



A NEW KITTEN!

Congratulations on the arrival of your new kitten! The following information is provided to help you with the essential health care for your new family member.

VACCINATION

Some feline diseases are very serious, and can be fatal, even with treatment. To prevent your cat from getting these diseases, we recommend annual vaccination. The vaccinations we use are highly effective and have a very low rate of side effects.

When does your cat need to be vaccinated?

At 8 weeks of age, kittens should receive their first vaccination. This needs to be followed up with boosters at 12 weeks and 16 weeks of age. After these initial kitten vaccinations, an annual booster is required to maintain immunity.

What do you need to vaccinate against?

- **Feline Panleucopenia** – the feline version of parvovirus. Symptoms may include depression, loss of appetite, vomiting, diarrhoea, often with blood. Mortality rate is high.
- **Feline Respiratory Disease (Cat Flu)** – most cases are caused by either Feline Rhinotracheitis virus or Feline Calicivirus. It affects cats of all ages and is usually spread by coughing and sneezing. Once infected, the cat will carry the disease for the rest of its life, shedding and producing symptoms during times of stress, low immunity, etc. Symptoms include sneezing, coughing, discharge from the eyes and nose, tongue ulcers, loss of appetite and lethargy.

These diseases are all covered in the F3 vaccination.

- **Feline Chlamydia** – mainly occurs in cats less than 12 months of age. It generally produces conjunctivitis in one or both eyes.

Feline Leukaemia – symptoms include loss of appetite, pale or yellow gums, vomiting, diarrhoea, tumours, and increased susceptibility to other infections. Death usually occurs within 3 years.

These 2 diseases, along with the 3 previously mentioned, are covered in the F5 vaccination.



- **Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV or Feline AIDS)** – Infected cats may not show symptoms until years after the initial infection, but once the virus takes hold, the cat’s immune system is severely compromised and weakened, making them very susceptible to secondary infections, similar to the human AIDS virus. Symptoms are varied and range from weight loss, fever and loss of appetite to runny eyes, inflamed mouth and hair loss. FIV is normally transferred through bite wounds from another infected cat.

This disease, along with the 5 previously mentioned, are covered in the F6 (F5/FIV) vaccination.

After Vaccination Care

Fortunately, most pets need no special care following vaccination as they show no obvious response and go about their lives normally. However, a small percentage may show a mild response and look ‘off-colour’ for a day or two, similar to how we may feel after a vaccination. This is quite normal. Symptoms may include loss of appetite, wanting to rest and tenderness at the injection site. It is best to provide your pet with a warm, cosy place to lie and rest. Make sure they have access to water and food, but don’t be alarmed if they are not hungry. If you are concerned, or if your pet has not recovered within 36 hours, please do not hesitate to contact one of our team members for advice.

NUTRITION

Kittens grow and age quickly; therefore a well-balanced diet tailored to your pet’s life stage is essential for proper growth and bone and teeth development. There are many choices available, but basically, you get what you pay for. Cheaper, supermarket available formulations are usually cheap because they have cheaper ingredients in them that may be difficult for your pet to digest. We use and recommend Royal Canin, as it has been scientifically formulated and tested, is highly palatable and digestible, and we believe it’s the best! The ingredients in Royal Canin are far more superior, which means it tastes better, you feed less, the cat produces smaller stools, and the overall health and wellbeing of your cat will be greatly improved. Talk to one of our staff about what the best Royal Canin food is for your pet.



WORMING

Intestinal worms may pose a danger to your cat, and your family. The most common intestinal worms that affect cats in Australia are roundworm, hookworm, whipworm and tapeworm. Loss of appetite, vomiting, diarrhoea, anaemia and, in severe cases, death, are just some of the symptoms a cat can experience from a worm infestation.

How do you protect your cat from worms?

Common worms are easily controlled with a routine worming treatment. Kittens should be wormed every two weeks until eight weeks of age, then monthly until six months of age. After six months all cats need to be wormed every three months for effective protection. We recommend dropping in to the clinic with your pet for a regular weigh in and our friendly staff can administer the wormer for you if you prefer.

