



# SO YOU GOT A KITTEN

New Kitten and Beyond  
Reference Guide



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# Welcome Aboard!

**Congratulations on your new pet!**



The staff at Animal Ark Veterinary Hospital would like to take this opportunity to thank you for choosing us for your pet's veterinary care. Enclosed in this guide is information to help get your new pet started and keep them healthy for the years to come.

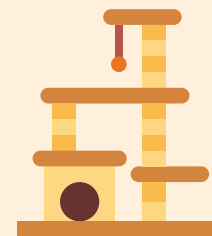
Please download our app as an easy way to keep track of all your pet's upcoming visits, schedule visits, refill medications, and view their record at any time.



## Kitten Basics

### Basic Needs:

- Carrier
- Breakaway Collar
- Litter boxes (1 more than the number of cats)
- Kitten Food (Our doctors recommend Purina Pro Plan, Hill's Science Diet, or Royal Canin brand)
- Bed or blanket
- Toys: appropriately sized toys for your kitten, make sure they are not a choking hazard and do not have pieces that will fall off.



### Tips and Tricks:

- Allow your kitten time to adjust to their new surroundings. Having a bed or blanket from where they previously were is excellent to help keep their smell in their new environment.
- Keeping them in a small room to start out is best for them to learn to feel secure and learn where food, water, and their litter box are.
- Allow them to sleep as they need. Kittens sleep a lot, especially when they are overstimulated.
- Be prepared for your kitten to need to use the litter box as soon as they wake up or finish eating. Keep the litterbox near their food area when they are young.
- Always keep small items away from kittens. They will eat things they are not supposed to, especially strings.
- Offer wet food if your cat is not a good drinker. Additionally, many cats like moving water to drink from so consider a cat water fountain.

## Age | Development | Learning

6-8  
Weeks

Kitten teeth come in, likes interaction with litter mates and mom, more coordinated



Learning how to interact with other cats, lots of play to establish what is appropriate and what is not. Other kitten interaction is important at this age, best to be with litter mates and mother

8-12  
Weeks

Kittens should be weaned and on solid food- kitten has had adequate time with litter mates and mother to learn. Kittens start to need and want human interaction

Expose to a lot of different people, introduce collar, needs lots of play time especially if a single kitten

12-16  
Weeks

Growing rapidly so ensure you're offering enough food. Make sure meeting new people and other animals

Learning more motor control, start going up and down stairs, should be learning to be more confident in new situations. Can start climbing, give cat trees, watch out for ledges that are too high

4-6  
Mos

Adult teeth start coming in, provide safe chew toys and ensure items around house are picked up



Set up a good routine and cats can even learn tricks so try and see what your kitten can learn!

6-12  
Mos

At this age your kitten is becoming fully mature, if not already spayed/neutered we recommend spaying/neutering by this age to help prevent future issues.

After getting neutered it is common for house cats to start putting on weight. Be sure to cut back food and encourage exercise by play and hunting for small meals around the house

- **Rabies:** Vaccination to prevent rabies. Rabies is a serologic virus that moves through the body and attacks the brain and central nervous system, causing aggression, staggering/incoordination, and ultimately death. There is no cure for rabies in humans or animals. This vaccine is legally required since Rabies is zoonotic (can be transmitted to humans and other animals). Legally it must be given by 16 weeks of age. This is a non-negotiable vaccination and we have to refuse care if the vaccine is refused.



- **RCPP Combo:** Our Combo Vaccine is an immunization that covers the most common environmentally found diseases. The main components of all the combo vaccines are Rhinotracheitis, Calicivirus, Panleukopenia, and Pneumonia. These are all respiratory illnesses that can often be fatal especially to young cats. RCPP vaccines are important for kittens' health and well-being.
- **Feline Leukemia Virus Vaccine (FeLV):** FeLV vaccine is an optional vaccine that we recommend based on a cat's lifestyle. If your cat will be indoor only and not around other cats FeLV is not needed. However, if your cat will ever be outside or around other cats (like a foster cat) then the FeLV vaccine is recommended. Every cat needs an up-to-date FeLV test to ensure they have not already been exposed.



