heartwormsociety.org



Commercial Food Recommendations

Commercial dogs and cat foods come in a dizzying array of shapes, colors, textures, and qualities. We have attempted to compile a list of recommended foods in terms of their wholesomeness, lack of additives, high digestibility, and availability. While this list cannot be all-inclusive it is meant as a starting point for selecting a quality food. For animals with specific health issues this selection should be discussed with your veterinarian.

Our opinion is that the ideal diet for your pet is a fresh, well-balanced, home-prepared diet. While this is not a feasible option for everyone and is not without a few contraindications, if you are interested in a home-prepared diet you should discuss the options with a veterinarian who is both open to and has experience with these diets.

There are a variety of commercially available preparations of raw meat, bone, fruits, and vegetables, ground into convenient patties or cubes and frozen. These approximate the quality of a home made food and are well balanced. Examples:

BARF patties – www.barfworld.com (Raw frozen)
Nature's Variety – www.naturesvariety.com (Raw frozen)
Primal Pet Foods – www.primalpetfoods.com (Raw frozen)
Woody's Pet Food Deli – www.woodyspetdeli.com (Freshly prepared pet food. Local.)

European-style pet foods consist of grains, herbs and nuts. Water, fresh meat, and vegetables must be added to balance these diets. Example:
Sojourner Farms – www.sojos.com (Local)

Here are some good options for commercially prepared dry and canned foods

California Natural – www.naturapet.com
Canidae or Felidae – www.canidae.com
Honest Kitchen – www.thehonestkitchen.com (Dehydrated food. Add water.)
Innova – www.naturapet.com
Merrick – www.merrickpetfood.com
Nature's Variety – www.naturesvariety.com
Solid Gold – www.solidgoldhealth.com
Wellness – www.wellnesspetfood.com

Retail Stores

Bone Adventure • 612-920-2201 • 5045 France Ave. S. • Edina, and other locations
Calhoun Pet Supply • 612-824-1094 • corner of 36th & Bryant Ave. S. • Mpls
Chuck & Don's Pet Food Outlet • 612-926-8161 • Many metro locations
It's A Pet's Life • 763-476-7372 • 1115 Vicksburg Lane N • Plymouth
Linden Hill's Natural Home Store • 612-279-2479 • 2822 West 43rd St. • Mpls
Lulu and Luigi • 952-929-5858 • 3844 Grand Way • St. Louis Park
Pet Stuff • 952-930-9383 • 14665 Excelsior Blvd. • Minnetonka
Surbarban Feed and Supply • 952-935-2700 • 1404 Main St. • Hopkins
UrbAnimal • 612-879-0709 • 2106 Lyndale Ave. S. • Mpls
Twin Cities Natural Food Coops • Many metro locations
Woody's Pet Food Deli • 612-208-0335 • 3008 W 50th St. • Mpls



Recommended Feline Vaccination Guidelines

A widespread feline vaccination program has played a crucial role in the prevention of infectious diseases in veterinary medicine. As pets have assumed a different role in the modern family and risk factors have changed the vaccination schedule has changed accordingly. As a holistically focused practice we seek a compromise between maximizing immunity to diseases and minimizing possible short and long-term side effects from vaccines. The risk versus benefit of using certain vaccines or of administering multiple vaccines at the same visit every year needs to be strongly reconsidered. Cats in particular can have a uncommon and poorly understood reaction to certain components in vaccines which in the worst cases can result in the formation of a cancerous tumor. In addition, there are studies that now show the duration of immunity from many vaccines is much longer than one year. When we consider if a cat should be vaccinated its health, age, risk of exposure, lifestyle, and past medical and vaccination history are important variables to assess.

The following vaccine protocol is our general recommendation but it may be modified. It includes the “core” vaccines and should not be interpreted to mean that other protocols recommended by a veterinarian are not valid. It is a matter of professional judgment and choice.

8 weeks of age	Panleukopenia, Rhinotracheitis, and Calicivirus (FVRCP)
12 wks	FVRCP and FeLV (if needed)
16 wks	FVRCP and FeLV (if needed)
16 wks or older	Rabies
1-1.5 years of age	FVRCP (3 yr duration)
1-1.5 years of age	Rabies (1 yr duration)

Adult cats:

We strongly recommend the new Purevax (1-year) rabies vaccine because it is free of the additives they are thought to contribute to side effects in cats. It is now favored over the older and more common 3-year rabies vaccine.

