

Havertown Animal Hospital

Kitten Information

Our staff thanks you for your confidence in entrusting us with the care of your kitten. This packet contains the information discussed in the first kitten appointment - please reach out with any additional questions that you might have.

*** Videos on Nail Trimming, Ear Cleaning and Teeth Brushing ***

Please look at our website: www.havertownanimalhospital.com

VACCINE SCHEDULE FOR KITTENS

The schedule below is a general recommendation and explanation of the most common kitten vaccines.

We never vaccinate a kitten or cat with more than 2 injections at one time. Vaccine boosters must be administered at least two weeks apart in order to mount a protective immune response.

We recommend discussing your kitten's particular lifestyle with your veterinarian to create the most personalized schedule for your kitten.

Why Vaccinate Your Kitten?

When kittens are born, their immune systems are not fully developed and they are unable to fight disease on their own. Fortunately, they are able to get some protection from their mothers. Nursing mothers provide antibody-rich milk called colostrum. These maternal antibodies provide kittens with temporary immunity against illness. The length of this immunity varies from kitten to kitten. Protection from maternal antibodies generally fades somewhere between the ages of eight and 18 weeks.

There is no easy way to know exactly when a kitten is vulnerable to a specific disease. In an effort to strategically protect kittens from diseases, veterinarians

administer vaccinations at strategic intervals. A vaccine is designed to trigger an immune response and prevent future infection from that disease.

All kittens need certain core vaccines, which provide immunity against the most dangerous and widespread diseases. Core vaccines are considered essential for kittens in most geographical locations. Depending on your location and your kitten's environment, certain non-core vaccines may also be recommended. Talk to your veterinarian about your kitten's risk of exposure to these diseases.

How Kitten Vaccinations Work

Kittens receive a series of vaccines over a 12- to 16-week period beginning at between 6 and 8 weeks of age. Some vaccines might be given together in one injection that is called a combination vaccine. At your kitten's first veterinary exam, your vet will discuss a vaccination schedule as well as other treatments, such as deworming and beginning parasite prevention.

The vaccine injection itself is typically not painful. Your kitten may feel a little pinch or sting, but many do not react at all.

At the first vaccine visit, your veterinarian will do an examination before vaccinating your kitten. Vaccines should never be given to a kitten with a fever or illness as the vaccine will not be effective. Giving a vaccine to a sick kitten can actually make her feel worse.

After a vaccine is administered, immunity is not immediate. It takes about five to 10 days to become effective. We always space vaccines out by a minimum of 2 weeks to allow the body sufficient time to mount an effective immune response.

True immunity is uncertain until about 16 to 18 weeks of age, or until all kitten boosters are completed. Avoid exposing your kitten to unknown animals until all vaccinations have been given.

Types of Vaccines for Kittens

referred to as feline distemper, is a highly contagious and often fatal disease that attacks rapidly growing Rabies is a fatal virus that can affect cats as well as humans.¹ This is a core vaccine that is generally required by law because of how

serious this disease is. All kittens and adult cats should be vaccinated against rabies.

FVRCP stands for feline viral rhinotracheitis, calicivirus, and panleukopenia. This is a core vaccine considered essential for all kittens. Calicivirus and rhinotracheitis are common feline viruses known to cause upper respiratory infections in cats. Panleukopenia, commonly dividing cells like those in the intestines, bone marrow, and the developing fetus.

FeLV or feline leukemia virus is a vaccine that is considered non-core in cats. However, it is highly recommended for all kittens. Adult cats who will spend time outdoors should get this vaccine boosted annually. Feline leukemia is one of the most common infectious diseases in cats. It is spread most commonly through bite wounds or via prolonged close contact with infected cats. FeLV can cause a variety of health issues in cats, including cancer and immune system disorders.

FIV stands for feline immunodeficiency virus, a common feline virus spread most commonly by bite wounds. This vaccine is non-core and recommended only for cats at a very high risk of exposure to FIV. Though many FIV positive cats can live normal lives, those adversely affected will suffer from various illnesses due to immune system dysfunction.