# Vaccination Schedule

A Typical Vaccine Schedule:

1st Vaccine Visit: Age 6-8 weeks

Can get RCPP combo

2nd Vaccine Visit: 3-4 weeks after first

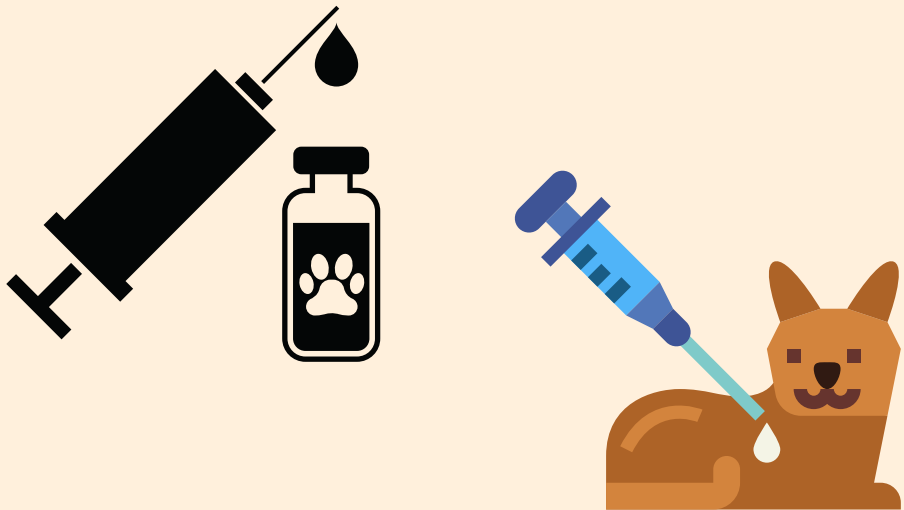
Gets 2nd RCPP combo

3rd Vaccine Visit: 3-4 weeks after the second

Gets 3rd RCPP and Rabies and 1st FeLV

4th Vaccine Visit: 3-4weeks after third

Gets final RCPP and final FeLV



# Common Feline Diseases

These are common feline illnesses that we see in our feline friends.

**Feline-immune Virus (FIV):** FIV results in the cats having a compromised immune system. As kittens, or cats in a shelter, this does mean they can catch illnesses from other cats much more easily than a normal cat. It is also harder for them to fight off even little colds. As cats in a house, they are typically healthy and happy. As FIV is only spread through blood or sexual activity, a neutered cat is unlikely to spread FIV to other cats but is likely to catch a cold from other cats. Isolation is more important for the FIV cat's safety than for the cats without FIV. It is recommended cats get tested for this when first adopted, then annually if outdoor, or after being exposed to any unknown cats.



# 8 Common Feline Diseases

**Feline Herpes:** while all cats have the herpes virus in their body, some have an active form that causes periodic flare-ups. For many cats, flare-ups include Upper Respiratory issues. Symptoms like runny nose, congestion, and goopy eyes. However, as this is caused by a virus, antibiotics do not help clear it up. Your veterinarian may start anti-viral meds, but also an antibiotic to prevent secondary infection. Many flare-ups will clear up on their own and do not require medication. If your cat has been diagnosed with Herpes and has a flare-up, watch out for decreased appetite, extreme lethargy, decreased drinking, or trouble breathing. Those would be reasons to see a vet.

**Feline obesity:** this disease is preventable but very common in house cats. Obesity is usually a result of overfeeding and lack of exercise. As owners, it is important to not only watch how much your cat is eating but how much you are feeding. Cats need less food than you think as there is no hunting involved in eating a bowl of kibble. Enough movement with play and also hiding food around the house where your cat can actually "hunt" for the food. Other alternatives to just feeding in a dish are a treat ball that they roll around to get food and a feeding station that makes them have to think and work for their food. Remember typically weight gain begins after your pet is spayed or neutered due to hormonal changes. Ensure you start paying attention to their diet and weight after that. Obesity can shorten their life span and lead to many other health issues as well.

# Parasite Prevention 9

**Parasite prevention is very, very important! Cats can get many different parasites that affect different areas of their body. In this section, we will talk about intestinal parasites, body parasites, and heartworms.**

## Intestinal Parasites

Intestinal parasites- or worms, are very common in Kittens. Several species are transmitted from mom to kitten while others are picked up in the environment. We diagnose and treat worms by doing a fecal and administering oral medication to kill the worms present. Kittens usually have several kinds of worms and often require more than one treatment. This is why it is important to recheck after completing the medication rounds to ensure the fecal is negative. We also recommend doing a yearly fecal to make sure they have not picked up any worms throughout the year. Common intestinal parasites are roundworms, hookworms, whipworms, coccidia, giardia, and tapeworms.