FVRCP should be given only once every 3 years for most cats. Circumstances may arise in which we recommend it be discontinued altogether.

Feline Leukemia Virus (FeLV): All kittens and cats with an unknown FeLV status should be tested for this disease. Feline leukemia is a risk to cats that go outdoors and/or are exposed to infected cats. Kittens with risk of exposure should be given a FeLV vaccine at 12 and 16 weeks, and then annually for an additional 1-2 years.

Other non-core vaccines such as those to protect against chlamydia, feline infectious peritonitis, bordetella, and ringworm are not recommended unless your cat is at high risk of exposure.



Guide To Brushing Your Animal Companion's Teeth

Our animal companions are an important part of our lives for many years and dental care is crucial to maintaining their good health. Dental disease is the most common problem seen in our pet population today. More than 85% of all dogs and cats over 3 years of age presented to veterinarians are affected by dental problems. Periodontal disease is the cause of your pet's bad breath and painful mouth, and may cause infections of the kidneys, liver, and heart.

We recommend daily dental care at home for your companion animals just like the rest of the family. It is best to begin home care at an early age (8–12 weeks), but visible tartar should be removed during a thorough dental cleaning. This makes your home care easier and more effective.

Supplies needed:

- Toothbrush
- Pet toothpaste (**never** human toothpaste)

Week 1: Slowly acquainting your pet with mouth care

Using your hand, gently open your animal companion's mouth and run your finger around the lips. Rub the outside of the mouth and massage the cheeks. This gets her used to having her mouth touched. Begin for thirty seconds on day one and progress to a couple of minutes by the end of the week. Reward your pet with a small treat at the end of each session.

Week 2: Introducing toothbrush or washcloth (without toothpaste)

This week, use either a wet washcloth wrapped around your index finger or wet toothbrush on the teeth. Lift the lips and massage the outer surfaces of the upper and lower teeth using a back and forth motion. Do this for thirty seconds on day one and progress to three minutes by the end of the week.

Week 3: Add toothpaste and extend brushing time

This week, use your dental cleaning instrument and now add $\frac{3}{4}$ inch of toothpaste to brush the outer surfaces of the upper and lower teeth using a back and forth motion. If possible, try to brush the inner surfaces of the teeth. The inner surfaces are harder to get at but the tartar builds up more quickly on the outer surfaces. Always give a small treat at the end of each session...make it rewarding.

If you find brushing impossible, there are other products you can use to maintain good oral health—but eventually we will recommend a professional dental cleaning.

- CET chews, Greenies, and other dental treats are available for dogs and cats. These are enzymatically treated to help remove bacteria before it builds up and turns to tartar that cannot be removed with simple brushing.
- Especially formulated dental diets are available for dogs and cats. These foods can be used as a regular complete diet or as a treat and we can write a prescription for you to pick these up at another clinic. If we think this is necessary for your pet we will discuss it with you.
- Some dogs may benefit from chewing on bones. However, this will increase their risk of tooth fractures and excessive wearing of the teeth.



Toxic Plants for Your Pet

Aloe
Amaryllis
Andromeda Japonica
Asian Lily (Liliaceae)
Asparagus Fern
Australian Nut
Autumn Crocus
Avocado
Azalea

Bird of Paradise
American Bittersweet
European Bittersweet
Branching Ivy Buckeye
Buddist Pine

Caladium
Calla Lily
Castor Bean
Ceriman (aka Cutleaf Philodendron)
Charming Dieffenbachia
Chinaberry Tree
Chinese Evergreen
Christmas Rose
Clematis
Cordatum
Corn
Plant (aka Cornstalk Plant)
Cornstalk Plant (aka Corn Plant)
Cutleaf Philodendron (aka Ceriman)
Cycads
Cyclamen

Daffodil
Day Lily
Devil's Ivy
Dumb Cane
Deadly Nightshade (See Nightshade)

Easter Lily
Elephant Ears
Emerald Feather (aka Emerald Fern)
Emerald Fern (aka Emerald Feather)
English Ivy

Fiddle-Leaf Philodendron
Flamingo Plant
Florida Beauty
Foxglove
Fruit Salad Plant