Sample Vaccine Schedule

6 - 8 weeks old

- 1st FVRCP (next vaccine to be given 3-4 weeks after the first one)
- Stool sample to be sent to Lab, checking for internal parasites
- Discussion about Preventatives (based upon lifestyle)

9 - 11 weeks old

- 2nd FVRCP (this core vaccine is to be given every 3-4 weeks), this vaccine is the same as the 1st FVRCP.
- Blood test for FIV/FeLV
- Monthly preventatives (based upon lifestyle)
- Check a stool sample

12-14 weeks old

- 3rd FVRCP vaccine
- Rabies vaccine is required by law in a kitten 12 weeks or older. Rabies is unfortunately endemic in the area is one of the most important vaccines that your kitten must remain up to date on his/her entire life EVEN if they are an indoor only kitten/cat.
- Check a stool sample

14 -16 weeks old

- 1st FeLV vaccine administered to most kittens but especially if going to be indoor/outdoor. Must ensure negative FIV/FeLV test before vaccinating.
- Monthly preventatives

16-20 weeks old

- 4th FVRCP vaccine (final FVRCP which is good for 1 year, will need to be boosted every 3 years after that)
- 2nd FeLV (will be done on a yearly basis after that IF patient is indoor/outdoor)

6 months old

- Spay +/- neuter
- Retained deciduous teeth (baby teeth) can be pulled at time of spay or neuter if they haven't come out on their own. Typically, all baby teeth should have fallen out by the age of 6 months. We check this on the day of spay or neuter and will call you to inform you that this needs to be done to make room for the adult teeth.

1 year from the last date of vaccine

- FVRCP booster, Rabies Booster, Deworm (if necessary). Schedule a technician appointment in 2 + weeks later for the FeLV vaccine if lifestyle requires.
- FVRCP and Rabies vaccines are administered every 3 years.
- FeLV vaccine is administered annually IF patient is indoor/outdoor

TOPICS TO BE DISCUSSED DURING YOUR FIRST KITTEN APPOINTMENT

1. Vaccines

- Vaccines are personalized recommendations based upon your kitten's lifestyle. FVRCP (feline distemper) and Rabies are both core vaccines. Rabies is required by law and may be vaccinated at a separate appointment or at the doctors' advisement.
- FeLV is only required if cat is indoor/outdoor.

2. Diet

- Most veterinary teams recommend one of five major pet food brands: Purina, Iams, Hill's Science Diet, Eukanuba or Royal Canin. These foods are recommended because of evidence based medicine as there is very little oversight on the pet food industry.
- It is important to feed your kitten a "kitten" food and not an 'all stage' food.

3. Spay/Neuter

- This is recommended. Benefits from Spaying and Neutering decrease the risks of certain illnesses (such as pyometra) and cancers.
- Spaying and Neutering is very important for avoiding certain behavior issues for your dog.
- Spaying and Neutering is also very important in avoiding unwanted pregnancies. There are unfortunately many dogs and cats who will never find their forever homes and 'population control' is imperative to decreasing this risk.

4. Trimming Nails

- Trimming Nails is very important to start as early as possible. Ensure that you always keep this process positive and start slow with minimal expectation.
- Be sure to always reward your cat/kitten with treats.
- Start with just one nail a day.

5. Brushing Teeth

- Brushing Teeth is recommended for all cats and kittens. Even though kittens will lose teeth at 4 - 6 months of age, brushing their teeth starting at an early age desensitizes them to anything scary

6. Flea, Tick and Heartworm/Intestinal Parasites

- Preventatives are the best way to keep your kitten/cat healthy - especially if they are an indoor/outdoor cat.
- There are many different preventatives out there and we recommend administering these preventatives all year round to indoor/outdoor cats in order to best protect your cat.

7. Pet Insurance

Pet Insurance There are many different policies and we recommend that you explore the different options listed on our website - from the AVMA's resources to Petinsuranceinfo.com Our personal recommendation is Pumpkin Pet Insurance - especially for your new kitten or puppy. Please check out our website for more information.

WHY SPAY AND NEUTER?

Many people have questions about whether or not they should have their pet spayed or neutered. Often, pet owners feel that they wish to have a litter of puppies or kittens from their pet. Unfortunately, breeding your pet has many risks and expenses. We recommend against breeding your pet to prevent unwanted health and behavior problems, as well as unwanted puppies and kittens.

Why should I spay my female pet?

A spay, or ovariectomy, is a surgical procedure performed on female animals under general anesthesia. Through an abdominal incision, the ovaries and uterus are removed and the incision is then closed. A spayed female is unable to become pregnant. Unspayed female dogs and cats will go into "heat" about once every 6 months. This is when your pet can become pregnant. Cats in heat will be disruptive. They often vocalize throughout the night and will remain in heat for days to weeks. If during her heat cycle your pet becomes pregnant, it is important to know that female animals do not always have a stress-free pregnancy or birth

process. It is not uncommon to see infections or difficult births that require emergency treatment or surgery. T

he most important reason for spaying your pet is health related. We know that in both dogs and cats, spaying before their first heat will decrease their chances of developing breast cancer by 99%! Spaying also eliminates the possibility of life-threatening uterine infections (pyometra) as well as ovarian and uterine cancers. In cats, 90% of mammary masses are malignant- PLEASE spay your cats!

