



RYEDALE
== VETS ==

Pickering | Kirkbymoorside | Helmsley

KITTEN HEALTHCARE ADVICE GUIDE





Vaccinating Your Kitten

Why do we give vaccinations?

Vaccinations are injections we give to kittens as a scientifically proven way to protect our loved ones against potentially fatal diseases. They work in the same way as the vaccinations we give to children and are just as important.

How do vaccinations work?

The injection we give contains a very small amount of the disease virus or bacteria which has either been killed or microscopically modified so it cannot harm our kittens. This stimulates the kitten's immune system to build an army of dedicated immune cells that are ready to fight off the real disease should it ever try to infect your loved one.

What do we vaccinate for?

Cat Flu - The commonest strains of Herpes virus and Calicivirus are covered with the vaccination.

Feline Enteritis virus – A cause of severe often fatal vomiting and diarrhoea similar to parvovirus in dogs.

The above viruses are given together in one injection. This injection course is required for entrance into catteries.

Feline leukaemia virus – This virus is the second most common cause of premature death of cats in the UK after road traffic accidents. The virus can be carried for several years before causing illness. As well as causing leukaemia in some cats the virus also causes tumours to form in various organs. The immune system is also suppressed leading to many other diseases. If a cat is already infected with feline leukaemia virus, then the vaccination offers no protection. We do not routinely test cats before vaccination because of the cost but if you would like to have your kitten tested please ask.

When should we give vaccinations?

Kittens can be vaccinated from 8 weeks of age. They require 2 injections, their second will need to be given 3 weeks after their initial injection.

Should kittens go outside once their initial vaccination course is complete?

While kittens will be protected from the diseases mentioned above after their vaccination course is completed, it is not recommended they are allowed to roam outside freely until they are neutered. Kittens become sexually active from a young age, from 3-4 months of age, and will actively seek out a mate to procreate. Because of this, we recommend keeping all kittens indoors until they are neutered, which can be done from 4 months of age (see the neutering section).

Should we give annual boosters against these diseases as well?

Yes! The vaccines we give are designed to protect your kitten for a certain length of time. To keep your kitten fully protected they will need an annual booster vaccine every year for the rest of their life. Missing these booster vaccines will put your kitten at risk of getting these devastating diseases.



Worming Your Kitten

How do kittens get worms?

Kittens can get roundworms from their mother's milk and some eggs from their environment, they are microscopic and are often invisible to the naked eye.

Why should we worm kittens?

Roundworms are a cause of vomiting, diarrhoea, coughing and ill thrift in kittens. They would therefore prevent your kitten from getting all the nutrition they need to grow and thrive. Other worms invade different parts of their body and can cause multiple organ problems.

Could your kitten have worms even if you've never seen worms in your kitten's poo?

Yes! There are many different types of worms your kitten could have, most of them are microscopic so cannot be seen to the naked eye when shed in your kitten's faeces.

How do we get rid of these nasty worms?

Regularly worming your kitten with the best product advised by our vets will kill any worms that may have been picked up by your kitten and reduces the amount of eggs shed into your home and the environment. Please talk to our pet health professionals to find out which product is best for your kitten.

When should we worm kittens?

We recommend worming kitten every 2 weeks until 12 weeks of age. Wormer is available in liquid form and is given for 3 days in a row. Adult cats should be wormed at least every 3 months against round and tape worm, depending on the product used. Wormers are generally in tablet form, but a spot-on variation is available on prescription. Unfortunately, many of the products available from pet shops aren't reliable or effective. At Ryedale Vets we regularly review the products we advise for flea and tick prevention so that your kitten always has the best cover against these parasites.



Kitten Flea and Tick Treatments

Why should we treat kittens against fleas and ticks?

Fleas and ticks are little blood-sucking insects that live in the coat of your kitten (and often on cats too!). Severe infestations can be dangerous for your kitten when so much blood is sucked out by the parasites that not enough is left for your kitten!

Flea bites commonly cause kittens to scratch which can lead to skin infections and perpetual irritation, when your kitten should really be playing and exploring.

Ticks can carry diseases harmful to your puppy's health and your own. Most notably Lyme disease, which can be fatal to humans as well as dogs.

If your kitten isn't scratching, could they still have fleas or ticks?

Yes! Ticks especially don't always cause kittens to scratch and not every cat scratches when they have fleas and ticks.

When should we start treating kittens for fleas and ticks?

Depending on their weight, kittens can be treated from 8 weeks of age to prevent them getting fleas.



What should we treat kittens with to prevent them getting fleas and ticks?

There are a wide range of products available to prevent fleas and ticks getting on to your kitten. Unfortunately, many of the products available from pet shops aren't reliable or effective. At Ryedale Vets we regularly review the products we advise for flea and tick prevention so you know your kitten will always have the best cover against these parasites. These products can usually only be prescribed by a vet.

Toilet Training Your Kitten

How long should it take your kitten to become toilet trained?

Cats will naturally look for litter to toilet in. So long as you have enough litter tray available (there should be at least 1 tray per cat in a multi-cat household), and the tray is in a quiet area of the house, cats normally will find them appealing enough to toilet in. Changing used litter daily will help encourage kittens to use them frequently.

