

# Heathcote Veterinary Clinic

1335b Princes Hwy  
Heathcote 2233  
Telephone (02) 9520 0655  
Fax: (02) 9520 7755



Hospital Hours  
Monday to Friday 9.00am – 7.00pm  
Saturday from 9.00am  
Sunday 9.00am – 12.00pm

## Your New Kitten

### Congratulations on the purchase of your new kitten!

The team at Heathcote Veterinary Clinic wish to congratulate you on your new addition to the family. We hope that you will have many years of joy with your new cat. The health and wellbeing of your pet is our highest priority and so we have put together a few notes on the most important veterinary and behavioural aspects of cat ownership to help you maximise the pleasure you get from your new pet. During the initial vaccination and consultation we will be more than happy to discuss these aspects and any other questions you may have about your new kitten.

### Feeding

Nutrition is one of the most important factors that contributes to a happy, healthy cat. At Heathcote Veterinary Clinic we take your pets nutrition very seriously and will be happy to help you make the right choice for your new kitten and his changing requirements as he/she matures.

#### 1. RAW BONES

Raw bones are great for cleaning cat's teeth. Raw chicken necks and wings are ideal. They can be given everyday but at least twice weekly will help maintain your cats dental health.

#### 2. DRY CAT FOOD

This component of the diet is essential as it ensures your cat receives the correct balance of vitamins and minerals. This is especially important in kittens that need the correct amount of calcium and phosphorus for their growing bones and development. Kittens require a "kitten" diet for the first 12 months of life. In addition, the hard consistency of dry kibble is important in developing the chewing habit, while leaving little residue on the teeth. We recommend a premium pet food product such as Advance, Eukanuba or Royal Canin. These premium foods lower the risk of lower urinary tract disease and a smaller amount of this feed is used compared to ordinary supermarket dry foods as it is better quality. These foods are also formulated to reduce the size of stools produced. Cats must have dry food throughout their life.

#### 3. RAW MEAT

Tough meats should be given in large chew sized portions to avoid choking. Examples include ox tongue, heart and stewing meat/off cuts.

#### 4. WATER

Always provide plenty of fresh water for your cat to maintain good digestive and urinary health. A dehydrated cat is not a happy cat! Never feed your kitten cows milk as most cats are lactose intolerant.

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## **Vaccinations**

F3 vaccinations offer protection against Cat flu and Feline enteritis. Most cases (~90%) of Cat flu are caused by the Feline Herpesvirus and Feline Calicivirus. They are highly contagious and cause fever, loss of appetite, sneezing, coughing, runny eyes and nose, and mouth ulcers. Cats spread the disease even after recovery from their symptoms. Feline Enteritis virus is also highly contagious. Diarrhoea and vomiting can be uncontrollable and the abdomen will become extremely painful. Severe dehydration, blood loss and death may result from infection with this virus.

### **Vaccination Protocol:**

1 <sup>st</sup> Vaccination	F3 at 6-8 weeks of age.
2 <sup>nd</sup> Vaccination	F3 at 12-14 weeks of age.
3 <sup>rd</sup> Vaccination	F3 at 16-18 weeks of age.
4 <sup>th</sup> Vaccination	Annually for the rest of your cat's life.

We will send out a reminder to your home address when the yearly vaccination is due.

Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV) vaccination is also available. Similar to human AIDS virus, this virus attacks the immune system leaving your cat susceptible to numerous diseases. Some cats are more at risk of this virus than others so discuss these factors with your veterinarian.

## **Worming**

Worming is required every 2 weeks from birth until your kitten is 12 weeks old, then monthly until 6 months of age. Beyond 6 months of age your kitten will need to be wormed every 3 months for the rest of their lives. An allwormer such as Felix Paste or Popantel Allwormer Tablets cover all intestinal worms. There are also topical applications available if the idea of giving your kitten a tablet is a bit daunting at first! Applications such as Revolution are discussed below.

## **Flea Treatment and Prevention**

Fleas are just as big a problem for cats as they are for dogs. It is important to use a flea treatment on your kitten regularly and maintain it throughout the year. Several products are available on the market and it is important to choose one that suits your needs.

Revolution is an all round parasite treatment for cats applied to the skin on the back of the neck monthly. It prevents fleas, heartworm, ear mites, and intestinal worms. It doesn't do tapeworm however, so if your kitten hunts or has a flea burden use a tapeworm tablet as well.

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It is important to check with the vet or nurse before using a product on very young kittens as some products can be harmful.

