



BEAVER BROOK ANIMAL HOSPITAL

434 Silas Deane Highway

Wethersfield, CT 06109

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www.beaverbrookah.com

<http://www.facebook.com/BeaverBrookAnimalHospital>

Welcome!

We would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to our “family”. We and the staff consider it an honor and privilege that you have chosen us to care for your pet’s health and we intend to do everything in our power to earn the trust you have put in us. We invite you to get to know us and to please feel free to ask any questions or make comments you may have. We feel that your pet’s needs may best be met in an open and honest environment where any concerns you have may be addressed.

We thank you for choosing us and hope that this is the beginning of a long and happy relationship. If there is ever anything we can do to help, please ask.

Office Hours:

Monday: 9:00 am – 6:00 pm

Tuesday: 9:00 am – 6:00 pm

Wednesday: 8:00 am – 8:00 pm

Thursday: 9:00 am – 6:00 pm

Friday: 9:00 am – 6:00 pm

Saturday: 9:00 am – 2:00 pm

Sunday: 9:00 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Sincerely,

Monica Dijanic, DVM
Medical Director

Howard Asher, DVM
Medical Director



BEAVER BROOK

ANIMAL HOSPITAL

Drs. Howard Asher and Monica Dijanic are excited to welcome you to Beaver Brook Animal Hospital. Opening its doors in November 2011, Beaver Brook Animal Hospital is a full service veterinary hospital offering medical, surgical, dental, and preventative care. Our veterinarians believe in integrating naturopathic medicine like laser and acupuncture with conventional western medicine and hope to add chiropractic care and physical rehabilitation in the future.

Dr. Dijanic (aka Dr. Monica) started her career in the veterinary field in 1992, first as a kennel assistant and then as a veterinary technician. She received her Bachelor of Science degree in Biology from the College of Staten Island and continued to receive her Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree from Ross University in St. Kitts, West Indies. She completed her senior year at the University of Minnesota's Veterinary Teaching Hospital. After practicing veterinary medicine for 3 years in the Puget Sound area of Washington, she decided to move back to the East Coast and now calls Vernon her home. She has very strong interests in internal medicine, preventative care, and alternative therapies. She volunteers with various committees for the Connecticut Veterinary Medical Association and is currently on the board and also is the charter lead for Suicide Awareness Voices of Education(SAVE) Hartford.

Dr. Howard Asher is a true nutmegger having grown up in Norwalk, CT. He attended the University of Massachusetts where he majored in Pre-Veterinarian studies. During his college years, Dr. Asher was an officer in the University of Massachusetts's Outing Club. In this position, he led many activities such as hiking, caving, and canoeing. After receiving his Bachelor of Science degree he went on to study at Ross University, School of Veterinary Medicine in St. Kitts, West Indies. He completed his senior year at the University of Minnesota's Veterinary Teaching Hospital. He has special interests in soft tissue surgery, preventative medicine, and pursuing studies in acupuncture. He has been a member of the Connecticut State Animal Response Team and is currently a team leader for his assigned region. He is also actively involved with the Veterinary Management Council of Connecticut having served on the board for the past four years.

Despite attending the same schools and working in similar hospitals, Drs. Asher and Monica did not meet until 2008. After much research they decided to open Beaver Brook Animal Hospital. They share their home in Vernon with their 4 dogs Wilson, Sugar, Rowan and Autumn, and their four cats Corwin, Orion, Aries and Tyberius. When not working with animals Dr. Asher enjoys spelunking, bee keeping, and home brewing whereas Dr. Monica loves to listen to music, do Yoga, or enjoy the latest urban fantasy novel.

As pet owners ourselves, we understand how important it is to have your furry family member seen when needed. We offer the added advantage of providing home visits to our clients so you can have the same level of compassion, knowledge, medical services, and attention by our doctor and assistant in the comfort of your own home. Give us a call at (860) 757 – 3346 or visit our website at www.beaverbrookah.com to make an appointment or set up a house call today.

Driving Directions to Beaver Brook Animal Hospital

60 Beaver Road

Wethersfield, CT 06109

(860) 757-3346

www.beaverbrookah.com

<http://www.facebook.com/BeaverBrookAnimalHospital>

From the West

Take I 84 East to I 91 South via Exit 52. Merge onto US 5 S/CT 15 S via Exit 28 toward the Berlin Turnpike/Wethersfield/Newington. Take Exit 85, CT 99 South towards Wethersfield/Rocky Hill. Merge onto the Silas Deane Hwy. Turn Left onto Beaver Road, and Beaver Brook Animal Hospital is on the Right.

From the East

Take US 5 to merge onto US 5 S/CT 15 S. Take Exit 85, CT 99 South toward Wethersfield/Rocky Hill. Merge onto the Silas Deane Hwy. Turn Left onto Beaver Road and Beaver Brook Animal Hospital is on the Right.

From the North

Take I 91 South, merge onto US 5 S/CT 15 S via Exit 28 toward the Berlin Turnpike/Wethersfield/Newington. Take Exit 85, CT 99 South toward Wethersfield/Rocky Hill and merge onto the Silas Deane Hwy. Turn Left onto Beaver Road and Beaver Brook Animal Hospital is on the Right.

From the South

Take I 91 North to Exit 24, CT 99 North towards Wethersfield. Turn slight Right onto CT 99/Silas Deane Hwy. Turn Right onto Beaver Road and Beaver Brook Animal Hospital is on the Right.



