

# A Healthy Start for your New Kitten

Welcome to White Bear Animal Hospital and thank you for entrusting us with the care of your new kitten. Our goal is to make sure that your new pet gets off to a healthy start in life. Below are summarized the primary issues in our preventative medicine program for kittens.

## Vaccines

### Core Vaccines

Distemper, Rhinotracheitis and Calicivirus – given by injection usually at 8 and 12 weeks of age followed by a booster at 1 and 2 years of age and then a booster every other year.

Rabies – given by injection anytime after 12 weeks of age, boosted 1 year later and then every other year.

### Optional Vaccines

Feline Leukemia – given as 2 injections 2 to 4 weeks apart anytime after 8 weeks of age followed by an annual booster.

Bordetella – given as intranasal drops anytime after 8 weeks of age and then boosted every 6 to 12 months as needed.

**Feline Leukemia Virus / Feline Immunodeficiency Virus** - FeLV and FIV are viruses that cats can contract from their mothers before birth, from the environment or from other infected cats after birth. We strongly **recommend that every kitten be tested** for these two incurable viruses. There is a FeLV vaccination available. Whether or not we recommend vaccinating your cat for FeLV will depend on a variety of risk factors that we will discuss with you. There is an FIV vaccine available but it is not yet in wide use.

**Intestinal Parasite Control** – Many kittens are either born with internal parasites (primarily roundworms and hookworms) or contract them early in life. These parasites generally cause vomiting, diarrhea, poor weight gain, a distended abdomen and sometimes coughing. We will perform an **intestinal parasite screen at least twice** during your kitten's initial visits. A fresh sample of your kitten's stool should be collected from the litterbox prior to your appointment. One negative stool sample does not guarantee that your pet is parasite free due to the possibility of immature parasites or low parasite numbers. We also recommend **deworming your kitten at least twice** with a broad-spectrum dewormer. Roundworms and hookworms can be **transmitted to other pets as well as people**. Litter boxes should be cleaned frequently and good hygiene practiced by all individuals in contact with the kitten and the litter box.

**Spay / Neuter** – Unless you are considering breeding or showing your pet, we strongly recommend that you have **her spayed or him neutered by six months of age**. You can refer to the handout "Spaying / Neutering of Dogs and Cats" for an in depth discussion of the procedure and its benefits. You can view step-by-step photographs of actual spay and neuter procedures by visiting the **Virtual Surgery Suite** on our website.

## Other

**Flea / Tick Control** – We recommend the once monthly topical flea and tick preventative Frontline Plus. Please refer to the “Fleas and Your Pet” handout for further information.

**Heartworm Prevention** – Feline heartworm disease (FHW) is a disease of the heart and lungs and is caused by the parasite *Dirofilaria immitis*, the same parasite that causes heartworm disease in dogs. Immature forms of the worm are transmitted by mosquitoes from one infected animal to another. Annual testing and prevention of feline heartworm disease is strongly recommended for cats that spend a significant amount of time outdoors. We do not recommend heartworm prevention for strictly indoor cats. Feline heartworm disease can be a very serious disease that is difficult to diagnosis. It is much less expensive to prevent than it is to treat. Prevention comes in the form of a monthly chewable (Heartgard) given year round or a topical product used monthly after 6 weeks of age (Revolution).

**Dental Care** – Brushing your cat’s teeth daily or every other day will go a long way towards preventing the development of significant dental disease that may require treatment later in life. Good quality pet dental care kits are available at our clinic. If brushing is not possible, other dental care products are available. If you have any questions regarding the care of your pet’s teeth be sure to ask. Please refer to the “Dental Care for Your Pet” handout for more information.

**Nail Trimming / Declawing** – Teaching your cat to accept having its nails trimmed is an important part of early kitten training. A free nail trim demonstration is a part of all initial kitten appointments. If you’re not sure how to trim your kitten’s nails, be sure to ask. Many owners elect to have their kitten’s front nails removed, but by no means does every kitten need to be declawed. Please refer to the “Declawing Your Cat” handout for an in depth discussion of the procedure and its alternatives.

**HomeAgain®** – The HomeAgain® microchip is a permanent identification system that allows positive identification of your pet if it is lost or stolen and recovered. A microchip the size of a grain of rice is implanted under your pet’s skin between the shoulder blades and can be read with a handheld scanner available at veterinary clinics, shelters and humane societies. The microchip is generally implanted while the pet is anesthetized during its spay or neuter. However, the microchip can be implanted while awake.

Below is a visit-by-visit summary of what you can expect during your kitten’s first several months.

### 8 Weeks

- \* history
- \* physical exam
- \* Distemper vaccine (1 of 2)
- \* FeLV/FIV/FHW test
- \* +/- FeLV vaccine (1 of 2)
- \* fecal exam/deworming
- \* +/- heartworm prevention
- \* free nail trim
- \* free kitten pack

### 12 Weeks

- \* history
- \* physical exam
- \* Distemper vaccine (2 of 2)
- \* Rabies vaccine
- \* +/- Feline Leukemia vaccine (2of 2)
- \* +/- Bordatella vaccine
- \* fecal exam/deworming
- \* +/- heartworm prevention
- \* discuss spay/neuter/declaw

If you ever have questions regarding any of the above information please do not hesitate to contact us. Visit us online at [www.WhiteBearAnimalHospital.com](http://www.WhiteBearAnimalHospital.com).

## WHITE BEAR ANIMAL HOSPITAL

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