Glacier Ivy
Gladiolas
Glory Lily

Gold Dieffenbachia
Gold Dust Dracaena
Golden Pothos Green
Gold Nephthysis

Hahn's self branching English Ivy
Heartleaf Philodendron
Heavenly Bamboo
Holly
Horsehead Philodendron
Hurricane Plant
Hyacinth
Hydrangea

Iris

Japanese Show Lily
Japanese Yew (aka Yew)
Jerusalem Cherry

Kalanchoe

Lace Fern
Lacy Tree
Lily of the Valley

Macadamia Nut
Madagascar Dragon Tree
Marble Queen
Marijuana
Mauna Loa Peace Lily (aka Peace Lily)
Mexican Breadfruit Mistletoe "American"
Morning Glory
Mother-in-Law

Narcissus
Needlepoint Ivy
Nephthytis
Nightshade

Oleander
Onion
Orange Day Lily

Panda
Peace Lily (aka Mauna Loa Peace Lily)
Philodendron Pertusum
Plumosa Fern
Precatory Bean

Queensland Nut

Red Emerald
Red Lily

Red-Margined Dracaena (aka Straight-Margined Dracaena)
Red Princess
Rhododendron Ribbon Plant (Dracaena sanderiana)
Rubrum Lily
Saddle Leaf Philodendron
Sago Palm
Satin Pothos
Schefflera
Spotted Dumb Cane
Stargazer Lily
Striped Dracaena
Sweetheart Ivy
Swiss Cheese Plant

Taro Vine
Tiger Lily
Tomato Plant
Tree Philodendron
Tropic Snow Dumbcane
Tulip

Variable Dieffenbachia
Variegated Philodendron

Warnecke Dracaena
Wood Lily

Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow
Yew (aka Japanese Yew)
Yucca

This list is provided by the ASPCA and is a compilation of most commonly encountered plants. If you believe your animal has ingested a poisonous substance, contact us at 612-822-1545, or call the 24-hour ASPCA hotline at 1-888-426-4435.

Please refer to this link for a more comprehensive list and additional information.
<http://www.aspc.org/pet-care/poison-control/plants/>

<http://www.petpoisonhelpline.com/>



Cat Resources

The following is a list of resources we have collected through word of mouth. We have been happy with the quality of service and expertise these individuals have provided and hope you will find the same. Please tell us if you have additional names to add to this list.

Pet stores/boutiques

Bone Adventure – 612-920-2201 • 5045 France Ave. S. • Edina, plus other locations • www.boneadventure.com

Calhoun Pet Supply – 612-824-1094 • Bryant & 36th St. • Mpls

Chuck and Don's – 612-926-8161 • Many metro locations • <http://www.chuckanddons.com>

It's A Pet's Life – 763-476-7372 • 1115 Vicksburg Lane N. • Plymouth • <http://www.itsapetslife.net>

Lulu and Luigi's – 952-929-1200 • 3699 Joppa Ave. • St. Louis Park • <http://www.luluandluigi.com>

Pet Stuff – 952-930-9383 • 14655 Excelsior Blvd. • Minnetonka • www.petstufftonka.com

Urbanimal – 612-879-0709 • 2106 Lyndale Ave. S. • Mpls • <http://www.urbanimal.com>

Twin Cities Natural Food Coops – Many metro locations

Pet sitters

Cat Watchers-952.920.4980

www.catwatchers.com

4816 W 82th Str

Mpls, MN 55437

See www.petsittersmn.org – 651-610-0444

Tails of 2 Cities – 612-822-7389 • tailsof2cities@mn.rr.com

These Paws Were Made for Walking-Betsy Hoyt – 612-926-3600 • www.theseapaws.com

Animal communication

Lena Swanson – 651-206-0644 • www.lenaswanson.com

Sage Lewis – 612-817-4473 • www.dancingporcupine.com

Pet loss support/grief counselor

Marilyn Erickson – 612-827-7467

University of Minnesota – 612-625-6761 (Main line; can help direct you)

Humane Society Pet Loss Support Group – 763-489-2220

Professional carpet cleaners

Keljik's (next door) – 612-823-6338

Grooming services

Bubbles and Bows – 3018 W 56th St. • 612-920-3868

The Groomsman – 313 W 38th St. • 612-822-2397

Wendy's Dog House – 4207 E 54th St. • 612.726.1740