Foraging Toys

Fundamentally Feline
www.FundamentallyFeline.com

Foraging toys are food dispensing containers that your cat manipulates in efforts to get food or treats to dispense. These types of toys give your indoor cat something to stalk and hunt, giving them a much needed outlet for their prey drive and hunting instincts. Most behaviorists agree that many behavior problems in cats stem from boredom, frustration and stress. A lack of mental stimulation can result in up to 30% loss of brain function over time in both animals and humans. Much like the need for humans to learn a new skill, do crossword puzzles, read etc. to keep our brains working; cats and dogs need similar challenges to alleviate senility, boredom, and mental dullness. The concept of foraging is designed to make your cat think and problem solve, and they get rewarded each time they figure out the puzzle.

Getting Started

Foraging can be a fun game and a way to give your cat treats; or if they are really good at it and are active foragers, it can be how you feed them their dry food. It is recommended that you start off with clear containers with a lot of holes so it is really easy and they barely have to bat at it to get food to dispense. We recommend using a plastic water bottle as a first toy. It is clear so your cat can see, hear, and smell the food rattling around inside. It is best to fill up the container; but not so full that the food does not move around freely; but DO NOT simply put 2 or 3 pieces of kibble in there because that is when foraging toys are the most difficult.

Once your cat has gotten the hang of foraging, move on to containers with fewer holes, objects that are opaque, objects that do not roll easily, or even cubes! It is important to continue to offer new and interesting objects to keep your cat from getting bored with them. If they continue to empty the same container for months and months, they may lose interest.

We have a variety of foraging toys available for purchase at Paws Whiskers and Claws, and you can try making some yourself. You are only limited by your imagination and creativity. It is also a great way to recycle your plastic household containers one additional time before they make it to the recycling bin!

Another great foraging toy purchase is the Peek-a Prize Toy box. This is a finished wooden box with many holes cut into it like a giant piece of Swiss cheese. Fill the box with balls, toy mice and food; so that the toys become an obstacle that your cat must move in order to access the food.

You can easily make one of these foraging boxes yourself out of an old shoebox. Simply cut some holes in the side and top of the shoebox slightly larger than the toys you are putting inside. This is so that they can get the toys out too. Fill with a handful of food. It is important to tape the lid on so that your cat does not simply take the lid off and eat out of the box like a bowl. Some cats, especially kittens, will be motivated by the toys alone and forage for them without even needing food to motivate them. Cereal boxes can also work well for this type of toy.

Motivating Your Cat To Forage

- Place the foraging toy on the floor and sprinkle a few pieces of the food or treats around the toy, so that your cat will eat those and then smell that there are more in the toy. Hopefully they will get the idea and bat the object around with their paws or nudge it with their nose.
- Put something different in the foraging toy other than what is in your cats' food bowl. There is no motivation to forage if they have a bowl of the same thing sitting a few feet away on the kitchen floor.
- Show them how to forage. If your cat is just not getting the concept, push the toy around a bit with your hand, roll it, and show them that if they do this food falls out! Help them to learn. Be patient. Remember, they have not had this type of challenge before there is a chance it could take them a while to catch on.
- Keep at it! Try all kinds of different treats and foods; sometimes it is all about finding the right motivator. Cats are great observational learners, so if you can get one or two of your cats to get the hang of it, the others will soon follow. When one kitty is having a ball and getting treat after treat it is bound to stimulate interest and make your other cats wonder, hey what are they eating over there?
- If your cats are not motivated by food, this type of environmental enrichment will likely not be successful.

What should I put in my foraging toy?

We recommend offering foraging toys daily. We recommend using the Hill's prescription Diet T/D (available at Paws Whiskers and Claws) or the Science Diet Oral Care (available at Petsmart). These are both dental diets that are high in fiber, and good for hairball control. T/D is a low calorie version of Oral Care. Using regular food allows you to be generous about filling the foraging toys. Oftentimes we find that many cats prefer the dental diets and it is a much healthier alternative to treats. You can also blend the dental food and a few treats such as Feline Greenies. This keeps it exciting; not all the kibble that falls out is the same.

A Challenge for your cat and easy for you

Keeping the humans motivated to continue filling these toys is another challenge. If your cats love to forage we suggest making this chore as easy on you as possible; you will be more likely to keep the toys filled if you do not need to do it daily. We recommend doing this by having a wide variety of foraging toys. Fill them up once a week and keep them in an airtight bin in your pantry, then simply throw a few on the floor before you leave for the day, or before you go to bed. This gives your cat hours of fun while you are not home or while you are sleeping. Offer foraging toys away from your bedroom so that it does not keep you awake. If your pet suffers from separation anxiety, providing foraging toys can help alleviate this behavior problem in both cats and dogs. It is also important to have a variety so that your cats do not get bored with them. New objects means new challenges; which means smarter more mentally challenged cats.

How do I keep my dog or toddler from foraging too?

If you have a canine family member or young child that may like to sample the contents of the feline foraging toy we suggest using a baby gate to keep dogs and small hands from being able to forage too! Baby gates are a great way to keep your dog from getting into your cats food and litter box as well. For some older children, filling the foraging toys can be a great household chore.

Foraging as a weight loss program

If we have recommended that you use foraging as a weight loss program we first encourage you to get your cats actively foraging using the dental diets. Once they have the hang of it we have some toys available here with smaller holes for the low calorie Science Diet kibble. Your cats must also eat low calorie canned food 2-3 times per day.

The idea is to create a lower carbohydrate diet, while still allowing your cat to free feed. Dry food has a lot more carbohydrates than canned food. They should fill up on the canned food at least twice a day and have the dry kibble in the foraging toys; so they essentially are still free feeding, but they are keeping active, rather than lying down in front of the food bowl to gorge.

