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## ***Congratulations on your new kitten!***

This is such an exciting time for you and your family! We know that the amount of information regarding the care of a new kitten can also be overwhelming. Hopefully this handout will be a helpful reference as we go through your kitten's first veterinary visits. We are always available if you have any questions or concerns regarding your new furry family member's health and wellness. As a mobile veterinarian, we love being able to offer the highest quality of care for your new kitten in the comfort of your home!

### ***Wellness Exams***

At each visit, the veterinarian will perform a thorough examination of your new kitten. This is important to ensure that they are healthy and free of any congenital diseases. We examine each kitten from nose to tail! We will discuss what to expect as they grow and become a loving part of your family. This also is a great time to discuss any questions or concerns you may have about your kitten with the veterinarian.

### ***Vaccinations***

All kittens require core vaccinations starting around 6-8 weeks of age. Until this point, they have been protected by acquired immunity from their mother's milk. This immunity begins to diminish as their own immune systems begin to develop.

When your kitten receives their vaccines, please monitor them closely for a few hours for any potential (yet rare!) vaccine reactions. If you notice any facial swelling, difficulty breathing, lethargy, vomiting, diarrhea or pain at the injection site please call us immediately.

- **FVRCP** [*Feline Viral Rhinotracheitis/Calicivirus/Panleukopenia/Chlamydia*] - This combination vaccine is considered one of the core vaccines for your kitten. These viruses are transmitted between kittens, and some of these viruses are fatal. Kittens should be vaccinated for FVRCP starting at 6-8 weeks

of age then given a booster every 3-4 weeks until at least 16 weeks of age. The final vaccine provides 1 year of immunity.

- **Rabies** - This is considered a core vaccine and is legally required for all cats and dogs. Rabies is a fatal virus transmitted by the saliva of an infected animal bite. The first vaccine is typically administered at their final kitten visit around 16 weeks of age and provides 1 year of immunity.
- **Feline Leukemia Virus [FeLV]** - This is a non-core vaccine and is not recommended for every kitten. FeLV is transmitted through close contact with other infected cats. We recommend this vaccine for cats that will be going outdoors or if you have an FeLV positive cat in your household.

### ***Feline Leukemia Virus & Feline Immunodeficiency Virus Testing***

We recommend all kittens be tested for these viruses that can be transmitted from their mother at birth. Although there is no cure for these diseases, positive cats can still live normal lives. It is important we know their virus status as it affects how their immune system will function. We recommend testing all kittens at their first visit. Most shelters and rescue groups will do this test prior to adoption.

### ***Parasite Prevention***

Fleas, ticks, heartworm, intestinal parasites... oh my! All pets are at potential risk of parasites, both internal and external. Regardless of lifestyle, these risks should be discussed with your veterinarian. Each pet is unique and an individual plan can be tailored to their lifestyle.

- **Heartworm Disease**  
Heartworms are a nasty internal parasite that are transmitted by mosquitoes. A single mosquito bite can lead to a life-threatening heartworm infection. Every cat should be on monthly heartworm prevention year-round, even if they only spend their time indoors.
- **Fleas & Ticks**  
Fleas and ticks are nasty external parasites. Flea and tick prevention recommendations will be tailored to your pet's lifestyle. Both fleas and ticks can carry a variety of infectious diseases, as well as cause painful bites and skin conditions. Fleas cause intestinal tapeworm infections. Some infectious diseases transmitted by external parasites can be life threatening. Fleas and ticks can also create massive infestations in your home, affecting not only your furry family members.

- **Intestinal Parasites**

Intestinal parasites (roundworms, whipworms, hookworms, and tapeworms) are very common in puppies and kittens. This is because they do not have a fully developed immune system. Kittens are most commonly infected when they are nursing, as their mother's milk can transmit parasite eggs. All kittens should go through routine deworming protocols starting around 2-3 weeks of age. We recommend testing a fecal sample to ensure there are no parasites present. Unfortunately, even negative fecal tests do not ensure your pet is parasite free as some of these pesky worms will only periodically shed eggs than can be detected in a fecal sample. This is why we recommend deworming kittens at each of their vaccination appointments.

Our recommended parasite preventative products have been carefully selected based on their safety and effectiveness, they include Revolution Plus and Bravecto Plus. These products are applied topically once a month. They are much more effective than most over the counter product. These products are dosed based on your pet's weight, so we will often start with single monthly doses until your kitten reaches their mature adult weight.

## **Microchipping**

A microchip is the only permanent way to legally identify a pet as your own. A microchip is placed between their shoulders. The unique number associated with this microchip is then registered to you via an online database. If your kitten is ever lost or stolen, a microchip can help them return safely to you.

## **Spaying & Neutering**

We recommend spaying or neutering your kitten around 6 months of age if it has not already been done at the time of adoption. A spay surgery involves removing the female reproductive organs - the uterus and ovaries. A neuter surgery involves removing the male reproductive organs - the testicles. We would love to discuss the best plan for your pet's surgery.

## **Diet**

We recommend all kittens be fed a complete and balanced diet formulated for growth and development. The AAFCO is an organization that oversees the pet food industry, and has created requirements for diet formulations. We always recommend a diet that has been formulated by a veterinary nutritionist. We know that pet food choices can be overwhelming, and often many companies unfortunately focus on marketing

and sales strategies over what is best for your pet's health. We are happy to discuss your pet's individual nutrition requirements, as well as help you choose a food your pet will love and will provide them with the best possible nutrition.

## ***Pet Insurance***

We encourage all owners to consider pet insurance for their new kitten. The best time to insure your kitten is before they have developed any pre-existing conditions. There are many options for coverage, accident only versus an all-encompassing plan. We encourage you to research each company before purchasing to ensure you understand what is included in each plan. We recommend companies such as Healthy Paws, Trupanion, Nationwide, and Embrace. We also recommend checking with your employer to see if they offer pet insurance in conjunction with your other benefits. We would love to discuss any questions you might have regarding pet insurance!

As a new client of Pet Care Professionals we will be there every step of the way as your family welcomes your new furry family member! A mobile vet is a great way to have all of your pet's healthcare right at your doorstep! We look forward to being a trusted part of your kitten's healthy start!