



Kitten Care: The First Year

Healthcare Service	Kitten Care: The First Year
Purpose	While vaccination, deworming and sterilization are important procedures for kittens, the first year is an opportunity to educate and emphasize the importance of preventive healthcare and to establish a lifetime of healthy habits. Discuss weight management, home dental care, nail care, parasite control, the need to observe behaviour at home and the importance of regular veterinary exams, as well as the benefits of pet insurance
Physical exam and consultation	Perform 2 or more times in the first 6 months of life
Pain assessment and management	Evaluate for the presence of pain and the need for analgesia at every exam
FeLV/FIV test	Test all kittens regardless of source or lifestyle
Surgical sterilization	Surgery can be performed following last primary vaccination at about 16 weeks but can be as early as 6 weeks Surgery can also be performed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before re-homing for rescue organizations • As early as 6-7 weeks in feral kittens; identification such as ear tipping recommended
Disease screening	Conduct blood tests, urinalyses, blood pressure measurement and fundic examination, as needed according to health status
Panleukopenia, herpes virus-1, calicivirus (FVRCP) vaccination	Administer first dose as early as 4-6 weeks Vaccinate every 3-4 weeks until at least 16 weeks of age Administer at or below right elbow Recommended for all cats
Rabies vaccination (as regionally appropriate)	Administer a single dose at not less than 12 weeks of age Administer at or below right stifle Recommended: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For cats with outdoor access including balconies • In regions with risk of exposure via wildlife, such as bats, foxes, skunks, etc. • Where required by municipal or provincial by-laws • For cats travelling to other countries

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Nutritional Assessment	<p>Evaluate diet and feeding practices for cat’s life stage, life style and health condition(s)</p> <p>Measure weight, body condition score and muscle condition at every visit; determine cat’s ideal weight</p> <p>Make a specific recommendation verbally and in writing for food, dose and frequency</p>
Fecal examinations	<p>Recommended 2-4 times during the first year of life</p> <p>Fecal centrifugation floatation techniques with zinc sulfate or modified Sheather’s sugar solution are considered most reliable.</p>
Parasite control	<p>Treat with broad-spectrum parasiticide at 2, 4, 6 and 8 weeks of age or when kittens are first brought home, provide 3 treatments, 2 weeks apart</p> <p>Follow with broad-spectrum monthly parasiticide until 6 months of age</p> <p>At 6 months of age, start a year-round or seasonal protocol with a broad-spectrum monthly parasiticide effective against heartworm, intestinal parasites and fleas based on risk of infection</p>
Feline Leukemia (FeLV) vaccination	<p>Administer first dose as early as 8 weeks of age</p> <p>Revaccinate 3-4 weeks later</p> <p>Administer at or below left stifle</p> <p>All kittens should be vaccinated, even if intended to be indoors, and boosted at one year</p>
Grooming and nail care	<p>Demonstrate nail trimming procedure and trim nails at every visit</p> <p>Discuss the importance of scratching behavior and locations and types of scratching posts</p> <p>Discuss importance of regular brushing or combing, especially for long-haired cats</p> <p>Onychectomy should be performed only for medical reasons</p> <p>Tendonectomy is never recommended</p>
Permanent identification (microchip +/- tattoo, collar and tag)	<p>Recommend at least one form of permanent identification combined with collar and tag</p> <p>Record the ID number in the medical record</p> <p>The CVMA recommends using a microchip with ISO technology</p>

