

CHECK LIST: FOR A HEALTHY CAT



Congrats on your new pet! This welcome kit is a great reference for tips from Ceres Veterinary Clinic on how to keep your kitty healthy and happy.



NECESSITIES

- Premium Grade Food
- Bowls - Ceramic or Stainless Steel for Food & Water (Cats are Prone to Plastic Allergies)
- Litter Box & Litter (1 per Cat, Plus 1 Additional in Multi-Cat Homes)
- ID Tag & Microchip Safe
- Toys
- Pet Carrier (Appropriate for Size)
- Stain Remover & Odor Eliminator (Do Not Use Ammonia)
- Flea Comb & Flea & Tick Control Products
- Toothbrush Kit & Dental Aids
- Bi-Yearly Exam with your Veterinarian



OTHER SUGGESTED ITEMS

- Cat Treats for Training and Play, with or without Catnip
- Air-Tight Food Container & Scoop
- Regular Grooming Program
- Cat Bed
- Change or Scoop Litter Daily
- Books on Cat Care (breed specific)
- Litter Genie
- De-Shedding Tool
- Vertical Cat Tree





MY PET

- Is acting normal, active and happy.
- Does not tire easily after moderate exercise. Does not have seizures or fainting episodes.
- Has a normal appetite, with no significant weight change. Does not vomit or regurgitate food.
- Has normal appearing bowel movements (firm, formed, mucus-free). Doesn't scoot on the floor or chew under the tail excessively.
- Has a full glossy coat with no missing hair, mats or excessive shedding. Doesn't scratch, lick or chew excessively.
- Has skin that is free of dry flakes, not greasy, and is odor-free. Is free from fleas, ticks or mites.
- Has a body free from lumps and bumps. Has ears that are clean and odor-free.
- Doesn't shake head or dig at ears.
- Doesn't rub face and ears on the carpet after eating. Has eyes that are bright, clear and free of discharge.
- Has normal hearing and reactions to the environment. Walks without stiffness, pain or difficulty.
- Has healthy looking feet and short nails (including dewclaws).
- Breathes normally, without straining or coughing.
- Has normal thirst and drinks the usual amount of water at the same frequency.
- Urinates in the usual amount and frequency; color is normal, no unusual odor.
- Has a moist nose, free of discharge.
- Has clean white teeth, free from plaque, tartar or bad breath.
- Has gums that are moist and pink with no redness, swelling or offensive odor.
- Has no offensive habits (biting, chewing, scratching, or spraying urine, or aggressive behavior).



KITTEN PROOF: UPDATES TO MAKE



Bringing a young cat into your family? Kitten proofing your home is important, so your new furry friend doesn't chew, eat or scratch anything they aren't supposed to. If you're welcoming an older cat, they may be less mischievous, though you should still consider a few ways to cat proof furniture for this resident. Here are some tips when cat or kitten proofing your home.

1. They Like to Paw and Chew

Kittens are a lot like human babies; they learn about the world around them with their eyes, hands (well, paws), and their mouth. Cats are playful animals, regardless of their age, with an innate love to paw around and play with anything they can find on the ground. That last part is important; you may think your floors are clean, but if you get down on your hands and knees, you'll probably find items that can cause problems for your kitten. Here's what you should look out for and remove from behind couches and shelves before bringing your kitten home:

- strings
- twist ties
- hair ties
- ribbons
- rubber bands
- plastic bags
- sewing supplies
- doll/toy accessories
- small board game pieces
- Erasers

Although loose items are easy for your kitten to paw and swallow, there are many other things in your home they may try to chew, including electrical cords. Tape down any loose or exposed wires if they can't be removed from your kitten's reach. Remember to promptly put away corded items that are used intermittently, such as an iron or portable appliance.

Aside from electrical cords and cables, you should also secure telephone wires, curtain tie-backs, and the cords on blinds, all of which can pose potential harm to your kitten if chewed.

2. Not All Plants Are Healthy

Houseplants add some greenery to your home but be careful what your new kitten has access to. Philodendron, lilies, mistletoe, and poinsettia are a few of the more toxic houseplants that could make your kitten very ill with consistent exposure. Lilies, azaleas, and daffodils are common garden plants that are toxic for kittens as well. Similarly, it's important to check and be sure any cut flowers you bring into your home are safe for kittens to prowl around.