In summary

Foraging toys are one of the best toys you can provide for your cat, ideally coupled with a few sessions of interactive play each day. It serves many purposes and provides hours of constant entertainment. Foraging would be a natural part of your cats' daily activities if allowed outdoors. Since we encourage indoor only cats, or secure outdoor enclosures, foraging is as close as you can get to providing your indoor cat with something to hunt. Remember that if you do not use it you lose it. Foraging will keep your cat active and mentally challenged for a happier longer life.

Using Food Puzzles with Your Cat

Leticia Dantas, Mikel Delgado, Ingrid Johnson, and Tony Buffington

Food puzzles are an excellent way to increase your cat's activity and mental health by giving them a new, more natural way to get their food by "hunting" for it. Food puzzles typically come in two styles, rolling and stationary. They can be purchased or homemade, and can be used with dry or wet food, or treats.



Some examples of rolling food puzzles.

Beginners should start with clear puzzles with many openings so that cats can see, smell, and hear that there is food inside and will be rewarded with food for even gently nudging it.

Puzzles should be at least one-half to three-quarters of the way full so the food easily dispenses. An almost empty puzzle can be too challenging and create frustration.

If dry food is fed, sprinkle some around the puzzle so the cat can acquire a few pieces and nudge the puzzle for more. Your cat will make the connection between moving the puzzle and obtaining food.

For **slow starters**, place small handfuls of dry food in locations frequented by the cat (condos, window sills, beds.). This allows the cat to discover food in novel places.

Gradually **increase the challenge**: use puzzles that are opaque, have fewer or smaller holes, or have unique shapes such as a cube, which makes them more challenging to manipulate.

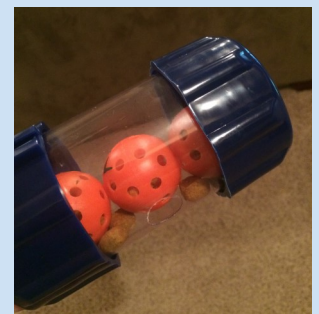


Stationary puzzles can be used with wet and dry food.

For **stationary puzzles** begin with egg cartons, muffin pans, ice cube trays or commercially available puzzles (the Catch by Northgate, or the Tunnel Feeder by Trixie Pet). Muffin pans and ice cube trays are well-suited for use with wet food.

Advanced foragers may also benefit from:

- ⇒ Hiding the puzzles around the house.
- ⇒ Doubling up objects by filling a smaller puzzle and placing it inside a larger puzzle, so that the cat must work harder to acquire food.
- ⇒ Placing a small weight or objects (such as a ping pong ball) inside the puzzle increases the challenge, by making it harder for the cat to move the puzzle, and for food to fall out.



Doubling up puzzles increases the challenge.

Eventually, you can even feed your cat all of their meals from food puzzles. Food puzzles increase your cat's exercise, allow them to use their minds to obtain food, and can provide entertainment for both you and your cat. For more information, go to foodpuzzlesforcats.com.

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CRATE TRAINING AND TRAVELING WITH YOUR CAT

Why are cats so reluctant to travel?

Cats are highly attached to territory, and movement away from that secure base is not something that is undertaken lightly! Travelling in cars, planes and other forms of human transport can be a very stressful experience for all concerned, in part, because the cat is no longer in control of its own experience. For cats that are not used to being confined to a crate, being confined in a carrier adds insult to injury and the cat's fear of leaving its familiar surroundings is compounded by its fear of being enclosed. In addition, cats that are not used to the motion and sounds of the car or plane may become quite frightened by the experience.

My cat seems to get worse with every journey – why doesn't he get used to it?

For most cats travel is a relatively uncommon experience and there is simply not enough opportunity for any significant level of habituation to be achieved. Unlike dogs, who come to see the car as a chance to accompany their owners on what might be a fun and adventurous outing, most cats see travel as an entirely negative experience and the likely destinations of feline transport confirm this. Visiting destinations such as veterinary clinics, boarding kennels, and unfamiliar or new homes are probably the most common destinations for a travelling cat and none of these give much opportunity for teaching cats that travel is fun! Thus, each subsequent trip may be more anxiety evoking than the last.



I want my cat to travel happily in the car – can I teach it?

Cats can certainly learn to enjoy car travel and there are cats that actively seek the inside of the family car and happily purr for the entire journey. In most cases these cats have been taught to travel; the best time to teach them is when they are very young. There is a period in the kitten's life when it is most likely to adapt to new experiences and when it can come to accept just about anything as being normal, provided that it is fun! Unfortunately this period occurs very early in the kitten's life and therefore the responsibility for introducing kittens to car travel may need to be undertaken by breeders. However, few breeders have the time to ensure that all of their charges are taken for daily trips in the car. Realistically it will be the new owners who need to start the introduction process and, even when the primary period of sensitivity has passed (after two months of age), short frequent pleasurable car trips will still be very valuable. Taking along some favored treats or play toys and making the first few trips to pleasant destinations can help to ensure only positive experiences. Although cats perching in the back window of a car may look cute it is important to ensure that your cat is under control during a journey and in most cases this will mean confining the cat to a carrier of some sort while it is in the car. Of course this can lead to further fear and anxiety if your cat has not been crate trained.

My cat reacts badly to the carrier– what can I do?

