Routine Veterinary Examinations for Your Kitten

Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff

Few things are more important than getting your kitten off to a happy and healthy start. We strongly encourage you to make regular veterinary visits during this important part of your kitten's life. Optimally, the first appointment should be the day you are bringing your new kitten home. Some people think these visits are just for 'shots,' but as you can see in the description of the visits below, these office visits cover a lot more than vaccinations.

We suggest you take this checklist with you when you go to your appointments. Be sure to write down any specific questions you have prior to the exam. Most veterinarians allow extra time for 'kitten visits,' but you may still want to inform the receptionist when you make the appointment that extra time may be needed.

First visit

- General physical exam including weighing your kitten
- Discuss any health concerns
- Inform the veterinarian of your kitten's previous vaccinations and deworming, and if your kitten will be exposed to other cats (outdoors, at shows, boarding facilities)
- Have your kitten checked for parasites, including a fecal exam (you may want to bring a fresh stool sample with you)
- Have your kitten 'dewormed'*
- Have your kitten tested for feline leukemia (FeLV) and feline immunodeficiency virus (FIV)
- Discuss heartworm prevention and start your kitten on a preventive
- Discuss vaccinations and have the proper ones given
- Discuss feeding your kitten: how much, how often, what brand, dry or canned
- Discuss any grooming concerns including nails, skin, coat, and ears
- Discuss other daily care such as brushing teeth
- Discuss and start flea and tick control medications if necessary
- Discuss normal kitten behavior, litter box training, and any problem behaviors
- Discuss introducing your kitten to other pets in your family, and to children

Second visit

- General physical exam including weighing your kitten
- Discuss any health concerns
- Have your kitten checked for internal and external parasites, including a fecal exam (again, you may want to bring a fresh stool sample with you)
- Have your kitten 'dewormed'*
- Discuss vaccinations and have the proper ones given
- Discuss any problems or changes in feeding your kitten
- Discuss any grooming, oral hygiene, or other concerns
- Review normal behavior and discuss any behavior problems

Third and subsequent visits

- General physical exam including weighing your kitten
- Discuss any health concerns
- Discuss spaying or neutering your kitten
- Have your kitten checked for internal and external parasites, including a fecal exam (you may want to bring a fresh stool sample with you)
- Have your kitten 'dewormed'*

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- Discuss the need to adjust the dosage of heartworm preventive according to your kitten's new weight
- Discuss vaccinations and have the proper ones given
- Discuss any problems or changes in feeding your kitten
- Discuss any grooming, oral hygiene, or other concerns
- Review normal behavior and discuss any behavior problems
- Discuss traveling with your kitten, or other concerns

* Even though a fecal exam may be negative, regular deworming is recommended to kill immature forms of the worms. Your heartworm preventive may contain a wormer; discuss this with your veterinarian.

We recommend that as your kitten grows into an adult, she should have an annual exam. Again, these appointments are not just for vaccinations but to evaluate the overall health of your pet and identify any potential problems early in their course.

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