3. Keep the Lid Closed

Cats and kittens may always be on the lookout for water throughout the day. One easy spot to drink from is the bathroom toilet. It might seem gross to you, but not all cats are as selective, and there's always water available here if she's thirsty. Be sure to keep the lid closed on your toilet if there's a kitten in your home. With the lid up, your furry friend could also fall in and become trapped. Other containers in your home you should keep closed? Garbage cans, laundry bins, and your washer and dryer. These are prime places for a curious kitten to find herself in danger.





4. Hot Spots Are Unsafe

Although your kitten enjoys warmth, it's up to you to make sure she's safe in these comfortable areas. Whether the warmth comes from a fireplace or wood stove, reinforce that these hot spots are not a place for napping. If necessary, regulate your cat's access by moving their climbing surfaces or waking them up after a certain amount of time. Ultimately, make sure all electric heaters stay unplugged and stored properly when not in use. If they are plugged in, supervise the heater at all times to keep your entire family safe from overheating.

5. Cat Proof Furniture

Cats and kittens love to scratch, but they won't know which surfaces are off-limits until you teach them. An easy target for your kitten's claws are heavy furniture items such as couches or tables. Rugs and carpeted stairs are also a favorite. When you cat-proof furniture in your home, consider not only what your kitten might scratch; but also about items she can climb on: curtains, long tablecloths, or bookshelves. Offset these tendencies with a scratching post or cat tree, so they know exactly which items belong to them.

6. Secure What She Can't Have

Cats are inherently curious, so closing a cabinet doesn't mean your feline friend will stay out. Consider purchasing childproof locks for any cabinets that hold cleaning supplies or medicine. You might keep these items on the top shelf of a closet to be sure they're inaccessible. Just remember that your cat can climb, so the closet door itself should also be closed.

If there is a special room your kitten should stay out of, keep this door closed at all times. Child or dog gates won't keep a cat out who can jump up to five times her own height. Any mementos that are especially important to you and your family should be locked or secured away. Did a late relative give you a special family vase? Wrap it safely and keep it stowed until your pets are mature enough to navigate these items.

7. Check Small Spaces

Cats love to snuggle away in warm, small places. Before closing the dryer door, for example, be sure your kitten didn't sneak in for an afternoon snooze. The same goes for other quiet places such as dresser drawers, baskets in closets, refrigerators, and freezers.

8. Lock All Window Screens

Every patch of sunshine has your kitten's name on it, and they will snuggle on your windowpanes to get the most of this natural warmth. When kitten proofing your home, check all the screens on your windows and doors, even if it's in the winter. You don't want to forget to do this in the spring or summer when your cat is already accustomed to their surroundings. If a screen isn't properly locked, your cat can end up in a dangerous situation. To be even safer, purchase cat-proof window screens as well as cat proof blinds. Not only are the cat-proof screens safer, but they also last longer than regular window screens, because they don't get torn up as easily.



KITTEN PROOF: UPDATES TO MAKE



9. Stock Up on Her Favorite Toys

The busier your pet is, the less likely they will get in trouble. Kittens love to play, so invest in some toys they can play with when they're finished with their nap. As you can imagine, she'll love fake mice and jingly balls, which make just enough noise for you to know where she is at various times during the day. Expect your kitten to alternate between playing with you and napping on your lap.

10. Be Patient When Kitten Proofing Your Home

Whether your new cat is young and playful or old and wise, it's tough for her to learn all the house rules at once. A kitten might avoid all the wires or loose objects on your floor but be highly interested in climbing curtains or jumping up shelves. They may scoff at her water bowl and sip from the sink. Make the transition to her new home easier by keeping her contained in a small cat-friendly room temporarily while they are learning, then slowly allow their access to more and more of the house as they become accustomed to the rules. When letting them roam around and explore their new settings, make sure to keep a watchful eye on them at all times. If they gravitate to an area that you notice might be unfit or dangerous for them take the necessary precautions to keep them safe. It's important to redirect your kitten while addressing any safety issues in a calm and loving manner.

Finally, it is never a good idea to punish a kitten or cat for misbehaving. They are still learning the rules of your house and might not know better. Punishing a cat can actually make the situation worse, causing them to become stressed and reclusive. Proper training and rewarding them for good behavior will help them learn what is acceptable. If you notice they are being a little ornery, just direct them back to their toys or their scratch pad. Your pet is learning and is looking to you for direction. Have the same patience as you would with a young child learning to take in the world for the first time and your bond will grow stronger and stronger.