One of the major sources of stress for cats during travel is confinement within a cat carrier that has only been used to transport the cat. If either the travel itself or the destination is unpleasant, the cat will develop further negative associations with the carrier, seeing it as a signal of the impending veterinary clinic visit or airplane ride. Training kittens to enjoy being in

their carrying boxes can make these outings far less traumatic for all involved. Many kittens will learn to use a carrier as a safe area or bed if you begin at a young age to associate it with exploration, play, food or sleeping. Even when cats are older it is possible to break down the negative image of the carrier and work to make it a safe haven rather than a prison cell. For cats that get accustomed to spending time in their carrier, the carrier may actually help to settle the cat when the cat is traveling, visiting, or hospitalized. How secure an individual cat feels when placed in its carrier will depend on the amount and type of previous training, and individual personality differences between cats.

The first step is to select the right sort of carrier for your cat. There are a number of things to consider. The ease of cleaning and the way in which you put the cat into, and take it out of, the carrier are factors that are likely to be determined by your own preferences. Some cats are far more relaxed when they can see what is going on around them and the wire basket is better for them, but others feel more secure when they are totally hidden from view and a solid cat carrier will be a better choice for these individuals. Cats may prefer to enter and investigate carriers that have a front opening, a top opening or both. However, for owners, removing the cat from the top may proved to be easier, especially if the cat is not ready or willing to voluntarily leave its carrier.



Whichever type of cat carrier you purchase, the most important step is to introduce the cat to a carrier for which there has been no previous negative experience and to keep it on permanent display for the cat to investigate. You can increase the chances that the cat will use or explore the carrier, by putting treats, play toys or food inside, by lining it with a warm blanket, and by keeping it in an area where the cat likes to play and sleep. In some cases beginning with the top off the carrier may encourage investigation and as the cat becomes more comfortable the carrier can be closed. Some cats may soon take to the carrier as a sleeping, security or hiding area. Do not attempt to force your cat into the carrier. Your cat should first learn to enjoy and feel comfortable in the carrier before you begin to use it for transport.

I do not have time to introduce my cat to its carrier in this controlled way – what can I do to make the car trip next week more bearable?

If you must travel with your cat and have not had time to introduce your cat to its carrier it is important to take steps to make the confinement as stress free as possible. Putting familiar bedding inside the carrier, together with a favorite toy, can be useful. The idea is to make the carrier smell familiar and therefore reassure the cat that it is safe. Another possible way in which to increase the familiarity of the carrier is to apply a synthetic feline facial pheromone, such as Feliway®. This pheromone may help the cat to relax during the journey and, in trials, it has been shown to decrease the signs of anxiety in cats during car travel and during hospital stays, especially when sprayed into the cats own carrier. In order to be most effective it must be applied to the interior of the carrier 30 minutes before you need to put your cat inside.

Should I consider a sedative for car or airline travel?

If your cat becomes distressed during travel, medication is certainly an option. However, individual cats can act very differently to sedatives and anti-anxiety medications. Selecting the right medication for any individual is not always easy. You also need to be aware that medication may not last for the entire duration of your plane trip and therefore should not be used as an alternative to the behavior therapy approaches discussed above. Your cat will still need to be prepared for its travel by being introduced carefully to the carrier and the feline facial scent might also be used within the carrier to make the journey less stressful. This applies to long car journeys as well as for plane travel. If you feel that medication is necessary, because of the severity of your cat's reaction to travel, you will need to discuss this in detail with your veterinarian. It may be useful to use a trial dose prior to traveling to determine the effects that it has on your cat and the optimum dose. Although sedatives can reduce motion sickness and may help your cat to sleep through the trip, they do not reduce anxiety and may pose some risk for cats that are elderly or have heart or other underlying illnesses. Anti-anxiety drugs and natural compounds that reduce anxiety are another option you might discuss with your veterinarian. They are a better choice for reducing anxiety but may not reduce motion sickness and are not as effective for sedation.

*This client information sheet is based on material written by Debra Horwitz, DVM, Diplomate ACVB & Gary Landsberg, DVM, Diplomate ACVB
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CASTRATION OR NEUTERING

What is meant by castration or neutering?

Neutering and castration are the common terms used to describe the surgical procedure known scientifically as orchidectomy or orchiectomy. In this procedure, both testicles are removed in order to sterilize a male cat.

Why should I have my cat neutered?

Neutering is very beneficial to the health of the cat, especially if performed at an early age. Following puberty, which occurs at approximately eight to nine months of age, the male cat often develops a number of undesirable behavioral changes. He will become territorial and start



to mark areas, even inside the house, by spraying urine. This urine has a particularly offensive odor and is difficult to remove. As the tomcat reaches sexual maturity, he will start to enlarge his territory, straying ever farther from the house, particularly at night. It is for this reason that many of the cats that are hit by automobiles are non-neutered males. By increasing the size of his territory, he increases the likelihood that he will come into contact with other cats and will get into fights for territorial dominance. Inflicted fight wounds can result in severe infections and abscesses. Diseases such as FIV and FeLV, which can cause AIDS-like syndromes and cancers in cats, are spread through cat bites, these cats are most commonly affected by such incurable diseases. Last, but not least, neutering prevents unwanted litters and the needless deaths of tens of millions kittens and cats each year.

The longer a tomcat sprays and fights, the less likely neutering will stop these behaviors.

When should I have my cat neutered?

In most cases, it is recommended to neuter your cat before the onset of puberty. Puberty normally begins between six and ten months of age. The actual age chosen for castration will depend upon the preference of your veterinarian. Many veterinarians recommend castration at around five to seven months of age, although it is becoming more common to perform this procedure at an earlier age, such as two to three months, in an attempt to control overpopulation. Please contact your veterinary hospital for further details regarding their specific sterilization policies.

What does the operation involve?

Your cat will undergo a general anesthetic. You will need to withhold food for twelve (12) hours prior to surgery. However, your pet should have free access to water during most of the pre-operative fasting period. Your veterinarian will advise you how long to withhold water before surgery.

