

Congratulations on your new kitten and thank you for choosing Leland Veterinary Hospital! This information is intended as a brief introduction to help you and your new companion get a great start.

VACCINES

Core Vaccines: These vaccines are strongly recommended or required for your feline friend	Non-Core vaccines: These vaccines are recommended based on individual risk
<p>FVRCP (Feline Distemper) Vaccine (<i>Feline Viral Rhinotracheitis (FVR)</i>, <i>CaliciVirus</i>, and <i>Panleukopenia</i>):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Panleukopenia is a highly contagious virus that causes severe diarrhea, vomiting, dehydration, and low blood cell counts. There is no cure, only supportive treatment. ● CaliciVirus and Rhinotracheitis cause most upper respiratory infections, and are contagious to other cats. Some chronic nasal and oral diseases can also be attributed to the infections. ● Typically, <i>vaccination starts at 8 weeks of age and continues every 3-4 weeks for a series of 3 injections, followed by a booster one year later.</i> ● <i>Adults with previous vaccination require a booster every 3 years.</i> <p>Rabies Vaccine: Rabies virus can be transmitted to any mammal, including humans, most commonly through bite wounds from an infected animal.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>North Carolina State law requires dogs and cats to be vaccinated</i> ● <i>Rabies is a deadly virus that can be transmitted to humans</i> ● <i>If an unvaccinated pet bites or is bitten, your pet will require quarantine at your expense up to 6 months and/or euthanasia.</i> ● <i>Kittens will need this vaccine after 16 weeks of age, followed by a booster a year later.</i> ● <i>Adult cats with previous vaccination need to be revaccinated every 1 or 3 years.</i> 	<p>FeLV Vaccine (<i>Feline Leukemia Virus</i>):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● FeLV is spread through saliva of infected cats. It can be spread via grooming or bite wounds. Infected mothers can spread it to their kittens during the birthing process or nursing. ● As the name implies, cats with FeLV are more likely to develop leukemia and lymphoma ● The median survival time for a cat diagnosed with FeLV is 2.5 years. ● Some cats can live more prolonged lives based on the course their FeLV infection takes. ● For more information check Cornell's Feline Health Center page on FeLV

What is an injection site sarcoma?

- These **rare tumors** are believed to result from inflammation associated with vaccination, and can occur up to 10 years after vaccination in some cats.
- Treatment requires aggressive surgical removal of the tumor with wide borders of normal surrounding tissue. Let your veterinarian know if a swelling occurs around a vaccine site.
- Vaccine reactions are **rare and occur in less than 1 in 10,000 cats**. The **benefits** of vaccination far outway the risks!

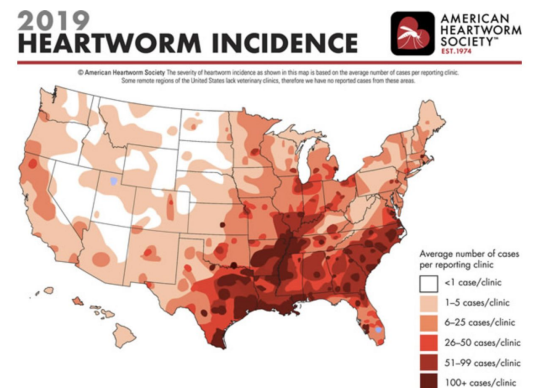
Flea & Tick prevention

- Flea and tick preventatives have a wide margin of safety and are easy to administer.
- Fleas serve as the intermediate host for **tapeworms**. Monthly flea prevention helps prevent tapeworms too!
- Ticks can transmit a wide variety of diseases and can cause anemia
- **We recommend the use of monthly preventatives for all cats year-round.**
- Many flea collars, sprays, baths and flea-bombs are generally ineffective and employ harsh chemicals that are irritating and even toxic to your cats.
- We would be happy to make recommendations that will fit the lifestyle of you and your pet