## Body Parasites

Fleas, ticks, mange, and mites! These are our body-found parasites that live on the skin of our pets. Fleas and ticks are the most common skin parasites, but luckily they are easy to prevent- keeping your cat on a flea and tick preventative means no worries! Here in North Carolina we recommend flea and tick preventative year-round, as our bugs are always out! Mange and mites usually only occur in pets that have been in stressful or neglectful situations. Often, rescue cats may have mange or mites that need to be treated.



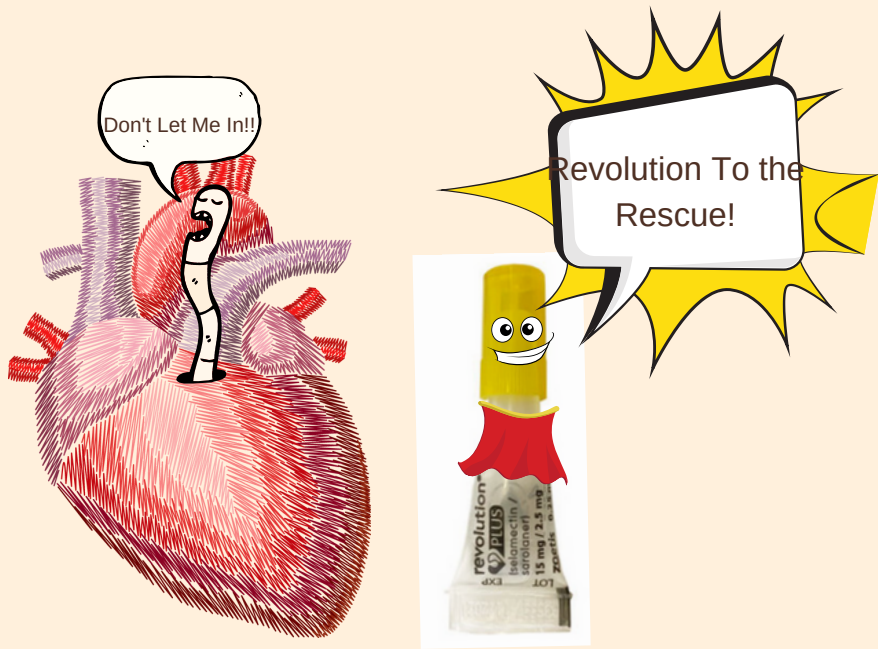
# 10 Parasite Prevention

## Heartworm

Heartworm is an extremely important parasite to prevent as there is no way to treat and kill heartworm in cats. Heartworm is transmitted by mosquitos, and then the worms make their way to the heart of the pet to mature and grow. Meanwhile, they can cause many issues for your pet- including trouble breathing, heart issues, and potentially death. Heartworm is prevented by giving your pet monthly heartworm prevention. One little topical application a month can save a lot of "heartache" in the future.



As kittens, we get them started before there is a chance they could have heartworm.

Many heartworm preventatives, like Revolution, also treat several intestinal parasites and fleas/ticks which means you are preventing multiple parasites with one monthly application!



# Pet Insurance 11

The truth is, Veterinary bills are expensive. A new kitten can cost a lot to care for properly, even just preventative care. However, some of the biggest expenses with having a pet are unexpected accidents, illnesses, and injuries. That is why we recommend pet insurance, specifically through Trupanion. Insurance gives pet owners security to know their pet is cared for even if a completely unexpected issue like eating a toy, breaking a leg, or even just a cold happens. Trupanion works with Animal Ark directly making payments and claims simple and easy. We have seen so many animals be able to get the care they needed due to having Trupanion. At your first Kitten Exam visit, we offer Trupanion free for 30 days. In that time, your pet is covered and you can work with a Trupanion Agent to find the best policy for you and your pet! Learn more by going to the website [www.trupanion.com](http://www.trupanion.com)