BRANDS WE RECOMMEND

- Royal Canin
- Purina ProPlan or ONE
- Hills Science Diet

When choosing a food, don't be afraid of the words "by-products" and "meal." The old definition of by-products included beaks, feet, feathers, etc. The new definition does NOT consider these to be by-products and are NOT included in your pet's food. The new definition of by-products includes cleaned bodily organs such as liver, kidney, stomach, heart, and intestines, which all contain vital nutrients for the health of your pet. High-quality does not always equal high price.

CATS

For kittens, feed wet and dry food 3-4x daily until 3-4 months of age, then switch to 2-3x daily through adulthood.





Q Will spaying or neutering cause my pet to become overweight and lazy?

A Spaying or neutering your pet will not necessarily make your pet become overweight and lazy. Heredity, diet, and how much and what type of exercise has more influence on the weight and attitude of your pet than does the surgery.

Q Is spaying or neutering dangerous?

A There is always a risk while a patient is under general anesthesia, whether the patient is human or animal. Veterinary procedures are very similar to human medical procedures. The risk is very small in healthy animals; and we take extra precautions for your pet's comfort, safety, and recovery.

Q Should I wait until my pet has had a litter?

A The answer to this question is NO.

Q When is the best time to have my pet undergo this procedure?

A The best age for spaying and neutering is around five months of age. The first heat cycle in a female cat usually occurs around this time. Neutering your pet prevents many undesirable behavior patterns.



BENEFITS OF SPAYING

- Eliminates Heat Cycles
- Prevents Accidental Pregnancies
- Significantly Reduces Undesirable Behavior
- Prevents Uterine Infections & Other Common Diseases In Pets
- Significantly Reduces Mammary Tumors



BENEFITS OF NEUTERING

- Significantly Reduces Prostate & Testicular Disease or Cancer
- Reduces Undesirable Behavior
- Reduces Urine Odor In Male Cats





CERES VETERINARY CLINIC

209-538-1911

3018 E. Whitmore Ave, Ceres, CA 95307

Monday – Friday

7:30am to 6:00pm

Saturday & Sunday

Closed

For emergencies outside of our business hours, please contact one of the following emergency hospitals.



Standiford Veterinary Center

209-527-8844

1520 Standiford Ave
Modesto, CA 95350

Taylor Veterinary Hospital

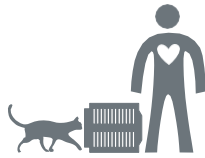
209-669-8600

1231 W. Taylor Rd
Turlock, CA 95382





Many loving cat owners discover the hard way that a kitty who showers them with affection every day can turn into a snarling, scheming wildcat once it's time to visit the vet. Take a 4-month-old kitten, Schmoozer. Schmoozer firmly believes he is the master of his domain, and that includes deciding if and when he will go into his super deluxe kitty carrier. When it comes to a trip to the vet, Schmoozer has a very simple philosophy: "I am Cat; Cat does not belong in carrier." With that and many stories, trials and tribulations, we've developed the Schmoozer-tested solutions for winning the cat carrier war.



6 TIPS TO WINNING THE CAT CARRIER WAR

- 1 Leave the cat carrier in an open place.**

Hiding the carrier and then bringing it out signals to a clever cat that it's time to play David Copperfield. Schmoozer now casually strolls into and out of HIS carrier, even occasionally dragging one of his favorite, much-mangled toys into it—you know, to show it who's boss.
- 2 Do some "in-house" carrier training.**

Some cat parents feed their cat an occasional meal or treat inside the carrier, or play games, such as "fetch the catnip mousy" by tossing a favored toy in. Once their cat is inside, they gently close the door, reopening it in five minutes, and report that these trial runs make the real process less painful.
- 3 Place a towel or small blanket upon which your cat often sleeps inside the carrier.**

When it's time to put your cat in his carrier, wrap him in his special blanket and slide them both in. The familiar scent is soothing and might also help diminish those painful cries. You can apply Feliway pheromone on the blanket or towel to help with calming.
- 4 Try a different type of carrier.**

Many people swear by a carrier with a door in the top. That way, they can lift and lower their cat into the carrier more easily than through the side (front door).
- 5 Remove escape routes.**

Keep the carrier in a bathroom cupboard or small room. When it's time for a trip in the kitty taxi, kitty is carried into the bathroom or small room and the door is closed, reducing the number of cumbersome places to escape and hide.
- 6 If you have more than one cat, use separate carriers.**

Even kitties who sleep together and wash each other tend to prefer their own kitty taxi.