## **Ticks**

Living on the beautiful East coast of Australia brings many joys to us all however, this region, especially around the Sutherland Shire brings with it a few perils for our beloved pets. The Paralysis tick is light steel blue in colour and harbours a very toxic venom. Although tick season is usually in the warmer months from September through to March it is not uncommon for our clinic to see tick paralysis cases even in the middle of Winter! Daily searching of your pet particularly in peak season is a MUST with the majority of ticks found on the front half of the body around the neck, head and shoulder regions and under their collar.

## **Symptoms**

The symptoms of tick paralysis can vary however commonly seen signs include:

1. No interest in eating and lethargy.
2. There may be a change in your cat's meow.
3. An exaggerated swallowing action that may even sound like the animal is trying to clear his/her throat or retch.
4. Regurgitation/vomiting
5. Wobbliness in his/her hindlimbs or walk. Your pet may not be able to jump as well as usual or may keep sitting down.
6. Difficulty breathing often characterised by open mouth breathing.

## **What to do**

If you find a tick and there are NO SIGNS, simply remove the tick by twisting it out with a pair of tweezers. Save the tick for identification purposes if possible and keep searching as there may be more than one!

Removal of the tick does not guarantee that symptoms will not develop. Keep your kitten/cat confined for the next 24 hours and monitor closely. Heat and activity make the toxin act so try to keep your cat calm and cool.

If your pet shows ANY OF THE ABOVE SYMPTOMS call us IMMEDIATELY.

The sooner we are able to treat your pet for paralysis the better chance it has of living. Ticks kill pets so do not hesitate to call us if you suspect your cat has a tick even if you have been unable to find it.

## **Tick prevention**

Unfortunately no one product is registered as a tick prevention in cats. We recommend Proban tablets, which are given every day.

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We recommend that you perform daily searches for ticks on your cat. No product is 100% effective, unfortunately, often the best prevention is searching for them yourself (however your cat will enjoy the cuddle).

## **Desexing**

We desex kittens from 3 months of age but recommend waiting until they are 6 months old. Desexing is a day procedure – your kitten will come into hospital in the morning and will go home that afternoon. Our desexing cost includes overnight pain relief, all anaesthetic costs, a free recheck if needed and free suture removal 10 days after the surgery. Unless you are going to breed from your cat, we recommend desexing early. As well as being cheaper to register at your local council, kittens have very rapid recoveries from the surgery. Female cats can fall pregnant at a very young age and this can be dangerous for a young mother. We also see a number of behaviour related problems and diseases that can be prevented with desexing.

At the time of desexing we also offer pre-anaesthetic blood testing to give us an overall picture of your pet's health. Unlike humans, cats do not tell us when they are feeling ill until it is quite late. Pre-anaesthetic testing helps us to pick up health problems which may not be evident on physical examination and minimises the risks associated with general anaesthesia. In addition it provides us with baseline values for your pet's health which we keep on file for the lifetime of your pet and which tell us whether your kittens organs have developed and are functioning properly. We can also refer to these results if your cat becomes unwell in the future.

Pre-anaesthetic testing significantly decreases the anaesthetic risk to your kitten and provides you and us with peace of mind.

## **Microchipping and Registration**

Kittens by law must be permanently identified through microchipping by 12 weeks of age. Once they are microchipped and desexed, you are required to register them at the local council on the NSW Companion Animal Register. This is a lifetime registration and one time fee.

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If you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to call our clinic and one of our nurses or veterinarians will be able to help you.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

	Age	Date	Prevention Due	Done
<b>Newborn Regime (6-12 weeks)</b>	6 weeks		1st kitten vaccination (F3)	
			Flea control (Revolution or other)	
			Intestinal all wormer	
			Weight	
	8 weeks		Intestinal all wormer	
			Weight	
	10 weeks		2nd Kitten vaccination (F3)	
			Intestinal all wormer	
			Weight	

	Age	Date	Prevention Due	Done
<b>Kitten Regime (3 - 6 months)</b>			Flea control (Revolution or other)	
			Intestinal all wormer	
			Weight	
	4 months		3rd Kitten vaccination (F3)	
			Intestinal all wormer	
			Weight	
			Intestinal all wormer	
	6 months		Weight	
			Desex	
			Intestinal all wormer	
			Weight	

<b>Adult Regime</b>	Annual vaccination
	Monthly flea treatment
	3 monthly all wormer for intestinal worm control
	Paralysis tick prevention strongly recommended during tick season from September to March