<div><b>GOLDEN RETRIEVER</b> Understanding the conditions and associated costs most likely to occur to Golden Retrievers based on Trupanion's claim data.</div>		
Puppy	Adult	Senior
<div><b>CHIHUAHUA</b> Understanding the conditions and associated costs most likely to occur to Chihuahuas based on Trupanion's claim data.</div>		
Puppy	Adult	Senior
<b>INGESTION OF FOREIGN MATERIAL</b> Average Cost: \$400 to \$1,000 Claim Frequency: 55% more likely than the average dog	<b>FRACTURED BONE</b> Average Cost: \$1,100 to \$2,700 Claim Frequency: 25% more likely than the average dog	<b>MEDIAL PATELLAR LUXATION</b> Average Cost: \$500 to \$1,900 Claim Frequency: 2.5 times as likely as the average dog
<b>HIP DYSPLASIA</b> Average Cost: \$400 to \$800 Claim Frequency: 2.5 times as likely than the average dog	<b>CONGESTIVE HEART FAILURE</b> Average Cost: \$800 to \$1,400 Claim Frequency: twice as likely as the average dog	
<b>OTITIS</b> Average Cost: \$100 Claim Frequency: 55% more likely than the average dog	<b>EXTRACTION</b> Average Cost: \$300 to \$500 Claim Frequency: 4 times as likely than the average dog	<b>HEART MURMUR</b> Average Cost: \$400 to \$600 Claim Frequency: twice as likely than the average dog
	<b>DENTAL DISEASE</b> Average Cost: \$500 to \$600 Claim Frequency: twice as likely as the average dog	
	<b>GASTROENTERITIS</b> Average Cost: \$300 to \$400 Claim Frequency: about as likely than the average dog	<b>COUGH</b> Average Cost: \$200 to \$300 Claim Frequency: 60% more likely than the average dog
	<b>SEIZURE</b> Average Cost: \$300 to \$800 Claim Frequency: 45% more likely than the average dog	

# 12 Socialization and Training

While training tends to be viewed more as a dog-only activity, socialization and training are important for the health, safety, and well-being of your cat. Just like with a dog basic training starts with teaching your kitten their name. Cats can learn a variety of commands like sit, down, spin, beg, and even meow on command. In general, cats are more difficult to train but many have an interest in learning.

When it comes to socialization, cats need to be exposed to many different people and environments just like dogs. They should also be used to their carrier and see it as a good place, this will make car trips much easier. We recommend putting a blanket they like, toys, and treats in there. Also, leaving the carrier out makes it a normal thing for them to see and many cats love boxes and find the carrier a fun place if introduced correctly.

Things to try with your cat: Coming when called, Sit, Beg, Spin, Speak

You can even teach them to go into their carrier on command, which is excellent in times of an emergency.

You can use the QR code below to see our YouTube videos going over cat socialization and training!

Giving Pills/Medications: for obvious reasons, this is a very important thing to have your cat be used to. Since most cats get liquid medications, practice using a syringe with just sugar water or chicken broth to get your pet used to the syringe itself. Seeing what treats your cat likes can help if you have to give a pill. You can also introduce Pill Pockets as a treat so you can use that in times of needing to give pills.



# Pet First Aid 13

There are many situations where getting to a veterinarian might not be immediately possible or warranted. Here are some first aid basics for your pet to help in the event of an emergency or to care for a minor cut/wound. **Ultimately, the best thing to do if you are not sure is to call or go to a veterinarian.**

Just like with human kids, animals do get minor injuries from time to time, and in many cases, these injuries do not warrant a vet visit, or at least not an emergency vet visit. A pup that ripped their toenail might do better seeing a veterinarian to have it properly removed, cleaned, dressed, and medications prescribed, but if it happens at 2 am, having some basic first aid supplies will help your pet stay comfortable until you can go to your regular vet in the morning. A basic first aid kit can also help your pet in an emergency while you drive to a vet hospital.

A basic first aid kit should be kept somewhere it's readily available in times of need like an emergency, natural disaster, or even a road trip.

You can make your own kit, or purchase one at many places. We recommend Pet Emergency Education. They also offer courses that you can take to learn more about pet first aid, CPR, or wilderness first aid. Scan the code to learn more.

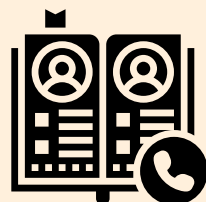




# Pet First Aid

Example of a General "Prepared Pet" Kit:

- Proof of ownership/ID for pet (microchip)
- Copy of Vaccine records (especially Rabies Vaccination Certificate)
- Food (at least a few days worth)
- Two - 1 Gallon water jugs per pet
- Bowls for pet
- Pet first aid kit
  - Vet Wrap
  - Sterile gauze
  - Cleansing wipes
  - Rubbing Alcohol
  - Neosporin
  - Iodine
  - Dog/Cat nail clippers
  - Quick stop/Styptic powder
  - Medical tape
  - Plastic bag (protecting bandage in rain)
  - Pair of socks
  - e-collar
  - Towel
  - Scissors
  - Thermometer
  - Lubrication
  - Number for Primary Veterinarian
  - Number for Poison Control and Local Emergency (24/7) Veterinarian
- Jacket/Blanket for pet
- Extra collar and leash
- Carrier/crate (where applicable)



**Get our App to keep track of all your pet's needs!**

**SCAN ME**