Socializing a new cat with your family takes plenty of patience. Even an adult cat adopted from an animal shelter may be frightened, shy, or unsure of her new housemates, no matter how welcoming they are. Here's how to give your new companion plenty of time and space to become acquainted with her new home and the people who live there.

- 1. Let them 'map' it out:** your job during cat socialization is to see things from your cat's point of view: They're frightened, in a strange environment inhabited by "giants" (you and your family) who always want to hug them and scoop her up. This can be overwhelming, especially for timid cats.

With this in mind, instruct your family to keep a safe distance as they make their way around the house. They need time to smell, investigate, and ultimately identify safe places they like to escape to for a bit. This allows them to develop their own internal "map" of the house by learning whose room belongs to whom.

- 2. The gentle giant at the very beginning:** everyone should sit quietly or go about their business. If your cat comes to you, place your hand down slowly to allow them to sniff. Moving quietly, start petting your new cat on the back.

If they allow it, stroking their cheeks is also a fine way to greet them as they rub their scent onto you, thus marking you as their property. Watch their tail for signs of distress or affection; cat tails can tell you how they're feeling.

- 3. There's the rub:** if your cat has been hidden away for a while, or hasn't seen certain people for some time, they may be fearful around them as if they're new again. Make sure your family and friends let them sniff them at their leisure—cat behaviorist Marilyn Krieger suggests extending an index finger to start. It may take them a few minutes to connect (or reconnect) that scent with a special ally.

Nonetheless, they will let you know when the connection is made by rubbing against you, purring, or giving the happy welcome-back "chirp" that some cats give when saying hello to someone they haven't seen in a long time.

- 4. Offer a safe place:** cat socialization should always include a safe place for them to go if they become frightened—not just when they are new to the home. You should leave the crate or carrier in the room at the start so they have a place to retreat to if they are startled. Place a towel or something soft inside so they can snuggle up. A cardboard box with a door cut out for easy entrance and exit is also a simple refuge to help a socializing cat develop confidence in you over time.



SOCIALIZING: YOUR KITTEN



- 5. Reward social behavior, ignore the rest:** when your cat comes out to investigate you and your family, greet her with praise, treats, and gentle strokes. If they hide just ignore them instead of chasing after the. It's important to reward desirable behavior and simply ignore undesirable responses during the ongoing cat socialization process. The more receptive you are to their affection when they are ready to give it, the less shy they will be.
- 6. Gain trust through a routine:** cat socialization is easier when they can rely on the casual nature of others right from the start. This allows them to find security in knowing what to expect from guests and other residents of the home. Create a routine of petting and feeding as you host relatives they may see regularly. This can make strangers more approachable and easier for them to remember. Feed them at regular intervals will let them know they can rely on you as well, which in turn will make them feel less vulnerable. Food, as you can imagine, is a great motivator when building a healthy relationship.

Spend as much time as possible around your cat without directly interacting with them; don't pressure them to play or come to you. Watch television in the same room or read a book. As long as you stay in common places, they will be confident enough to come and join you eventually.

It may be cliché but take it slow. Cats are like people in at least one way: They can be outgoing, shy, aggressive, and passive. Depending on your cat's unique personality, they may warm up to the family quickly or it may take them several days. Let them set the pace, and never force them to accept affection she doesn't want to give.



SHEDDING: TIPS TO REDUCE SHEDDING



We all love our pets, but we do not love the fur they leave all over our homes and on us. Here are some tips to reduce shedding:

BATHING & GROOMING

Brush your pet regularly. Regular brushing reduces shedding, helps to reduce the undercoat without damaging the top-coat, and helps to bring out the pet's natural oils, promoting healthy skin and a shiny topcoat. Start brushing at a very young age to get your pet used to the sensation.

Bathe your pet as needed with a mild pet shampoo. Dogs and cats benefit from bathing and grooming. A clean pet gets petted more and therefore a clean pet is a happy pet.

DIET

Provide a high-quality diet—look for foods that contain vitamins E and C (tocopherals and ascorbic acid) as a preservative rather than BHT, BHA, and ethoxyquin.

SUPPLEMENTS

Supplements you give to your animal should be tailored to them. Please consult with your Heartfelt veterinarian..



