



FACT SHEET

Kitten Checklist

Before you can start fully enjoying the addition of a new member to the family, there are a few considerations that come first in regard to keeping your new kitten happy and healthy. Here's what we recommend:

Vaccination. We routinely give **F3** vaccinations. This protects against both feline flu and feline enteritis and is a requirement for all boarding cats. There are also vaccines available to protect against feline leukaemia (FeLV), feline immunodeficiency (FIV) and feline chlamydia. FeLV and FIV are transmitted by bite wounds from infected cats, and very rarely diagnosed in the Northern Beaches area. Chlamydia is normally contracted in the first few weeks of life, before normal purchase age. Cats who live mainly indoors and are kept in separate cages in boarding catteries are extremely unlikely to be infected with these viruses, so we do not usually vaccinate against them.

<input type="checkbox"/> 6-8 weeks	New kitten protection vaccination
<input type="checkbox"/> From 12 weeks	First full vaccination
<input type="checkbox"/> 4 weeks later	Full vaccination booster
<input type="checkbox"/> 1 year after first full	First annual vaccination

For many years adult cats were normally given vaccinations every year, and we are happy to continue this practice at their annual health check. However, there are now three-year vaccinations available, which means you only have to worry about them every third year.

Annual health checkups are important so we can look for signs of diseases that can be treated or prevented before your cat becomes very ill. During these checkups we monitor your cat's teeth, eyes, ears, skin, abdominal organs, nails, heart, lungs and temperature. Early recognition of disease gives your pet the best chance of recovery and longevity.

Tick control. If you and your kitten live on the Peninsula, then he or she is at risk of getting a paralysis tick, and these nasty pests can be fatal. See the section called **Tick Advice** on our website. Below we've listed the more common tick preventions, but we'll be happy to recommend which would be best for your particular situation.

- **Frontline Spray®** - Using the correct dose, thoroughly cover the cat every three weeks. Frontline gives good protection from two days of age. To help your kitten get used to the process, start off by spraying Frontline onto a glove and rubbing it on.
- **Proban Tablets®** - Given orally every second day, Proban uses a dose of *organophosphate* which kills any ticks that happen to bite. While it's an

effective tick preventative, Proban can make some cats feel nauseous. An average-sized cat (5kg) needs 1/2 a tablet every second day. **Please note:** This is an off-label use; Proban is not specifically registered for this purpose in cats. However, we have successfully used this treatment for many years at PAH.

- **Frontline Topspot®** - When applied every two weeks, it seems to offer tick prevention to some cats. *It is by no means 100% effective and is not registered for tick prevention in cats.* We would recommend something else if ticks are a real problem.

Note: No tick prevention is 100% effective, so your cat should be searched regularly. As indicated above, some areas of the Northern Beaches experience extremely bad tick infestations, especially in the spring. In many cases more than one tick preventative could be needed. However, you should always consult with us before combining medication.

Flea control. If you spot any fleas on your kitten or see any sign of flea dirt, we strongly recommend that you start year-round flea treatment. (See the relevant **Fact Sheets**.) Long-acting spot-on medication has proved to be the best way to control fleas, but **all cats and dogs** in the household must be treated. The products we feel are working well this year are:

- **Advantage®** - Squeeze onto the back of the neck every month, all year round. If you stop medicating in the wintertime, the small flea population remaining will be able to seed your house and yard with eggs that will hatch the following summer.
- **Revolution®** - This spot-on medication is also an all-wormer, treats ear mites and helps prevent heartworm. So far, we find it working very effectively against fleas.
- **Advocate®** - Like Revolution, it kills fleas but also helps prevent heartworm and intestinal worms when applied monthly.

Intestinal worms. Because new kittens often have worms, we recommend that you use an 'all-wormer' on yours every two weeks until 12 weeks of age, then every month until it's six months old.

Adult cats that go outside should be wormed **four** times a year.

For adult cats that never venture outside, worming twice a year from the age of 12 months should be sufficient.

Cats on Revolution (flea, heartworm and worm medication) don't need worm tablets.

Feeding. In most cases you should feed your new kitten three times daily – till full but not bursting - until 12 weeks old, then twice daily. **There is no need to leave food out during the day.**

We highly recommend professional dry foods such as:

- Hills Science Diet
- Advance
- IAMS

These quality regimens provide all the nutrients needed for optimal growth, healthy teeth, gums and coat. Along with such products, you should give chunks of raw meat or low-fat bones (such as chicken necks) to encourage healthy teeth. Tinned food and minced meat is *not* good for cats' teeth. To help ensure your cat has healthy teeth into old age, you should encourage it to chew.

You should also pay particular attention to not over-feeding; obesity has become a considerable problem with cats. One of our vets or nurses will be happy to offer sound weight and feeding advice.

De-sexing. At PAH we recommend that all non-breeding animals be de-sexed at about six months of age. We will perform the surgery during the day, and your cat should be home that evening. Before surgery and the anaesthetic it's a good idea to do a routine blood scan to test for any possible abnormalities and to establish a normal baseline of blood tests for your cat. After surgery we give injectable pain relief, which lasts for the next 24 hours. Normally, kittens will be free of significant pain by then, but if you feel more pain relief is necessary, we can supply oral medication for up to a further week. Our nurses will talk this over with you upon admission.

Council registration. All new cats must be registered with the council by six months of age. They will need proof your cat has been micro-chipped and, if applicable, de-sexed, which we can provide for you. If your cat has not been micro-chipped, we can do this for you, at the same time giving you the relevant documentation for council registration.

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