**Glen Mills Veterinary Hospital**

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We would like to congratulate you on the acquisition of your new cat!

We are grateful that you have chosen us to help you with your pet’s health care. If you have questions concerning any subject related to your cat's health, please feel free to contact us. One of the technicians or doctors will be happy to help you.

**VACCINES**

In kittens, vaccines are given every 3-4 weeks starting at 6-8 weeks of age, the time when the immunity they received from their mothers starts to wane. We continue vaccinating until they are at least 16 weeks old to ensure proper immunity has been established. The exact protocol will depend on many factors and is tailored by the veterinarian to meet the needs of each individual pet. Below are the vaccines that may be given and a brief description of each.

- **Rabies**- Given at 13 weeks of age or older to all pets. The first vaccine lasts for one year. Thereafter, we recommend the Purevax 1 year Rabies vaccine but also offer the Imrab 3 year Rabies vaccine. We will discuss the differences during your appointment.

- **FVRCP** (often called "Feline Distemper") - This vaccine is for immunity against Feline Viral Rhinotracheitis (respiratory infection), Calicivirus (respiratory infection), and Panluekopenia (feline distemper) and is given to all cats. Usually 3-4 boosters are given during the kitten series with the final booster lasting for one year. It is given every 3 years thereafter.

- **FeLV** (Feline Leukemia Virus) - This is an optional vaccine recommended in cats that go outside or are exposed to cats that do. Two boosters are given initially, 3-4 weeks apart, then yearly thereafter.

**Do indoor only cats really need vaccines? The answer is yes.** Some people feel that if their cat never leaves the house, there is no reason to vaccinate, however there are important reasons to vaccinate your cat.

First, rabies vaccination is required by Pennsylvania Law for all cats and dogs. Rabies is life threatening virus for all mammals and therefore will always be a serious public health concern. Guidelines created are designed to protect humans and their pets.

Secondly, vaccines provide "herd immunity", meaning the more animals that are protected against the spread of disease by vaccination, the less disease is shed into the environment. When an animal becomes ill, one component of the illness is re-distributing the disease-causing agent back into the population. For example, when a person has a cold or flu, a sneeze sheds the virus into the environment for others to be exposed. This continues the spread of the disease. Vaccines help to decrease the spread of virus back into the environment. Vaccines also decrease the length of time of illness and the severity of illness.

Also noteworthy is a discussion on exposure. Sometimes cats that live strictly indoors manage to sneak outside. In addition, a cat does not always need direct contact with another animal to become sick. People can carry viruses on their clothing or shoes and bring them into the cat's home environment. Moreover, a stray outdoor cat can transfer infectious, disease-causing agents to your indoor cats through screened doors or windows.

**Feline Leukemia/FIV (“Feline AIDs”) Testing**

This test is recommended in all newly acquired cats. Cats may be infected in utero, while nursing or as adults.

Feline leukemia virus (FeLV) causes leukemia, other cancers and immunodeficiency. Cats may not start to show signs of disease for months or years after being infected with FeLV.

Feline immunodeficiency virus (FIV) is retrovirus in the same family as human immunodeficiency virus (HIV, the virus that causes AIDS). It attacks the **immune system****,** and as a result, the cat is unable to fight off various infections and cancers. Once infected with FIV, a cat's health may deteriorate progressively or be characterized by recurrent illness interspersed with periods of relative health. In other cases, signs of immunodeficiency may not appear until years after the FIV infection was established.

**Do I need to test my cat if the mother tested negative?** **What if littermates tested negative?** Yes, we would recommend testing all the kittens. It is rare, but occasionally serum negative queens have passed infection to kittens. In addition, we can see negative and positive results between patients of the same litter. Better to be safe than sorry.

**Flea and Tick Preventative**

Flea and tick preventatives are recommended for any cat that goes outside and indoor cats that may have high exposure from other household pets. These are products that are applied topically once monthly between the shoulder blades (where the pet can't lick it off). There are different products to choose from and it is important to realize not all flea preventatives are created equal. Topical spot-on treatments are preferred over flea baths or flea collars and please note, some over the counter flea products can produce marked neurologic side effects. Please ask us which topical are appropriate. Good choices include:

**Seresto Collar (flea and ticks)**

**Revolution (topical -heartworms, fleas, ear mites, hookworms, roundworms)**

**Bravecto (flea and ticks)**

**Deworming and Fecals**

Kittens, cats exposed to the outdoors and hunters will have the highest worm burdens but indoor cats do not evade infection altogether. Mud on shoes can harbor parasites (example: roundworms and hookworms). Fleas can be brought in by family dogs and tapeworms can develop from flea ingestion (grooming). Overall, it is important to remember:

\* GI parasites that shed in stool are most often invisible.

\* Many parasites are contagious to other pets and people.

\* Many parasites thrive even in winter. The snow acts like a blanket for them while they are embedded in soil. GI parasites are considered **a year round problem**.

\* Annual fecal examinations are recommended for all cats.

\* Prophylactic protection for your pet is easy and recommended in higher risk pets.

**Neutering/Spaying**

Recommended at approximately 6 months of age in all non-breeding pets. Reducing the number of unwanted puppies and kittens has been and remains an important part of reducing the relinquishment and euthanasia of millions of animals annually.

Spaying at a young age prevents mammary cancer and spaying at any age prevents unwanted kittens, noisy heat cycles, and reduces the incidence of urine marking in the house.

Neutering males at a young age reduces the incidence of the undesirable behaviors of roaming, fighting and urine marking in the house.

**Microchip**

A microchip is a safe and valuable item that we highly recommend for your pet. It will ensure your cat is reunited with your family if it is ever lost and found.

A microchip is a permanent form of identification that is placed below the skin between the shoulder blades. This tiny device can be easily implanted during an appointment or while your is under anesthesia for their spay or neuter.

Veterinary hospitals, humane societies and animal shelters across the country have universal scanners used to identify a microchip in a pet. Your pet’s unique microchip number is stored in a national registry and ensures you will be contacted if someone finds your missing pet and brings them to an animal care facility.

**Pet Insurance**

The decision about whether or not to get pet insurance is dependent on your individual family situation. There is an independent website www.petinsurancereview.com that compares some of the different plans available.