VACCINES: KITTEN CARE SCHEDULE



Please note not all vaccines are for all pets. Your veterinarian will discuss with you the vaccinations that are right for your pet and its lifestyle. In addition to the schedule below, we recommend year-round flea and tick prevention.

8 WEEKS	12 WEEKS	16 WEEKS	5-6 MONTHS	1+ YEAR
1st FVRCP (Feline Rhinotracheitis, Calicivirus, & Panleukopenia)	2nd FVRCP (Feline Rhinotracheitis, Calicivirus, & Panleukopenia)	3rd FVRCP (Feline Rhinotracheitis, Calicivirus, & Panleukopenia)	Spay or Neuter Procedure ID/ Microchip	Rabies Vaccine Fecal Intestinal Parasite Screen
Fecal Intestinal Parasite Screen	FIV/Feline Leukemia Test	Rabies Vaccine	Flea/Tick Preventative	FVRCP (Feline Rhinotracheitis, Calicivirus, & Panleukopenia)
Deworming Treatment	1st FeLV Vaccine (if needed)	2nd FeLV Vaccine (if needed)		FeLV Vaccine (if needed)
Consider Pet Health Insurance & Preventive Plan	Flea/Tick Preventative	Flea/Tick Preventative		Flea/Tick Preventative
Flea/Tick Preventative				



HOME HAZARDS: BE MINDFUL OF THESE



GENERAL HOME HAZARDS

Plants*	Lead	Fire Places
Drugs, Medicine, Vitamins	Wax	Fire Pits & Grills
Fabric Softener	Cotton Swabs	Compost
Mothballs	Pins, Needles, Tacks Paper Clips	Fertilizers & Mulch
Bleach	Rubber Bands	Algae
Disinfectants, Detergents, & Cleaning Products	Hair Pins & Fasteners	Bodies of Water
Solvents & Removers	Twists & Ties	Sinks & Tubs
Potpourri	String, Yarn, Dental Floss	Washers & Dryers
Tobacco Products	Buttons	Toilets
Lighter Fluid	Coins	Doors & Windows
Gasoline	Small Balls/Toys	Balconies
Oil & Antifreeze/Coolant	Batteries	Fences & Gates
De-icing Salts	Electric Cords	Branches & Sticks
Pesticides, Insect or Rodent Traps & Bait	Glass & Sharp Objects	



HARMFUL FOODS

Avocados (pits)	Grapes & Raisins	Moldy/Spoiled Foods
Chocolate	Macadamia Nuts	Fatty Foods
Coffee	Tea Leaves	Raw Yeast
Onions	Alcohol	Gum, Candies, & Foods
Garlic	Salt	Sweetened with Xylitol

For more information:

www.asPCA.org/pet-care/animal-poison-control/toxic-and-non-toxic-plants





PLANT HAZARDS

Aloe	Corn Flower Crocus	Ferns (Most Forms)	Marble Queen	Pokeweed
Amaryllis	Castor Bean	Gladiolas	Morning Glory	Poppy
Andromeda Japonica	Caladium	Golden Pothos	Mother In Law	Potato
Avocado	Ceriman	Golden Glow	Mountain Laurel	Red Emerald
Asparagus Fern	Clematis	Heavenly Bamboo	Mistletoe	Rhododendron
Australian Nut	Cordatum	Honeysuckle	Monkshood	Ribbon Plant
Autumn Crocus	Corn Plant	Hurricane Plant	Mushrooms	Rhubarb
Azalea	Cycads	Hyacinth	Narcissus	Sage Palm
Anemone	Cyclamen	Hydrangea	Nephthysis	Satin Pothos
Apricot	Cactus	Henbane	Nightshade	Scheffera
Arrow Grass	Cherry (Most Forms)	Hemlock	Nutmeg	Striped Dracaena
Buttercup	Chrysanthemum	Horse Chestnut	Oleander	Sweetheart Ivy
Belladonna	Daphne	Iris	Panda	Scotch Broom
Bird of Paradise	Daffodil	Ivy (Most Forms)	Philodendron	Skunk Cabbage
Bittersweet	Delphinium	Jerusalem Cherry	Poison Hemlock	Star Of Bethlehem
Black Locust	Dieffenbachia	Jimson Weed	Precatory Bean	Sweet Pea
Burning Bush	Dumbcane	Jack In The Pulpit	Privet	Tulip
Buckeye	Euonymus	Japanese Plum	Peach	Tobacco
Buddhist Pine	Eucalyptus	Java Beans	Pear	Tomato
Balsam	Elephant Ears	Jonquil	Peony	Virginia Creeper
Baneberry	Fiddle Leaf Philodendron	Kalanchoe	Periwinkle	Water Hemlock
Black-Eyed Susan	Flax	Lantana	Pimpernel	Wisteria
Bleeding Heart	Four O-Clock	Lilies (Most Forms)	Poinsettia	Wild Barley
Bloodroot	Foxglove	Lupine	Poison Ivy	Yew
Boxwood		Locoweed	Poison Oak	

