



CONGRATULATIONS on the arrival of a new kitten to your home. All of us here at The George Veterinary Group hope that have many happy and healthy years together.

Vaccination

We routinely vaccinate kittens at 9 and 12 weeks of age. Up until this time, they will have a degree of protection from infectious diseases through the colostrum (first milk) from their mother. This protection begins to wane from 2 months onwards though.

Kittens are vaccinated against a range of infectious diseases including: Cat Flu complex (Feline Herpesvirus and feline Calicivirus), Leukaemia (Feline Leukaemia virus – FeLV) and Feline Infectious Enteritis/Panleucopenia (Feline Parvovirus). They are fully immune 1 week after their second vaccination and are then safe to explore.

A booster vaccination is then needed every year, which also provides a good opportunity for us to give your cat a health check.

Worming

All kittens have worms regardless of the conditions into which they are born. This is because the main roundworm that affects cats, *Toxocara cati*, passes to the kitten while it is still in the uterus, and even after birth in the milk.

Therefore, we advise that kittens are wormed every 2 weeks until they are 12 weeks old; then every month until 6 months old. Adults should be routinely wormed every three months unless there are very young children or people with poor immune systems in the household, in which case we will recommend more frequent worming.

Besides causing damage to the intestine and potentially lungs, the eggs, which are passed in the faeces, are a **public health concern**. The migrating egg larvae that hatch can cause blindness in children who may play in areas where cats defecate. Many cats hunt and these will also become infected with tapeworms from their prey.

There are a number of good wormers available from us, there are even 'drop on' wormers available to treat the more fractious cats against both roundworms and tapeworms.

Fleas

Fleas are a potentially huge and expensive problem, which can very easily (and cheaply) be prevented. It is always best to keep up regular flea treatment as the majority of a fleas life



cycle is spent in your home and *not on your pet*. The types of flea preventative treatments vary and we are happy to advise you about which would best suit your needs.

Some treatments kill the eggs in the environment in which the cat lives and prevents re-infection of your cat, while others aim to kill the flea at several stages in its life cycle.

All cats will pick up fleas at some stage even if they have been treated; fleas firstly need to bite in order to ingest the product and die. They can also be a problem at any time of the year, not just the spring and summer months.

Feeding

Sensible feeding of the young animal is extremely important. Some problems are caused by not meeting its nutritional requirement or conversely exceeding it. In general, we advise that you aim for an average growth rate with a quality brand food. Fat kittens, become fat cats and the excess fatty tissue laid down in the first year is much more difficult to lose than any fat put down in adulthood.

To ensure a correct growth rate and weight gain we advise that you feed strict portion-controlled meals of high energy density complete diet until adult body size is reached. Supplementation of a complete diet is **not necessary**.

The diet should be advertised as '*Kitten*' or '*Growth*'. We recommend HILLS Kitten or ROYAL CANIN Growth as both of these diets are scientifically formulated to provide the best start in life for your pet.

Socialisation

Kittens have a very early socialisation period which means a lot of this time is spent with the breeder. It is still important to socialise your kitten to different people coming and going and objects around the home, however, keep in mind that kittens tend to be very shy and scared of new experiences so they should be left to investigate in their own time.

Kittens and adult cats need plenty of secure places to hide if they are frightened by a new experience so ensure you have plenty of hide outs around the home. These should be in different locations and slightly above ground level as cats like to view things from a height.

Identification

There is now a means of identifying pets that is invisible, permanent, safe, reasonable priced and tamper-proof. It is called '*microchipping*'. A microchip is approximately the size of a grain of rice and is inserted under the skin on the scuff of the neck in a similar fashion to a

vaccination injection. All lost animals that are bought into the vets, police and animal shelters are routinely scanned for the presence of a microchip. Each chip has an individual barcode that corresponds to your details which are registered and held on the national database so that you can be contacted when your animal has been found. Several cases

have been recorded of pets being re-united with their worried owners after having been missing for six months. **You must remember to update your contact details** with the chip company if you move house.

Microchipping is also an important part of the pet travel scheme.

Insurance

We are proud to say that the standard of veterinary care available to animals these days is extremely high, even to the extent of surpassing the care we receive ourselves. However, there is no NHS available for animals and good veterinary care is not cheap. When you consider that every one in three animals requires treatment as a result of an accident or illness, **we strongly recommend taking out pet insurance**. There are a lot of different companies that offer a range of policies, the best thing is to shop around and try to get a lifelong policy. It is always distressing when a situation arises where the treatment required is not possible due to financial constraints: with insurance, you do not need to worry about the financial aspect of the treatment.

Ask at reception for helpful hints and tips on insuring your kitten.



Neutering

Kittens can, in theory, start to explore the outside world 1 week after their second vaccination, however, we recommend that kittens are only allowed supervised visits into the garden or secure area until they have been neutered.

Female cats can have a litter of kittens from as early as 6 months of age. Male cats will go wandering in search of females from an early age and may get lost. Male cats will also become very territorial and may spray strong smelling urine around the house in order to mark their territory.

Therefore we recommend neutering both male and female kittens from 5-6 months of age.

Dental Care

Kittens have two sets of teeth in their life time: deciduous (baby teeth) and adult. The Deciduous teeth fall out at around 4-6 months to make way for the adult teeth coming through.

It is very difficult to clean a cat's teeth. However, if it is not done regularly there will be a build up of plaque and tartar causing severe dental disease. If this happens then cats will require an anaesthetic in order to scale and polish the teeth and may result in removals of unhealthy teeth.

We therefore recommend that teeth cleaning should be introduced at an early age to prevent the occurrence of dental disease. Brushing is the best thing and nothing beats it. However, if it really is not an option for your kitten then there are other products that will help. If you would more information then please ask at reception or one of the nursing team.



Please contact us if you have any questions or concerns on 01666 823165.

You can also join in the fun on Facebook at

www.facebook.com/georgevethospital

We look forward to watching your kitten grow into a happy and healthy cat.

