



# Britannia Kingsland

## VETERINARY CLINIC

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### Recommended Wellness Plan - Feline

Congratulations on your new pet! Hopefully, your pet will have good health and provide you many years of companionship. We hope to be able to help you provide the best care and health possible to your new companion. The following are guidelines to give your pet the best chance for optimal health.

- The first visit should be as soon as possible after you get your pet.
- Bring any information about previous health care, medications, diet, fecal testing, vaccinations (type and date given), previous owners or facility, environment, geographical areas they are from and where you might have taken them.
- Bring a stool sample (toonie size or larger) for examination for internal parasites.
- Bring any questions or concerns you have about your pet.
- All pets should have yearly examinations and twice yearly fecal examinations.
- *The Center for Disease Control (CDC)* and the *Companion Animal Parasite Council (CAPC)* recommend monthly internal parasite control for all pets, whether indoors or outdoors. This is to protect humans as well as pets. Indoor pets can get parasites from rodents, insects, mosquitoes and fleas. For more information, refer to the provided websites.

<http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/animals.html>

<http://www.capcvet.org/guidelines/>

- There are many flea, tick, heartworm, and intestinal parasite preventative medications. Discuss the best plan for your pet with the veterinarian.
- Nutrition should be discussed with the veterinarian. Diet and exercise are key to a long, healthy life.

# Vaccination Protocol

At each vaccination visit, the Veterinarian will examine your new kitten. An exam is required before any vaccines are given to ensure your kitten is in good health. This decreases the likelihood of complication or vaccine reactions. Kittens grow very quickly and new problems can arise rapidly.

- Ideally the first vaccination should be given at **8 weeks** of age. It can be given between 6-10 weeks. This vaccine will be given 2 more times to help prevent 4 harmful viruses.

Feline Viral Rhinotracheitis, Calicivirus, Panleukopenia and Chlamydia (FVRCCP)

- The second vaccinations should be given at **12 weeks** of age. This is a booster of the first vaccine (FVRCCP) as well as a Feline Leukemia vaccination (if your cat will be at higher risk; multi cat household or going outdoors).
- The third and last vaccinations should be given at **16 weeks** of age. This is a booster for FVRCCP and Feline Leukemia. The rabies vaccination is also given.
- All vaccinations should be assessed yearly. The vaccine schedule will vary with the lifestyle/exposure of your cat.

## Diseases - Why we vaccinate against them

Disease Name	What does it affect?	How is it spread?	Symptoms
<b>Feline Distemper or Panleukopenia</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Intestinal tract</li> <li>- Bone marrow</li> <li>- Viral disease</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Airborne</li> <li>- Contact with an infected animal or places where the infected animal has been</li> </ul>	Diarrhea, vomiting, severe dehydration, fever and death.
<b>Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Weakens your cat's immune system</li> <li>- Similar in nature to HIV in humans</li> <li>- Viral infection</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Present in bodily fluids - typically passed by direct biting</li> <li>- FIV positive kittens may be born of infected mothers</li> </ul>	Swollen glands, fever, depression, loss of appetite, weight loss, mouth sores and recurrent infections
<b>Feline Infectious Peritonitis (FIP)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Interacts with kitten's immune system</li> <li>- Viral disease</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Most common route of infection is oronasal</li> <li>- Kittens may be infected before birth</li> </ul>	Rough haircoat, fever, loss of appetite, neurological signs, laboured breathing or distended abdomen  Infected cats may not show any signs for a lengthy period of time, and then suddenly turn ill
<b>Feline Leukemia Virus (FeLV)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Inhibits the immune system</li> <li>- Results in various types of cancer and other chronic diseases</li> <li>- Deadly infection</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Present in bodily fluids - typically passed by direct contact through licking, biting, sneezing</li> </ul>	Depression, Fever, loss of appetite, anemia, swollen neck glands and recurring infections  Can be infected for long periods of time before showing symptoms

	- Viral infection		
<b>Rabies</b>	- Infection of the central nervous system - Always fatal	- Through the bite of an infected animal - Humans can be affected	Two phases of disease: 1. Excitatory phase/furious rabies: restless, irritable, unprovoked biting, sensitivity to noise 2. Paralytic phase/dumb rabies: Paralysis, cramps and swallowing difficulties
<b>Upper Respiratory Disease</b>  (Including rhinotracheitis, pneumonitis and calicivirus)	- Respiratory system - Viral disease	- Airborne	Flu-like symptoms, nasal and ocular discharges  Ulcers in the mouth, on the tongue or in the throat

## Other Procedures

### Neuter

What is a neuter? Neutering is an operation done under general anesthesia to remove both of the testicles in male animals.