Heartworm prevention

- Heartworms are not just a dog disease! They can occur in cats too but, unlike dogs, there is no heartworm treatment available for cats
- Heartworms are spread through mosquitoes
- Only a few heartworms can cause very serious disease in cats including coughing, vomiting, and difficulty breathing
- For more information visit the American Heartworm Society website (<https://www.heartwormsociety.org/heartworms-in-cats>)



Intestinal Parasites

Intestinal parasites are frequently transmitted to kittens from their infected mother in utero, or via milk or feces ingestion. We perform an exam under the microscope to look for eggs shed by the adult worms. In large infestations, adult worms can be observed in your cat's bowel movements or after he vomits.

- Dewormers can be given orally but first we need to diagnose which parasites your puppy has.
- **We recommend testing a fecal sample for analysis of parasites upon getting your new puppy.**
- Hookworms, roundworms, and some other intestinal parasites are **zoonotic** which means they can be transmitted to humans. Be sure to clean up feces promptly and thoroughly wash your hands.

Preventative Testing

Triple Snap (FeLV/FIV/Heartworm) - We recommend yearly testing for all cats, especially outdoor cats

- **FeLV** is carried in the saliva and is often called “the loving virus” because it can be spread through mutual grooming (*see section on vaccines*)
- **FIV** (Feline Immunodeficiency Virus) can affect the immune system and leave infected cats **more vulnerable to other infections** from bacteria, fungi, or other viruses
 - It is spread primarily through bite wounds (outdoor, aggressive male cats have the highest incidence of FIV)
 - **Many cats with FIV live completely normal lifespans**
 - It is important to know a cat's FIV status because of it can impact other cats in the household and their susceptibility to other infections
 - For more info check out Cornell's Feline Health Center page on FIV

Spaying & Neutering

- There is a serious pet overpopulation problem in the U.S. which results in many animal shelters being overwhelmed with pets that need homes.
- **Spaying and neutering eliminates the risk of unwanted puppies and kittens** and helps keep shelters from becoming overwhelmed.

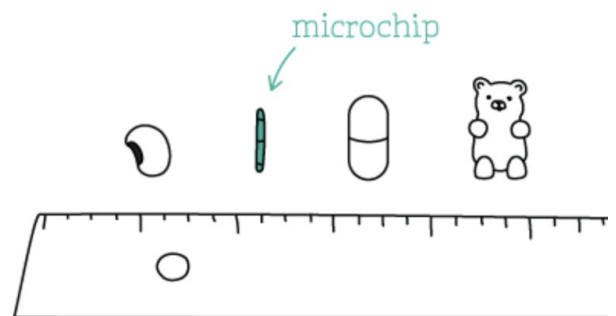
Additionally, there are numerous benefits to spaying or neutering your cat:

Benefits of spaying	Benefits of neutering
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preventing pyometra: Pyometra is an infection of the uterus and is considered an emergency that requires surgery. This is a life-threatening condition and creates a great financial expense to the owner. • Decreased Risk of Mammary Cancer. Each heat cycle increases the chance of mammary cancer • Eliminates Risk of Ovarian or Uterine Cancer. Spaying a cat involves the removal of the uterus and ovaries. No organs: no cancer! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neutered cats are less likely to spray urine (which will have a strong odor). • Neutered cats will be less likely to exhibit fighting behaviors (biting and scratching) • Decreases roaming activity - neutered cats will be less likely to try to escape, which means they will be less likely to contract diseases such as FeLV and FIV.

Microchipping

- Even the most experienced and diligent pet owner is at risk for losing their cat
- A microchip is a rice-grain sized electronic chip enclosed in a glass case that is injected under the skin of your cat using a hypodermic needle
- If your cat is ever lost and brought to a veterinary hospital or shelter, one of the first procedures performed is to scan for a microchip
- Microchipping significantly increases the chance of being reunited with your pet if your pet gets loose
- The image shows from left to right: a bean, a microchip, a capsule, and a gummy bear

(source <https://www.foundanimals.org/how-big-is-a-microchip/>)



Socialization

What is the socialization period?