Why should I neuter my male kitten?

The neutering of an intact male involves a surgical procedure performed under general anesthesia during which both testicles are removed through a small incision. Neutered males are unable to impregnate a female animal. Unneutered male dogs and cats can display a variety of undesirable behaviors. Aggression towards other animals is common in both dogs and cats, as well as increased urine marking behavior.

Spaying and Neutering Saves Lives!

When you spay or neuter your pet, you are preventing unwanted litters of puppies and kittens that could end up in shelters. There are millions of homeless pets in shelters across the country and unfortunately about half of these animals are euthanized simply because there is not enough space. Even if your pet's puppies or kittens are adopted, they are still occupying valuable shelter space that could have been used for another animal. Pet overpopulation is a major problem, and you should feel good about being a part of the solution by making the responsible choice to spay and neuter!

How to Raise a Happy Cat

New kittens are dependent on you to help them stay safe and thrive in their new homes. Here's what you can do to provide your kitten with safety and a sense of security:

Give them time

9 to 10 weeks is the ideal age to adopt a kitten. Some are adopted as early as 6 weeks, but adoption at that age can be stressful for kittens and may make them fearful or shy. A kitten that has been gently handled by humans will be friendlier and more well-adjusted, so look for inquisitiveness and confidence in a new kitten.

Cover the basics

Young kittens need a place to feel safe—something reminiscent of being surrounded by their mother and siblings. A blanket-lined cardboard box or cat bed can be a great replacement. For the first year, kittens require the extra protein and calories found in kitten-formulated foods, so be sure the food you choose is created just for them. Begin litter training by placing your kitten in the box after meals or right after waking and gently simulate digging with the kitten's paws. Never punish a kitten for missing the box, and always praise him for using it correctly. Provide a scratching post to prevent furniture damage.

Introduce new family members slowly

Place the kitten in a quiet room, along with a bed, litterbox and food, until he gets adjusted. Introduce family members one at a time, providing extra oversight with children. Teach children how to gently interact with the kitten and remind them to wash their hands after handling him.

Kitten-proof your home

Bundle electric cords and place them out of the kitten's reach. Put all small items away and remove poisonous plants and insect traps. Close the toilet seat lid, along with kitchen cabinets and the lids to washers and dryers.

Go room by room

Give your kitten the grand tour of the house, one room at a time. Try to prevent him from hiding under or behind furniture. To discourage climbing on the bed simply place him back on the floor when he jumps up or starts the climb.

Prepare your other pets

If you already have pets at home, be sure that they're in optimal health before introducing a new kitten to the mix. To help ease anxiety, give older cats extra attention. Then allow them to approach the kitten briefly so that they can sniff each other. If they demonstrate physical hostility, separate them and try again in a few days. If you have a dog at home, don't leave your new kitten alone with him. Introduce them with the dog on a leash. Prevent the kitten from running so the dog doesn't try to give chase. And remember to reward all pets for their good behavior during these introductions.

Keep playtime safe

Choose toys designed with kittens in mind—nothing with any small parts that could be ingested. Small stuffed animals or feathers on the end of a small fishing pole are good picks.

Provide comfort while you're away

Secure the kitten in one room before you leave, and include a bed, litterbox, scratching post, toys, food and water. Consider adding a nightlight or leaving a light on if you'll be gone all evening. You may want to try playing music or talk radio, too—the sounds can be soothing to a kitten that's alone.

Interesting Cat Facts

- Purring translates to more than just "I'm happy." Cats purr for more reasons than just to convey how content they are at a given moment. They have also been found to purr when hungry, injured or frightened. This may be because purring serves as a ["self-soothing" device](#) that cats may access during stressful situations.
- Cats groom to keep themselves cool. While hours of grooming do help a cat keep clean, ensuring a shiny coat and removing dander and loose hairs, this process is about more than just cleanliness. Among the other benefits of dedicated grooming is that cats are able to control their temperature—while they can sweat through their paws, they can't sweat much elsewhere, so licking serves as a [cooling system](#) with their own saliva helping chill them out.
- Cats have better peripheral vision than humans. Even the sharpest peripheral vision in humans pales in comparison to that of your average cat. Cats' peripheral vision occupies 200 degrees—20 percent more than humans. While they're not especially effective at seeing long distances, within 20 feet of prey, they have absolute accuracy
- Cats sleep up to 70 percent of their lives. Domestic cats do mostly four things: sleep, eat, run, or play. It turns out, sleeping takes up more time than the other three activities combined. With [up to 70 percent](#) of their lives dedicated to sleep, cats are among the most frequent sleepers in the animal world because, in the wild, they must use a lot of energy to hunt