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## KITTEN INFORMATION SHEET

Greenbay Vets are committed to the best possible patient and client care. Our staff are friendly and approachable and will be happy to help you with any queries you may have. Please feel free to discuss any problems with the vet, or telephone for advice from one of our experienced nursing staff.

We are proud to be a certified Cat Friendly Clinic and do our utmost to make sure your cat's experiences with us are as positive as possible. The International Cat Care website <https://icatcare.org/> is a fantastic resource for cat health advice and also tips on reducing stress when bringing your cat to the vets.

### **Keeping Your Kitten Happy**

Your kitten will love to play, and this is something you should carry on with as they get older. Water bowls should be available in several locations throughout the house and placed away from food bowls. Litter trays should be positioned in quiet areas, away from food and water. Ideally there should be one tray for each cat in the household, plus one extra. Cats like to have high places to observe from, private places to rest away from the chaos of the family home and warm places to sleep.

### **Vaccinations**

Your kitten will need a course of 2 injections, 3-4 weeks apart, to protect him/her from cat flu, enteritis (panleukopenia) and Feline Leukaemia Virus (if you decide to vaccinate your cat against leukaemia). Feline Leukaemia Virus is spread between cats by contact, so the vaccine is recommended if your kitten will be going outdoors when he/she is older or mixing with other cats. He/she can go out two weeks after the final injection, however it may be safer to wait until your kitten is older and has been neutered before letting them out. Your kitten will require yearly boosters to keep the vaccinations up to date. More information about vaccinations can be found on our website.

### **Worming and Flea Treatment**

The most common worms cats can get are called roundworms and tapeworms. Your kitten should be given worming treatment every 2 weeks starting from 3 weeks of age until they are 12 weeks old. Then worming should be done every month until they reach 6 months, and thereafter dependent on lifestyle but at least every 6 months. All cats, including indoor ones, should be treated for fleas all year round. Effective prevention is much simpler than curing an infestation. There is a wide range of products available – prescription treatments are the most effective and can only be prescribed by a veterinary surgeon to animals under their care. The vet will advise you about which products are best for your kitten. More info can be found on our website.

### **Neutering**

If you are not intending to breed from your cat, then we recommend you get them neutered. This is called spaying in a female cat and is an ovariohysterectomy, thus preventing unwanted pregnancies. Cats can become pregnant from 5 months old; it is not necessary for a female cat to have a litter before she is spayed. The operation in male cats is called castration and involves removing both testicles. Castration prevents roaming, reducing the risk of the cat being run over, and helps to decrease spraying, and aggression towards other cats. Both operations can be performed from 5 months of age at either of our surgeries. If you have any questions, please speak to a vet or member of staff.

### **Microchipping**

This is a permanent form of identification. The microchip is about the size of a grain of rice and is inserted into the scruff of your kitten's neck, like an injection. If your cat is found and taken to a veterinary surgery, police station, rescue centre etc. then the microchip enables them to be identified and returned to you, even if they have lost their collar. The vet will advise you when the best time to place the microchip will be. It is vital to keep your contact details up to date on the microchip database.

### **Diet/Nutrition**

It is very difficult to design a balanced diet for your kitten based on home-cooked ingredients. The easiest way to give your kitten a balanced diet is to feed him/her a proprietary kitten diet. We recommend Hill's Vet Essentials Kitten diet, which is available at the surgery. This is a complete cat food which should be fed for the first 6 months of your kitten's life before moving onto the adult diet. Please ask about our loyalty scheme for money off Hill's food.

### **Dental Care**

It is a good idea to start caring for your kitten's teeth when they are young. As your kitten gets older plaque and tartar will start to form on his/her teeth and most older cats need their teeth cleaned and polished at some point in their lives. Regular tooth brushing can help to stop plaque forming on their teeth. If you get your kitten used to having his/her teeth brushed when they are young, then you may be able to do this all through their life. The vet or nurse will be able to discuss how to accustom your kitten to this and other options which are available to care for your kitten's teeth.

### **Socialisation**

Your kitten's first 6 months of life are the best time to socialise him/her with different people, places and situations. It is essential to introduce your kitten to different types of people (men, women, children, elderly and disabled people) while they are young to give them confidence and prevent them becoming easily frightened/nervous. It is also helpful to practice 'vet examinations' at home - to get your kitten used to having his/her eyes, nose, teeth and paws examined/touched; this makes a trip to the vets much less stressful! If your kitten is long-haired then it is best to start grooming and brushing them as young as possible. If your kitten will be living with other pets, then it is a good idea to socialise them whilst they are young.

### **Pet insurance**

Greenbay Vets strongly recommend that you consider insuring your pet. There are many different pet insurance companies and different policies available. Check whether your policy provides 'lifetime' cover, so that if your cat develops a condition which will require regular treatment throughout its life, e.g. diabetes, the insurance company will continue to pay for the condition. It is easy to plan for routine costs such as boosters, but it can be a nasty shock if your cat needs urgent treatment and you have to pay the veterinary fees! There is an information sheet about pet insurance on our website, or available on request.

**We are here with the aim of keeping your cat happy and healthy. Many problems can be prevented by giving your kitten the best start in life and practising preventative care. If you have any queries or concerns, our staff will be happy to help.**