For more information:

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VALENTINE'S DAY

Many types of flowers and plants found in bouquets are harmful to dogs and cats if they are ingested (see our list of hazardous plants).

Chocolate can cause vomiting, diarrhea, hyperactivity, abnormal heart rhythm, seizures, and in severe cases chocolate poisoning can be fatal (see our list of harmful foods).

EASTER

Fake grass may look appetizing to your pets, but it could cause them to choke or obstruct their intestines if ingested.

Small toys and plastic Easter eggs can cause your pet to choke or damage their intestinal tract.

Chocolate can cause vomiting, diarrhea, hyperactivity, abnormal heart rhythm, seizures, and in severe cases chocolate poisoning can be fatal. Xylitol (artificial sweetener) in candy and gum is toxic to your pet (see our list of harmful foods).

4TH OF JULY

Fireworks can scare your pets, making them highly nervous or even run off. Fireworks can also cause serious injuries if detonated near your pet. If ingested, they are toxic.

With more people and food around during picnics and parties, be mindful of food accessible to your pet (see our list of harmful foods).

HALLOWEEN

Repeatedly opening doors for trick-or-treaters can increase the chances of your pet running out. If your pet likes to run out or is not friendly to other people, consider crating or keeping them in a secure area.

Pets are naturally curious and may be attracted to lights and flames. Dogs and cats could get burned on candles or knock them over and cause a fire.

Chocolate can cause vomiting, diarrhea, hyperactivity, abnormal heart rhythm, seizures, and in severe cases chocolate poisoning can be fatal. Xylitol (artificial sweetener) in candy, gum and mints is toxic to your pet (see our list of harmful foods).

THANKSGIVING

Animal bones, especially turkey, chicken, and other small animals, are very different from the large bones you find in the pet store. These small bones splinter easily and can cause serious internal damage if swallowed. Never give them to your pet.

Your pet will most likely become curious when they smell something cooking. Keep an eye on hot containers so that your pet does not tip them over and get burned.

There are many foods that are dangerous to your pet (see our list of harmful foods).





CHRISTMAS

Holiday plants like poinsettia, holly, lilies and mistletoe are all toxic to dogs and cats. (see our list of harmful plants).

Ribbons may look adorable on your pet but placing them around your pet's neck may cause them to choke. If swallowed, your pet could choke, or it could cause internal trauma.

Antique bubbling lights are attractive decorations, but may contain methylene chloride, which is a highly toxic chemical.

Fire salts contain chemicals that could be harmful to your pets.

Angel hair is a form of spun glass and can be irritating to the eyes and skin and could cause intestinal obstruction if eaten.

Christmas tree water containing preservatives or stagnant water could result in stomach upset if ingested. Styrofoam can cause your pets to choke if swallowed.

Ornaments can look like toys to your pet, but they can cause serious injury, especially if your pet breaks or swallows them.

Tinsel can cause choking or internal trauma if swallowed.

Pets are naturally curious and may be attracted to lights and flames. Dogs and cats could get burned on candles or knock them over and cause a fire.

Your pet will most likely become curious when they smell something cooking or baking. Keep an eye on hot containers so that your pet does not tip them over and get burned.

There are many foods that are dangerous to your pet (see our list of harmful foods).

NEW YEAR'S EVE

Balloons and confetti can cause your pet to choke or obstruct their intestines if ingested. Keep an eye on your pets when they're around these items or move them to an area that is not decorated.

New Year's Eve can be a loud holiday. Unfortunately, loud noises can frighten pets and cause them to be overly nervous or run off. Keep your pets away from noise makers, loud music and other sounds that startle them.

Watch your pets around party foods and alcoholic beverages, that are often left unattended. There are many foods that are dangerous to your pet (see our list of harmful foods).