In male cats, both of the testicles are removed through a small incision in the scrotum. Since the incisions are very small, and since stitches may cause irritation of the sensitive skin of the scrotum, it is rare for the incisions to be sutured.

What surgical complications could arise?

In general, complications are rare during castration surgery, however, as with all surgical procedures, there is always a small risk:

Anesthetic complication

It is always possible that any pet could have an adverse reaction following the administration of any drug. Such cases are impossible to predict, but fortunately are extremely rare.

One potential danger arises from the cat not being fasted properly prior to anesthesia. It is essential that all instructions are strictly followed.

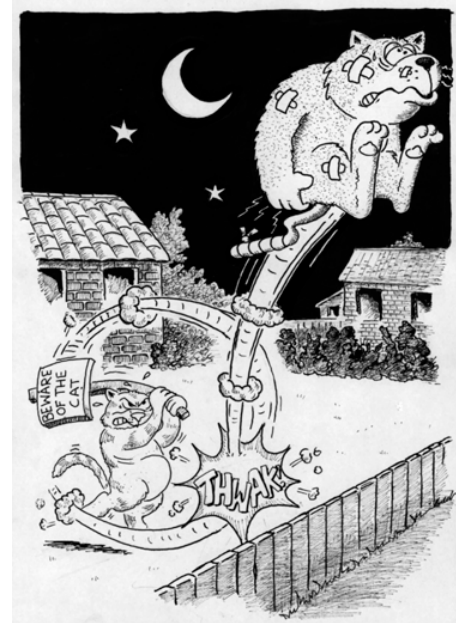
In addition, any signs of illness should be reported to your veterinarian prior to an operation.

Post-operative infection

This may occur internally or around the incision wound. In most cases the infection can be controlled with antibiotics.

What adverse affects might neutering have on my cat?

In the vast majority of cases no adverse affects are noted following neutering. In certain cats, notably the Siamese breed, the hair that grows back over an operation site may be noticeably darker, believed to be due to a difference in the skin temperature. This darker patch may grow out with the following molt as the hair is naturally replaced.





Vaccinations: What to expect after your pet's vaccination

It is common for pets to experience some or all of the following mild side effects after receiving a vaccine, usually starting within hours of the vaccination. If these side effects last for more than a day or two, or cause your pet significant discomfort, it is important for you to contact your veterinarian:

- Discomfort and local swelling at the vaccination site
- Mild fever
- Decreased appetite and activity
- Sneezing, mild coughing, "snotty nose" or other respiratory signs may occur 2-5 days after your pet receives an intranasal vaccine

More serious, but less common side effects, such as allergic reactions, may occur within minutes to hours after vaccination. These reactions can be life-threatening and are medical emergencies. Seek veterinary care immediately if any of these signs develop:

- Persistent vomiting or diarrhea
- Itchy skin that may seem bumpy ("hives")
- Swelling of the muzzle and around the face, neck, or eyes
- Severe coughing or difficulty breathing
- Collapse

A small, firm swelling under the skin may develop at the site of a recent vaccination. It should start to disappear within a couple weeks. If it persists more than three weeks, or seems to be getting larger, you should contact your veterinarian.

Always inform your veterinarian if your pet has had prior reactions to any vaccine or medication. If in doubt, wait for 30-60 minutes following vaccination before taking your pet home.

FELINE SOCIAL BEHAVIOR AND FEAR PREVENTION IN KITTENS

What is socialization?

Socialization is the process during which the kitten develops relationships with other living beings in its environment.

What is habituation?

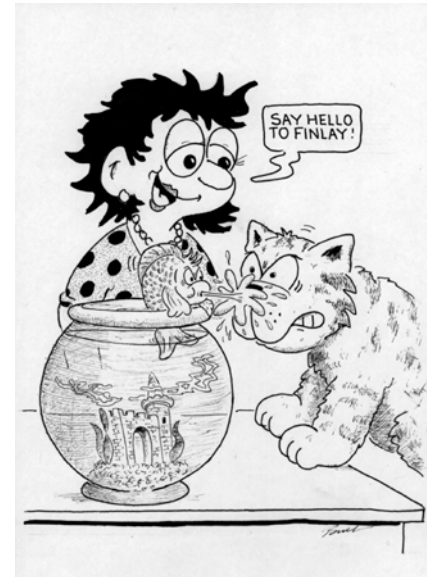
As cats develop, there are numerous stimuli (sounds, smells, sights and events) that, when they are unfamiliar, can lead to fear and anxiety. Habituation is the process of getting used to and not reacting to those stimuli by continuous exposure under circumstances that have no untoward consequences.

What is localization?

Localization is the process during which the kitten develops attachment to particular places.

Why are these terms important?

Cats that receive insufficient exposure and contact with people, other animals and new environments during their first two months may develop irreversible fears, leading to timidity or aggression. Expose your kitten to as many stimuli (people, places and things), when they can most effectively socialize, localize, and habituate to these stimuli. The first 1 to 3 months of life are the most critical periods in the social development of the cat.



Are cats a social species?

While they are fairly independent and can do well on their own, cats are quite social. Although feline social behavior has not been as extensively studied as for the dog, the domestic cat is much more social than has been traditionally reported. There are many situations where cats live together in groups and interact in a friendly manner. The composition of these groups differs from dog groupings. Usually they consist of mothers, daughters, aunts and grandmothers; female cats that are related. In large colonies, there may be many smaller related groups sharing the same space. Male cats will leave the group, but return for breeding. Males that have been neutered join the group in much the same way as females. Colonies of feral (wild) cats will be found in areas where food is abundant and shared, such as barns, dumpsites or around fishing ports. The cats in the group will allogroom (lick each other) and allomark (rub against each other). They will share the raising of kittens, fostering others from different litters.