FLEAS & TICKS

Fleas can be a major problem for cats and their owners. These blood-sucking parasites cause considerable discomfort for your pet, leading to scratching, chewing, biting and restlessness. Some animals may also be allergic to flea bites, leading to a common skin condition known as Flea Allergy Dermatitis (FAD). Fleas can also transmit tapeworm to your pet. You may not see fleas on your cat as readily as you can see them on your dog. This is because cats groom themselves often, therefore ingesting the fleas.

One female flea can produce up to 50 eggs per day, and almost 2,000 eggs in her lifetime, so even a few fleas can rapidly turn into a major infestation. This is why it is important to use quality flea prevention on all animals in the household.

Paralysis ticks normally live on possums and bandicoots, who have immunity to their toxin. Unfortunately, your cat is not so lucky, and can become very sick from a paralysis tick attaching to them. Signs of paralysis tick toxicity include not wanting to eat, vomiting, a change in meow and weakness in the hind legs which progresses to paralysis all over the body. Paralysis tick toxicity becomes fatal when the animal's chest muscles become paralysed, making the animal unable to breathe. Treatment for paralysis tick can be complicated, very expensive, and some animals die despite treatment. So prevention is better than cure!

There are excellent flea and tick control products available that are safe, effective and easy to use. They are available in sprays, spot-ons and tablets. Our friendly team can provide you with more detailed information about effective flea and tick control that best suits your pet.



DESEXING

Desexing is an integral part of responsible pet ownership. As well as reducing the number of unwanted kittens, desexing prevents pets from roaming, fighting or causing nuisance to neighbours. Health wise, it significantly reduces the occurrence of cat bite abscesses.

The optimum time for desexing is five months of age, when the animal is approaching sexual maturity but before they come on heat. However, it is never too late to desex!

You may also receive a significant discount when registering your cat with your local council if he/she is sterilised. Ask your council for more information.

MICROCHIPPING & IDENTIFICATION

It is now legislation that all new dogs and cats must be microchipped. This procedure should be performed between the ages of 8-12 weeks. Inserting a microchip is a simple procedure, taking only a few moments. The procedure is very safe and your pet will feel little pain. We even use 'mini' microchips, which are 30% smaller than regular microchips, to further minimise any pain your pet may feel during the implantation process.

The microchips we use have nationwide, lifetime registration. This means if your pet is ever lost, a ranger or veterinarian anywhere in Australia can scan your cat for the microchip and access your contact details by contacting the national database. There are no ongoing charges to keep your pet registered to this database with our microchips.

We suggest you also attach a personalised tag including your phone number to your cat's collar. All these methods of identification ensure your pet will have the best chance of being returned to you if they become lost.

PET INSURANCE

We highly recommend taking out a pet insurance policy for your new member of the family. Accidents and illness can strike even the healthiest of pets without warning. Having your pet covered with insurance means you have the peace of mind they will be able to receive the best treatment, without having to worry about the financial side of things.

There are a large number of insurance companies offering pet insurance nowadays, with different levels of insurance offered. It is advisable to look at all the policies available, before choosing which one is right for you and your cat. Your pet may be eligible for four weeks FREE pet insurance with Pet Plan! Ask one of our friendly team members about this free offer!

Esk Veterinary Services Fernvale Vet Surgery



SOCIALISATION

Socialising your kitten is one of the most important building blocks for a friendly, calm adult cat. The best time for socialisation is the first 4 months of your kitten's life. Exposing them to people, animals, foods, plants, objects and natural phenomena they are likely to encounter through their life is all part of socialisation. Bringing them in frequently to our veterinary clinic for a weigh in and a cuddle will make future visits to the vet an accepted, enjoyable experience.

**If you have any questions regarding your kitten,
please contact one of our team members.
We hope to see you again soon!**