- Can be done any time after 4 months
- Recommended at **6 months** of age. If they have any retained deciduous (baby) teeth, they can be removed at that time (see Dental section).
- Neutering reduces sexual and aggressive behaviours as well as other undesirable behaviours such as urinary marking.
- Not neutering can lead to physical problems in the future such as diseases of the prostate and testicles. Talk to the veterinarian for more information.

### Spay

What is a spay? A spay or ovariectomy is an operation performed under general anesthesia to remove the uterus and ovaries of female animals. It is a permanent form of birth control and will result in a pet that does not go through heat cycles and can not get pregnant.

- Recommended to spay at **6 months** of age, if any deciduous (baby) teeth need to be removed, it can be done then.
- Cats that are left intact are also at increased risk of bladder infections and developing mammary cancer.

## Dental

- Each year at the annual examination, the teeth will be assessed and recommendations made to keep your pets mouth healthy.
- Dental disease is very common and can start at just 6 months of age. Plaque harbors bacteria, which first erode the gums, and then loosen the teeth. This process is called periodontal disease.
- Your kitten's baby teeth will fall out between 6-8 months of age but you should immediately start teaching your kitten to let you brush, even though the baby teeth will fall out.
- Preventative care should be started as soon as you get your pet (ex. brushing teeth, water additives, dental diet etc.)
- Brushing the teeth is the best way to prevent tartar build up. This can be a pleasant experience for your kitten by using flavoured toothpaste and appropriate brushes.
- Do not use human products as they are not meant to be swallowed and will cause stomach upset.
- Sometimes the baby teeth are in an abnormal position and will prevent the adult teeth from coming into the proper position in the mouth. These teeth need to be removed.
- For more information, talk to the Veterinarian.



## **Feeding**

If your new kitten is thriving on his/her previous diet and it is a good quality diet, then it is a good idea to continue the same food. If not, then give us a call we can help recommend a different diet to try.

We prefer young pets to be on a good quality diet that is formulated for growth. It is also important to feed cat food to cats, never dog food. Cats must be supplemented with the amino acid taurine, which is present in cat food, but not in dog food. It is worth paying a little extra for a good quality diet as reputable manufacturers do a lot of research and have quality control measures in place to ensure that their foods consistently provide all the necessary nutrients in the correct balance. Try not to introduce table foods because they do not satisfy nutritional needs and can cause digestive problems.

### Wet or Dry Food?

It is sometimes nice to have a combination of canned and dry foods as this exposes your pet to different textures of foods so that, if in the future your pet must be on a specific type of food, he will accept the change more readily. Dry food is also an excellent way of reducing tartar build up.



### Schedules

It is best to offer food at scheduled meals throughout the day rather than leaving it out at all times. Animals look forward to their meals, whereas free access to food is unnaturally easy and promotes overeating, obesity, and potential disinterest in their food. Feeding at regular times makes it easier to control food intake.

Feed your kitten six times a day until 6 weeks of age, four times a day until 12 weeks, three times until maturity and then twice daily for life. Leave the food down for ten to fifteen minutes, if they have not consumed all of the food within that time period, remove it until the next meal. This will establish a good meal feeding regime.

## Annual Examinations

Annual visits may reveal underlying conditions that could be affecting the health of your pet. During the exam, the veterinarian will do a complete physical examination. We will discuss diet, exercise, parasite prevention etc. and will answer any questions you may have.

## Litter Boxes

Cats have a natural instinct to bury their waste which helps make litter box training easier. Kittens at a very early age 3-4 weeks will automatically begin to find a place to urinate outside of their sleeping/eating environment. Kittens can be extremely picky about their litter box habits and it's our job to provide for them the right box, litter, location and cleaning schedule.