Do cats have “personalities”?

Research has shown that it may be possible to classify cat "personalities" similar to what has been done for dogs. One such study identified cats that were shy, timid or fearful and those that were confident. The timid cats took significantly longer to approach persons and be held by them. Another study identified cats that were "shy" and those that were "trusting". That research noted that trusting cats were trusting regardless of where they encountered people, while shy cats were more fearful the further from home they were encountered. Based on these and other studies there are two common personality types: (a) sociable, confident and easygoing; (b) timid, shy and unfriendly. Some other research has also indicated an active aggressive type as well. What influences the development of personality type? Not surprisingly studies have confirmed that not only is personality inherited from the mother, but also that friendliness specifically is, in part, inherited from the father.

How does the mother cat (or queen) teach her kittens?

Cats are very good at observational learning. This occurs when an animal watches a behavior being performed by another. The queen starts to teach her kittens at a young age. From the queen, kittens learn elimination behaviors and predatory behavior. Kittens will begin to spend time in the litter box at about 30 days of age and will learn appropriate litter usage through observation of the queen and certain olfactory (smell) cues. If allowed access to prey, the queen will begin to bring them to her offspring at about 32 - 36 days of age and teach them to hunt. The kittens will begin to be weaned and eat solid food at the same age. The choice of food is influenced by the queen. Play between kittens is an important part of social development, particularly for those kittens that will be housed with other cats later in life.

What can I do to improve my chances of having a social non-fearful cat?

Selection: The genetics of an individual cat plays a critical role in how sociable, playful, fearful, excitable, or domineering a kitten will become. The first issue in helping to ensure that a kitten will be friendly and social when it grows up is to choose an appropriate kitten for your family. Since cats have a variety of personality types, the question is whether these personality types can be determined at the time of selection. As kitten socialization begins to decline at about 7 weeks of age, selection testing may become increasingly more accurate after this age. Therefore assessing older kittens and adult cats may provide more accurate information. The behavior of the parents, especially the father, as well as the behavior of any offspring from previous litters may be of even greater value at predicting adult behavior.

Assessment of young kittens is likely of limited value if the kittens are still progressing through the primary socialization period, and the assessment of the parents may provide just as much information.

Early handling: Kittens that are stimulated and handled from birth are more confident, more social, more exploratory, faster to mature and are better able to handle stress as they develop. Early handling of kittens decreases their approach time to strangers and increases the amount of time that they stayed with them. The more handling the better; but even 15 minutes a day will help to improve later behavior. Regular and frequent handling from birth increases the likelihood that the kitten will relate well to people when placed into a home after weaning at 6 to 9 weeks of age. Therefore, kittens obtained from a breeder or home where they have had frequent contact and interaction with the owners are likely to be more social and less fearful as they develop.



Socialization: The two most important factors in how social a cat becomes with people are its genetic personality, and the amount of socialization it receives during the sensitive period of socialization which is thought to be 3 - 7 weeks of age. Certainly, the greater exposure a kitten has to humans of all ages, other pets and novel situations, the better adjustment that kitten will have. Therefore the best options may be to obtain a kitten from a home where good socialization has already taken place, or to obtain a new kitten prior to 7 weeks of age and ensure immediate socialization.

How can I assist my new kitten's socialization?

Introduce your kitten to many new people and situations as possible. If the kitten is meeting a person or other pet for the first time and remains playful and inquisitive be certain to encourage and reinforce the kitten for its actions, and repeat the exposure regularly with a variety of similar stimuli. If however the kitten is fearful or withdrawn, a more gradual introduction while pairing favored treats and play with each exposure may improve the relationship fairly quickly. Be certain that the stimulus moves slowly so as not to startle the kitten. Strangers may be able to offer treats or stimulate play using a favored chase toy. However, when introducing a kitten to other animals, the stimulus should be well restrained and calm so that the kitten's fear is not enhanced, and it can be motivated to take the treats and food for the owner. There may be a great deal of individual variation, with some cats quickly adapting to new people and other pets, and others requiring a very gradual program of desensitization and counter-conditioning. (See our handout on desensitization and counter-conditioning for more details).

In order for the kitten to develop and maintain good social skills with other cats it would be advisable to introduce the kitten into a home with other cats, or to consider obtaining more than one kitten. A lack of ongoing and regular social interactions with other cats may make it difficult to introduce your cat to other cats later in life. In addition, cats that lack other cats as playmates may target the owners as substitute playmates for swatting, chasing, pouncing, and biting.

How best should I introduce my new kitten to my home?

Your interaction with your new kitten begins on the ride home. Cats should always be transported in some kind of carrier in the car. By teaching your kitten to ride in a confined location you are providing safety for your cat in future car rides. Upon arriving at home, place the kitten in a small, quiet area with food and a litter box. If the kitten is very tiny, a small litter box with lowered sides may be necessary at first. If possible, duplicate the type of litter material used in the previous home (See our handout on House-training).

The first place you put your new kitten should be inspected for nooks and crannies where a kitten might hide or get stuck. Often in a new environment, a kitten may look for a secluded place to hide. However, all kittens and cats will need to investigate their new surroundings. For a new kitten this is a more manageable task if you limit space available and initially supervise the kitten. When cats do investigate they use a random method of search. After your new kitten has had some quiet time in a restricted location, slowly allow access to other areas of the home.

