



LIFELONG CARE FOR YOUR CAT

Fort Street Veterinarian



MTWF: 7:00am - 5:30pm
TH: 7:00am - 8:00pm
SAT: 8:00am - 12:00pm

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www.fortstreetvet.com

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Thank you to these sources:
Merck Animal Health,
International Cat Care (formerly the Feline Advisory Bureau),
The Humane Society of the U.S.
and WebMD



You've welcomed a new kitty to your home...Congratulations!

All of us at Fort Street Vet are dedicated to helping you and your new purry companion share as many happy years together as possible.

On our website we have information and resources we hope you find helpful in caring for your pet... some of that info we've included in this pamphlet.



KITTEN BIRTH-6 MONTHS

KITTEN EXAM: At this first exam you, your pet and your vet begin to form the relationship that will last for your kitty's lifetime. We'll talk about ways you can keep your kitten healthy as he or she grows.

- We'll assess overall wellness, congenital defects, intestinal parasites and feline leukemia virus (*FeLV*).
- **Between 6 - 17 weeks of age**, your kitten should be given vaccinations for feline viral rhinotracheitis (*FVR*), calicivirus, panleukopenia (*distemper*), *FeLV* and rabies
- **Between 5 - 6 months of age**, neutering or spaying as well as declawing can be done if you wish.

ENVIRONMENT: The average lifespan of an indoor cat is about 15 years while that of an outdoor cat is less than 5! That's why we encourage you to keep your cat indoors. Kittens that start inside are usually content to stay there, especially if you make their environment friendly fun and safe.

- Begin by kitten-proofing your home (*see Helpful Resources*).
- Create or purchase a perch to keep near a window so your cat can "critter watch."
- Provide a comfy bed in a draft-free location.
- Provide easy access to water throughout the day and a litter box.
- Brush and play with your pet often using safe toys.
- If you have another cat or a dog in your home, see our Helpful Resources for tips on how to handle introductions/integration.

DIET: Kittens need more protein and calories than older cats so talk to us about the best foods to feed your kitten. **DO NOT** give your kitty milk or human food; serious diarrhea or worse can result.

DENTAL: Starting a routine oral health program is imperative for the overall health and wellbeing of your cat because good dental care can extend your cat's life. Brushing your cat's teeth daily can help prevent tooth decay and while this process can be started with a cat of any age, kittens seem to adapt to the routine easiest. See Helpful Resources for tooth brushing instructions and more.

LITTER BOX TRAINING: Most kittens figure it out quickly when placed in the box. Plus, you can encourage your kitty by taking his or her front paws and "digging" in the litter. If your kitten does have issues with the cat box, contact us and also check out the Helpful Resources.



VISIT OUR WEBSITE: www.fortstreetvet.com



JUNIOR 7 MONTHS - 2 YEARS



PRIME 3 - 6 YEARS



MATURE 7 - 10 YEARS



SENIOR 11 - 14 YEARS GERIATRIC 15+ YEARS

JUNIOR EXAMS: Most cats are usually very healthy during this stage but they can develop serious diseases. Annual wellness exams are important for early detection. Plus up-to-date vaccinations are required for licensing, licensing is required by law.

ENVIRONMENT: Exercise is important for the health of your cat so play with your pet often and provide safe toys to keep him or her active. You can also take your kitty outside for some quality time if you keep your pet confined in a large cage or “catio” with water and shade...but never leave unattended.

DENTAL: It's never too late to start a routine oral health program for your cat and in our Helpful Resources you'll find instructions on how to brush your cat's teeth. However, if your cat refuses the brush there are still some things you can do such as introducing cat food and cat treats that help to clean your pet's teeth. Talk to us and we may be able to create a special dental diet for your kitty.

DIET: Transition your kitten to a balanced adult cat food at about 10-11 months of age. The variety of food is something we'll happily discuss with you at your pet's annual exam because again, proper nutrition can add years to your pet's life.

PRIME EXAMS: This is when most behavioral problems and behavior-related diseases become evident. Genetic-related problems—such as polycystic kidney disease in Persian cats—usually become evident at this stage, too. So keeping up with annual exams and vaccinations continues to be important. At this stage we may suggest screening for any breed-specific issues. Check the Helpful Resources for specific breed-related disorders.