Make sure your litter box is the appropriate size for your kitten. Remember kittens grow and you may need to buy a bigger box if your cat grows 'fluffier' with age. Covered boxes or those with rims are useful for preventing litter from being kicked over the sides when scratching. Covered boxes do tend to trap odors and need to be cleaned more often. Timid kittens may find the covered boxes scary at first and you may need to leave the lid off for awhile. Never use a covered litter box for a makeshift travel kennel or a place to trap your kitten, he/she may avoid the box and find a new place to urinate.



## Litter Type

There are so many options to choose from when picking litter such as clay, sand, newspaper, sawdust, wheat. Many of these options come in different forms such as clumping, non-clumping, and pellets.

**Clay:** Clay litter is the most common type of litter available and most cats like it. It comes in clumping and non-clumping varieties. The non-clumping requires you to clean them more often than the clumping but tends to track less in the house. Clumping fillers trap the waste into a ball/clump form, making it easy to scoop out of the box. Boxes with clumping litter still needs to be cleaned regularly as the 'clumps' will eventually break down if not cleaned. Some long-haired cats have trouble with clumping litter sticking to their feet so many owners choose not to use it.

**Sand:** Sandbox sand (fine sand) is commonly used in litter boxes. The fine texture is pleasing to cats, especially for declawed cats who have extra sensitive toes. Since sand does not clump, it should be changed out daily.

**Newspaper:** Although a cheaper alternative, it isn't very absorbent and can be very messy. It also doesn't absorb odors well and can stain white paws. Despite its drawbacks, newspaper litter is useful for post-surgical use since it will not stick to wounds.

**Sawdust:** Sawdust litter is very messy and easily gets tracked around the house. It also can cause asthma in animals.

**Wheat:** It's becoming more common, cats like the texture. It's biodegradable so it can be composted. It is also easily digested if your kitten eats it.

### **Litter Box Location**

Don't put litter boxes too close to where your kitten eats or sleeps. It should be in a quiet area away from the normal daily traffic, but not too far away for the kitten to get to. Kittens should be shown where the box is located and occasionally brought to the box until you are sure that they know where it is. Try to keep the box in the same location routinely and if moving put the box in a similar location in the new home.

### **How Many Boxes Do I Need?**

Cats can become protective of their boxes and may not like sharing them with other cats in the home. The litterbox rule is one box for every cat, plus one extra. These boxes should be placed in every cat's personal quiet time location.

### **Cleaning Schedule**

A clean, odorless litter box is the most important issue for young kittens. Kittens will eliminate in other areas of the home if their litter box isn't clean enough to their liking. Routinely wash the pan using a mild cleaner. Cats are sensitive to smell so ammonia-based products or strong disinfectants should be avoided. Waste removal should be done at least every 2 days if not daily.

## **Traveling With Your Pet**

In the car, your cat should always be in the back. Cat carriers are highly recommended as they reduce the risk of injury if you should stop suddenly or are involved in an accident.

When travelling by plane or train, contact the transport company to find out what their regulations are. Contact your hotel to ensure they offer pet friendly accommodations. If you plan to travel outside of North America, contact the embassy of the country to be visited. You will need to know about restrictions such as mandatory vaccinations and parasite prevention. Some vaccines must be administered up to 6 months ahead of time and Rabies titres may need to be checked. For travel into the United States a Rabies certificate and a valid certificate of health may need to be obtained (varies from state to state) and dated within 10 days of travel. Rabies certificates are required for entry into Canada.

## **Pet Insurance**

Most pet insurance companies offer a free trial for 4 weeks. Your breeder or rescue organization may have started one.

We recommend using the trial, you may decline or continue when the trial is over.

Insurance gives you peace of mind for any unexpected bills, especially in the kittens first year of life.

## Internet Information

The internet can be a source of good or bad information. Check out our website [www.calgaryvet.com](http://www.calgaryvet.com) and click 'Resources' tab for a full list of websites we support. Below are a few worth noting.

- [www.veterinarypartner.com](http://www.veterinarypartner.com)
- [www.dogsandticks.com](http://www.dogsandticks.com)
- [www.pethealthnetwork.com](http://www.pethealthnetwork.com)

Please consult the veterinarian before accepting any information found online. We would be happy to share our professional opinions with you regarding the information you collect.

Before you administer **any** over the counter medications, please consult with a veterinarian. Some human medications can be very harmful to pets.