Should kittens be let out to toilet in the garden?

Kittens should ideally be kept indoors until neutered (see our Kitten Neutering section). If they are let out and go missing they run the risk of being mated or mating another cat, which can lead to unwanted litters.





Settling Your Kitten In

What can we do to make our home friendlier for our new kitten?

It can be a scary time for kittens when they are moved from their place of birth to their new home with new people. There are a couple of pheromone plug-in diffusers which can keep kittens calm and help them settle in.

- For all households, the 'Feliway' diffuser releases a pheromone designed to keep all cats calm.
- For households with multiple cats, 'Feliway Friends' releases a pheromone designed to help cats get along when meeting for the first time.

Please contact the practice for more information on the benefits of using Feliway.

How can we help our kitten grow in to a sociable, calm cat?

Socialisation is key. When they are young, kittens will be very inquisitive and try to explore everything in their new environment. Making new experiences (such as being handled or hoovering) as calm and positive as possible will help encourage good behaviour as they grow. Cats like routine a consistency so try to use the same food and litter as the breeder and make any changes gradual.



Feeding Your Kitten

What kind of food should we feed kittens?

There many pet food options for you to feed your puppy. We recommend a complete diet (usually in biscuit or tinned form), designed for kittens. These diets are carefully balanced to give your kitten their exact nutrient requirements. Its recommended to use the same food as the breeder or shelter and make a gradual transition to the food of your choice.

How often should we feed kittens?

Kittens around 8 weeks of age should be having around five meals per day. Over the following 4 months the number of meals should be gradually reduce to two meals per day at around 6 months of age.



How much should we feed kittens?

This will vary greatly depending on the brand of food you chose to feed your kitten. Most brands will usually have a feeding guide on the back of the packet. Some will be based on your kittens expected adult weight. We advise weighing the amount recommended for your kitten to be as accurate as possible. A good trick is to mark a line on a feeding cup corresponding to the amount you need to feed to make feeding time quicker and easier.



Neutering Your Kitten

What is neutering?

Neutering is the removal of the sex organs from either females (spaying) or males (castration). This prevents them from being able to produce kittens and can prevent some unwanted behaviours.

When can we neuter kittens?

Socialisation is key. When they are young, kittens will be very inquisitive and try to explore everything in their new environment. Making new experiences (such as being handled or hoovering) as calm and positive as possible will help encourage good behaviour as they grow. Cats like routine a consistency so try to use the same food and litter as the breeder and make any changes gradual.

How long will the neutering procedure take?

On the day of their procedure, we will usually get you to bring your kitten in to the practice to be admitted with one of our vets or nurses between 8:30am-9:15am (we can also offer transport from our Pickering surgery). Your kitten will have a full health check to make sure they are fit for the procedure and you will be asked a few questions about their recent health. They will then be cared for by our nurses (with lots of cuddles) as we prepare them for their surgery.

We will get you to give us a call in the afternoon on the same day of the procedure to arrange a time to collect your kitten.

Do kittens have to be kept inside at home after their surgery?

After their surgery, female with have stitches in their skin which will need to be kept in for at least 10 days. During this time your kitten should have minimal exercise to reduce the chance of them damaging these stitches. During this time your kitten should have minimal exercise to reduce the chance of them damaging these stitches. Male kittens usually don't have any stitches but are best kept inside for a few days so you can keep an eye on them.

Does the surgery cause pain?

Kittens can feel a little woozy or uncomfortable for the first couple of days after their procedure but this will be minimalised with the range of pain relief medication we can give.

Does neutering kittens make them fat?

As we are taking away a whole organ system that uses a lot of energy when we neuter kittens, their energy requirements will be reduced. After your kitten has been neutered we recommended feeding a diet design for neutered cats. We recommend a range of complete diets specifically designed for neutered cats from Hill's, please talk to one of our staff for advice on the best diet.



Microchipping Your Kitten

Do we need to get our kitten microchipped?

Microchipping your kitten is the best way to get them back to you should they ever become lost, this is why we have always recommended microchipping in cats.

Whose responsibility is it to keep the microchip details up to date?

It is the owner's/keeper's responsibility to ensure the details registered to the microchip are kept up to date. Microchip details can be stored with a number of different microchip companies. At Ryedale Vets we have the ability to scan and read your cat's microchip number, so we can let you know who you need to contact to update the microchip details.

What details will be registered with the microchip?

The details registered to a microchip usually include some of your own details including, name, address and contact telephone numbers or e-mail should anyone need to contact you if your cat is found. They will also take some of your pet's details such as breed, colourings, age, whether they are neutered and any medical conditions that are useful to know about.

How big is a microchip?

About the size of a grain of rice.

Is it painful when the microchip is implanted?

The needle to implant a microchip is slightly larger than a standard vaccinating needle so can cause a little pain, but this usually only lasts a few seconds, after which most kittens are none the wiser. We generally recommend microchipping your kitten when they are in for neutering so the microchip can be implanted while they are under anaesthetic.