DENTAL: Based on exams, professional cleaning of your cat's teeth may be recommended. Broken and decaying teeth can give your pet a great deal of pain without you knowing it because cats hide their pain. That's why annual exams are so important. Tooth decay and gum disease can be life threatening so check out our website for details and FAQs about our professional cleanings.

DIET: Obesity peaks during this stage and carries with it an increased risk for certain disorders and diseases, so we'll work with you to monitor and manage your cat's weight. If your pet is diagnosed with an illness, allergy or more, we offer a host of prescription pet foods to support your pet's health. Check our website for details.

MATURE EXAMS: Mature cats start to face an increased risk for “old cat” diseases such as hyperthyroidism, diabetes, kidney disease, high blood pressure, and cancer. Subtle clinical signs such as vomiting (*even if only once weekly*), increased thirst, hiding, poor hair coat and changes in urination and/or defecation should never be ignored.

Semi-annual senior wellness exams may be recommended at this stage because 6 months of a cat's life equates to about 2-3 human years. Bi-annual wellness screening is necessary to detect any subtle changes and early signs of age-related diseases.

DENTAL: Tooth decay and gum disease become more common and more severe in older pets. If your cat has bad breath, drools a lot, seems sensitive around the mouth, is reluctant to eat or will only eat soft food, he or she may have tooth or gum disease...which can lead to a host of other life-threatening diseases of the heart, kidneys and liver. That's why annual exams are so important and why we charge less—all year long—for our dental cleanings.

DIET: Cats need more protein than many other animals. However, older cats can have more difficulty processing it and that can impact an older kitty's immune system. Monitoring your cat's eating habits, appetite and weight will help us choose the proper diet for your maturing pet.

SENIOR AND GERIATRIC EXAMS: The “old cat” diseases listed previously become more of a risk as your cat ages. Semi-annual exams and diagnostics are essential and depending on your cat's physical exam, further screening (*such as electrocardiogram, blood pressure, radiographs*) may be recommended.

ENVIRONMENT: It is important to adapt your home environment to the needs of your older kitty.

- He or she may need easier access to food, water and litter box.
- A more cushiony and joint-supportive bed may provide some relief from Arthritis.
- Older pets' coats begin to change as they age, hairballs become a bigger issue and senior kitties seem to crave more attention from their owners...brushing your cat often can help with all three!
- See more suggestions in Helpful Resources.

DIET: Nutritional requirements change as your pet ages. Plus various medical conditions can also impact your kitty's diet. Weight loss or gain, dehydration or increased thirst can be indications of illness in your pet so be sure to contact us if you observe any such changes.

DETERMINE YOUR CAT'S “TRUE” AGE

ACTUAL AGE	COMPARABLE HUMAN AGE	
1	7	JUNIOR
2	13	
3	20	
4	26	PRIME
5	33	
6	40	
7	44	MATURE
8	48	
9	52	
10	56	SENIOR
11	60	
12	64	
13	68	
14	72	GERIATRIC
15	76	
16	80	
17	84	
18	88	
19	92	
20	96	

* Based on weight between 0-20 lbs.

HELPFUL RESOURCES:

- **Kitten proofing your home:** <http://www.mypet.com/new-pet-owner/kitten-proof-home.aspx>
- **10 tips for feeding your kitten:** <http://www.mypet.com/pet-nutrition/kitten-nutrition.aspx>
- **Preventing litter box problems:** <https://pets.webmd.com/cats/guide/solving-cat-litter-box-problems#1>
- **Getting cats and dogs to get along:** <http://www.mypet.com/new-pet-owner/cats-dogs-get-along.aspx>
- **Home Care for Dental:** <http://icatcare.org/dental-home-care>
- **Introducing your cat to your other pets:** <http://www.mypet.com/new-pet-owner/new-pet-intro.aspx>
- **Understanding your pet's body language:** <http://www.mypet.com/new-pet-owner/understanding-pet-body-language.aspx>
- **Cat obesity:** The Fat Feline: The Garfield Syndrome <http://www.mypet.com/pet-nutrition/fat-feline.aspx>
- **Disorders in breeds of cats:** <http://icatcare.org/advice/cat-breeds/inherited-disorders-cats>
- **Senior cat care:** <http://icatcare.org/advice/keeping-your-cat-happy/elderly-cats-%E2%80%93-special-considerations>