Kittens are natural explorers and will use their claws to climb up onto anything possible. In the first few weeks, slow access to the home will allow exploration as well as giving you the ability to monitor the kitten's behavior. Monitor for any stimuli, rooms or areas that seem to frighten the cat, and use favored treats and play to encourage further exposure.

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HOUSE TRAINING – USING THE LITTER BOX

Do I need to train my new kitten to use a litter box?

Most cats by nature use a soil type surface for elimination. By providing a litter box with an appropriate and appealing substrate (material), few cats will need to be trained to use it. At about 30-36 days of age kittens leave the nest to search out a loose substrate for elimination. The kitten learns specific areas and substrates to use by observation of the queen (mother). Although some cats, especially those on their own property will dig and bury their wastes, many cats only partly cover their feces especially if they are off of their home territory. Some cats do not bury urine or stools at all, even on their own property and, for obvious reasons these cats may prove harder to litter train.

How can I help to train my new cat to use the litter box and area that I have selected?

Initially it is best that the kitten be confined to a small area with an appropriate sized litter box. This allows you to take advantage of a cat's tendency to eliminate in a loose material. As long as the kitty litter is easily accessible and is the only loose substrate available, very little effort should be required to litter box train the kitten. About the only other indoor area that might be equally or more appealing to some cats is the soil around houseplants. Ensuring that the cat is prevented from getting into houseplants, except when you are around to supervise deals with this problem. Another option is to move the houseplants into a room where the cat does not have access, or to place decorative pebbles or rocks over top of the soil. Kittens may need to eliminate after they eat, after they wake up and after play. At those times, you might place the kitten in its litterbox and praise or give a treat for elimination. A kitten does not need to be confined continuously, but should be supervised to prevent accidents and frequently brought back to the appropriate elimination location. A little of the urine or stool odor from previous elimination should help to attract the cat back to the box. In fact, if the kitten soils in a location other than its box on the first attempt, clean up the area thoroughly using a product that is designed to neutralize cat urine odor (see our behavior resources handout for more details), and perhaps even move a small amount of the stool or a few drops of the urine to the box to attract the cat to that area. If there is more than one cat in the home, at least one more litter box should be added to the home. By confining the kitten to an area with its own box, the kitten can establish regular litter habits without competition or threats from the other cats. This also provides for a more gradual and cautious introduction of the kittens to the other cats.



What type of litter material should I use?

There are many types of litter materials available today. These include clay litter, fine "clumping" litter, plastic pearls, silica, recycled newspapers, wood shavings and many others. Some have materials added to control odor although scented litters may be aversive to some cats. The type you choose is up to you, although you might wish to seek guidance as to which litter types are

safest if you have a kitten that tends to eat litter (as some young kittens do). Since the kitten will first start eliminating by following the cues of the queen, continuing with the same litter as used in the first home is helpful. Some studies have found that clumping litter may be preferable to more cats.

What size and type of litter box should I buy?

Initially, the size of the litter box should be determined by the size of the kitten or cat. A very small kitten may need a box with shorter (lower) sides or a ramp for easier access. As the kitten grows, a larger box is generally more appropriate. Some owners prefer litter boxes with covers on them. This is acceptable if it is acceptable to the cat. You need to be sure that the cat can



negotiate the opening by stepping into it and that the cat is not too large to fit into the opening. Over time be certain to increase the size of the box if necessary to accommodate the cat's needs.

Where should I put the litter box?

The litter box should be placed in a location that is easily accessed by the cat, yet out of the way. Try to avoid congested household areas. The cat should have some privacy and quiet to eliminate. Laundry and furnace rooms are often used but be sure that noise from household equipment is not disruptive and aversive to your cat. Make sure that the cat does not get locked out of the room at a time when it may have to eliminate. Try to put the litter box in an area that is convenient for you to check on and keep clean. Do not put food and water bowls immediately next to the litter box. If there are dogs in the home, then the litter box should be located where the cat can eliminate without being bothered by them.

How often should I clean the litter box?

One of the most important factors in continued litter box usage by house cats is cleanliness. Cats are very fastidious animals, and spend time each day making sure their coat, feet and face are clean. One can assume that they would like a clean place to eliminate. The number of cats in the home and litter usage determines the time between litter cleaning. Fecal material should be removed after each bowel movement, if possible and the box should be cleaned or scooped of urine wastes on a daily basis, whether the litter material type is clumping or plain. Litter should be changed weekly. Some clumping litters form fairly hard clumps (which may not be flushable) that are easy to scoop in their entirety and leave little residue behind. These types of litter may only need to have the box cleaned every few weeks; however remember to refill the litter to maintain sufficient depth after each scooping. Remember that each cat is an individual. Your cat may like more frequent cleaning of the litter box to maintain good usage patterns. Some cats dislike the odor of the cleansers used to clean litter boxes, so rinse the box thoroughly after each cleaning. A number of products are self-cleaning and this can be particularly appealing to some cats. However some cats might be frightened of the motors and cleaning mechanisms.

How many litter boxes do I need in my home?

The number of litter boxes needed depends on the number of cats, the size of the home, the temperament of the cat, and other pets in the home. When there are multiple cats, multiple pans

should be available in different locations, not all side-by-side in one place. Because there can be varied interactions between individuals, multiple boxes in multiple locations allow housemates to avoid one another if they so choose. Even for only one cat, two boxes may be appropriate depending on the layout of the home and the individual preferences of the cat. Some cats prefer one box for urine and one for stool. Some physical limitation may prevent a cat from climbing stairs and so a box in the location the cat frequents is needed. In general, there should be at least one litter box per cat; however, if soiling problems arise, most behaviorists advise one more box than the number of cats in the house.

What if the kitten does not use its litter box?