- The ideal socialization period is when a kitten is **3-9 weeks old**
- This is the period in a kitten's life when they are most trainable, able to learn most quickly, and "recover" most quickly from something that may initially be scary

How should I socialize my kitten?

Positive reinforcement is the cornerstone for socializing and training your kitten. Reward your kitten when they perform a desired behavior to encourage them to repeat the desired behaviors

- For example, **touch your kitten's feet, head, and all parts of their body.**
 - Start slowly - touch one of your kitten's feet and reward him immediately with a treat if he tolerates it well. This will make nail trims easier when in the future!
- Offer both the wet and dry formulation of your kitten's diet. You can even try different flavors as treats.
 - Studies have shown this helps cats be **less averse to diet changes** when they are older. Your cat may require a prescription diet for disease management later in life!
 - If your cat is willing to take treats, it will be easier to give them pills if they ever require them
- **Teach your kitty good manners**
 - **Never** allow your kitten to teeth on or scratch at your hands while playing. The behaviors they learn as kittens are the behaviors they will **repeat as adults**. It may be cute when they're small, but those claws will hurt when they're grown up.
 - Only allow your kitten to scratch and bite at its appropriate cat toys. Wands and fishing rod-type toys (*pictured right*) allow for great interactions with your cat while keeping your hands and feet out of the way.
- **Do not** allow your cat to have access to free strings or ribbons. While many cartoons may depict cats playing with yarn, cats frequently ingest these strings. This is a surgical emergency and therefore quite dangerous!



Scratching behaviors

- While scratching behaviors can be frustrating and cause damage to household items, it's important to remember that this is a **normal cat behavior**
- **Why do cats scratch?**
 - **To remove dead nail**
 - **To mark objects**
 - **To stretch and exercise** - this behavior may be seen when you cat wakes from a nap or as part of a normal stretching sequence
 - **To play or exhibit excitement** - you may notice your cats scratch when she is playful or becomes excited

- **Provide appropriate substrates for scratching**
 - Provide both **vertical and horizontal** scratching posts that are **stable** and won't tip over
 - Many cats prefer rope covered surfaces but some may enjoy carpet covered surfaces (*pictured right*)
 - **Add catnip** to make it more attractive. When you see your cat using the appropriate scratching surface, **praise her and give her a treat!**
 - Cats are more likely to return to scratching surfaces they have been rewarded for using
- **Preventing inappropriate scratching**
 - Prevent access to the areas or furniture where your cat is inappropriately scratching
 - Additionally, make the furniture unappealing to interact with. Cover the furniture with plastic or other mild deterrent.
 - Spray areas of inappropriate scratching with Feliway Classic®. This is a feline pheromone which may decrease a cat's desire to mark furniture.



Creating a great environment for your cat

- **Litter Boxes**
 - While some cats have different preferences, most cats like loose substrate for their litter box. You may have to experiment with different litter types and styles of litter boxes to find one that your cat likes using
 - If you have a multi-cat household we recommend having one litter box for each cat plus one. This means if you have three cats, we recommend four total litter boxes
- **Hiding Places**
 - Some cats are easily stressed and they often need spots that are uniquely theirs where they know they won't be bothered
 - Cats enjoy being off the ground. Providing kitty perches near windows or specific cat dedicated shelves may help your cat feel more at home (*example to the right*)
- **Cat Carriers**
 - We recommend soft carries that have zippers on both the sides and top of the carrier
 - This allows easy access to your cat, and we can even examine your cat while it remains inside the carrier!
 - **We recommend making the carrier available to your cat at all times while inside the home**
 - Leave comfy blankets inside and allow your cat to take naps in there
 - This will prevent your cat from running and hiding when it's time to go inside the carrier for a vet visit or trip in the car