EARLY DETECTION: URINARY TRACT DISEASE



If you are a cat owner, it is important that you are aware of this potentially life-threatening condition. Cats are prone to urinary tract disease, especially at times of stress.

Symptoms include:

- straining to urinate
- increased frequency of urination
- crying and licking at genitals
- vomiting and loss of appetite

In most cases this is a non-bacterial cystitis, like intestinal cystitis in women. In some cases, however, tiny stones may form in the bladder. Female cats are usually able to pass these stones, but males are unable to pass them due to their anatomy. The urine flow becomes blocked, causing the bladder to continue to fill with urine, which backs up to the kidneys. This causes the cat severe pain, increase in kidney levels, and will cause death if left untreated.

It is critical for any male cat showing these signs to see a veterinarian IMMEDIATELY. This is an EMERGENCY.

Female cats showing these signs should also be seen by a veterinarian, but generally this is not a life-threatening situation for them.

Overweight indoor male cats on all dry food diets have the highest incidence of this condition.





Feline Viral Rhinotracheitis

This virus causes upper respiratory tract infection that is easily transmitted from cat to cat, so vaccination is imperative if your pet will come in contact with other cats. Signs may take the form of moderate fever, loss of appetite, sneezing, and/or eye and nasal discharges. Kittens are particularly affected, but this disease can be dangerous in any unprotected cat, as effective treatment is limited. Even if a cat recovers, it can remain a carrier for life.

Feline Calicivirus

This virus is a major cause of upper respiratory tract infection. Widespread and highly contagious, its signs include fever, ulcers and blisters on the tongue, and pneumonia that can range from mild to severe. Treatment of feline calicivirus can be difficult. Even a recovered cat can continue to infect other animals, as well as experience chronic sneezing, runny eyes, and severe gum disease. Vaccination is very important.

Feline Panleukopenia

Also known as feline distemper, feline panleukopenia is caused by a highly resistant virus that can survive up to 1 year outside a cat's body. Most cats will be exposed to it at some point, and infection rates in unprotected cats can run as high as 90% to 100%, making vaccination against this potentially fatal disease essential. Signs include listlessness, diarrhea, vomiting, severe dehydration, fever and death. The vaccine is very effective in preventing the disease, but treatment is difficult and expensive.

Rabies

This incurable disease affects the central nervous system of almost all mammals, including humans. It spreads through contact with the saliva of infected animals through bites or any break in the skin. Many municipalities require that cats receive regular rabies vaccinations.



IMPORTANT TESTS: FOR YOUR CAT



Fecal Testing

Cats may carry internal parasites that are not often evident in the stool. A sample once or twice yearly, based on exposure, will allow us to test for parasites and treat appropriately.

Feline (FeLV) “AIDS”

FeLV infection can result in many serious health problems—from cancers such as leukemia to a wide range of secondary infections. In fact, FeLV is the leading cause of death from infectious disease in North American cats. After initial exposure, a cat may show no signs for months or years.

Feline Leukemia Virus (FeLV) Transmission occurs from exposure to the saliva, urine, feces and milk of infected cats. Cat to cat transfer of virus may occur from a bite wound, during mutual grooming, and rarely through shared litter boxes and feeding dishes. An infected mother may also transfer virus to her kittens.

Testing is available to determine the FeLV status of your cat. In most cases a quick in-house ELISA (enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay) test will determine the presence of the virus. In some cases, the doctor will order an IFA (indirect immunofluorescent antibody assay) for a more complicated case.

Keeping a cat indoors will eliminate the possibility of exposure but for those cats that go outside an effective vaccine is available. If your cat is likely to come in contact with infected cats, vaccination against this potentially fatal disease is highly recommended. This disease is not contagious to humans.

For more information about these tests, visit: www.vet.cornell.edu/fhc

Feline Immunodeficiency Viruses

Cats who are infected with feline immunodeficiency virus (FIV) may not show symptoms until years after the initial infection occurred. Although the virus is slow-acting, a cat's immune system is severely weakened once the disease takes hold. This makes the cat susceptible to various secondary infections.

Although any feline is susceptible, free-roaming, outdoor intact male cats who fight most frequently contract the disease. Cats who live indoors are the least likely to be infected.

Many people confuse FIV with feline leukemia virus (FeLV). Although these diseases are in the same retrovirus family and cause many similar secondary conditions FeLV and FIV are different diseases.

