

Caring for your kitten

Why are vaccinations so important?

Vaccinations form an important part of your kitten's preventative healthcare regime. Most of the diseases we vaccinate against can have serious consequences as they are caused by viruses which have no specific treatments. The kitten vaccination course consists of two vaccinations three weeks apart and would normally commence at nine weeks of age. Some of the diseases are not completely protected by vaccination but the vaccinations significantly reduce the severity of the disease if your kitten were to contract it (cat flu), and some almost eliminate the risk of contracting the disease (eg. FeLV).

The diseases we can protect your kitten against are:

- Feline herpes virus
- Feline calicivirus
(both are components of cat 'flu)
- Feline panleucopaenia
- Feline leukaemia virus (FeLV)

These are what we would term as 'core' vaccines - that is ones that are essential in the area we live. Although FeLV vaccine can be separated and is not chosen by everyone as it is not required by boarding catteries, the disease is highly prevalent in East Anglia and, due to its severity, we would always recommend vaccinating against it.

Optional vaccines for cats include chlamydomphila and bordatella although these are only really required if your cat is in a breeding cattery or is a show cat.

If you would like any further information about how to care for your kitten, please call the surgery on

01379 852146

or email
admin@oakwoodvets.co.uk



What should I feed my kitten?

Feeding appropriately for your kitten's life-stage will ensure that he/she develops properly. Diets lacking in essential nutrients can affect development of all parts of the body, especially the bones and joints. Some B vitamins especially are also essential for a kitten's development and a lack of these can cause neurological and eyesight problems. Cats MUST eat meat - a vegetarian diet is not appropriate and for all these reasons, we at Oakwood Veterinary Group would always advocate the use of a commercial food rather than a home-made diet. It can be almost impossible to accurately formulate a diet for your kitten at home that contains all the essential nutrients in the appropriate quantities and ratios.

Kittens are best allowed to graze and eat when they like. This means that often a dried food is best. The most important thing is to ensure the food you feed your kitten is indeed kitten food. If you require any further advice do not hesitate to contact the surgery where we will endeavour to help.

Do I need to treat against fleas and worms?

It is important to treat your kitten for fleas - not only to get rid of these nasty beasts but also to minimise the risk of them passing on worms. Immature fleas can ingest one type of tapeworm egg, and the worm is passed to the cat when it ingests the flea during grooming!

Several prescription flea preparations are available in formulations safe to use on young kittens as using the wrong product in some instances can be very dangerous. Please ask at the surgery for advice on the most appropriate regime for your pet.

All kittens should be treated to control *Toxocara Cati* - the most common roundworm found in kittens. It can be passed via the mother's milk and so the kitten does not need to have gone out of the home to be infected. Current recommendations therefore are to worm kittens every two weeks from six to 16 weeks of age with a product which is both effective and safe. Appropriate products can be purchased from the surgery which will also treat against tapeworms, and we will be happy to recommend the one most suitable for your kitten. Tapeworms can be a problem for kittens once they venture out. There are two types - one which is passed on by fleas (so it is important to also maintain flea protection for your cat) and the second which is passed to cats when they hunt and eat rodents.