Should the kitten begin to eliminate in locations other than its litter box, first review the steps above. Is the litter in an area that is appealing and easily accessed by the cat? Is the litter box being cleaned often enough? Are there enough litter boxes for the number of cats? Try and determine what there is about the area that your cat is soiling that is so appealing to your cat. And perhaps most important is there anything about the area, box or litter that might be preventing its use (or scaring your cat)? To determine the most appealing litter for your cat, offer two or more different litters in the same type of box, side-by-side and see which one, if any, the cat uses most frequently. Next, determine the type of litter box the cat prefers by offering two or more litter box types side-by-side (each with the preferred type of litter). You can determine the cat's preferred location by offering the preferred litter box with the preferred litter in two or more locations and determining which one, if any, the cat uses more frequently. If litter box problems persist, then additional guidance and perhaps a behavior consultation might be required. (Also see our handout on 'House-soiling in cats'). If however, the cat begins to lift its tail, and spray urine onto vertical objects, then this is a marking behavior and would indicate that its time to consider neutering (if your cat is an intact male) or that an anxiety or territorial problem is emerging and professional guidance should be sought. (Also see our handout on Urine Marking in cats).

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VACCINATIONS IN CATS

Recent advances in veterinary medical science have resulted in an increase in the number and type of vaccines that are available for use in cats, and improvements are continuously being made in their safety and efficacy. Some vaccines are more or less routinely advocated for all cats ('core' vaccines) whereas others are used more selectively according to circumstances. However, in all cases the selection of the correct vaccination program for each individual cat, including the frequency of repeat, or booster, vaccinations, requires professional advice.

Currently cats can be vaccinated against several different diseases:

"Core" Vaccines, as recommended by the American Association of Feline Practitioners (AAFP) for all kittens and cats:

1. Feline panleukopenia, FPV or FPL (also called feline infectious enteritis) caused by FPL virus or feline parvovirus
2. Feline viral rhinotracheitis, FVR caused by FVR virus, also known as herpes virus type 1, FHV-1
3. Feline caliciviral disease caused by various strains of Feline caliciviruses, FCV
4. Rabies caused by Rabies virus



"Non-core" or discretionary vaccines, recommended for kittens and cats with realistic risk of exposure to specific diseases:

1. Feline chlamydial infection
2. Feline leukemia disease complex caused by Feline leukemia virus, FeLV
3. Feline Infectious Peritonitis (FIP) caused by FIP virus or Feline Coronavirus
4. Giardiasis caused by the protozoal parasite *Giardia*
5. Bordetellosis caused by the bacterium *Bordetella bronchiseptica*
6. Ringworm
7. Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV)

How do vaccines work?

Vaccines work by stimulating the body's defense mechanisms or immune system to produce antibodies to a particular microorganism or microorganisms such as a virus, bacteria, or other infectious organism. The animal's immune system is then prepared to react to a future infection with that microorganism(s). The reaction will either prevent infection or lessen the severity of infection and promote rapid recovery. Thus, vaccination mimics or simulates the protection or immunity that a pet has once it has recovered from natural infection with a particular infectious agent.

The immune system is complex, involving interaction of various cells and tissues and organs in an animal. The main cells involved in an immune reaction are the white blood cells and the main tissues are the lymphoid tissues such as the lymph nodes.

One of the most important functions of the immune system is the production of specific protein molecules called antibodies. A specific microorganism, such as Feline Panleukopenia Virus, has components called antigens that induce the immune system to produce antibody that specifically binds and neutralizes that organism and no other.

Antibodies work together with other white blood cells such as lymphocytes that are able to identify and kill cells that have become infected by the microorganism. The activity of lymphocytes and other immune system cells is called cell-mediated immunity.

After vaccination, just as after recovery from natural infection, the body 'remembers' the particular antigens so that when they are encountered again it can mount a rapid and strong immune response preventing the cat from developing the disease. The duration of this response varies with the disease, the type of vaccine and other variables. The likely duration will determine the recommended revaccination date.

It is important to realize that most vaccines work by preventing your cat from becoming ill during a subsequent exposure to specific disease-causing organisms, but vaccination may not prevent the cat from becoming infected. In such cases the cat, while itself protected against disease, may shed the organism for a period of time after exposure and be capable of infecting other susceptible animals. This is not a major consideration in the pet cat but may be important in the breeding colony.



What is the difference between the various types of vaccine?

Three major types of vaccine are produced for use in cats.

- 1. Modified live vaccines** - these vaccines contain live organisms that are weakened (attenuated) or genetically modified so that they will not produce disease but will multiply in the cat's body. Live vaccines are generally considered to cause a stronger, longer lasting immunity than inactivated vaccines. It is not advisable to use modified live vaccines in pregnant queens or cats whose immune system is not working properly (cats infected by *feline immunodeficiency virus* (FIV), etc.).
- 2. Killed (inactivated) vaccines** - these vaccines are prepared using fully virulent organisms or genetically modified organisms that have been killed by various treatments. Because, on their own, they do not give as high a level of protection as the live, replicating type of vaccine, killed vaccines may have an 'adjuvant' added to enhance immune stimulation.
- 3. Subunit vaccines** – these are most commonly what are called recombinant-DNA vaccines. These are vaccines in which the infectious organism has been broken apart and only certain parts are included in the vaccine. In some cases this is achieved by using genetic engineering techniques prior to the fragmentation.

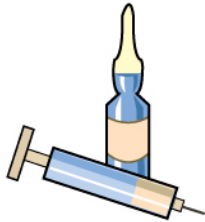
Also vaccines come in various combinations, so that protection against more than one disease is achieved in a single injection or administration. Some vaccines are given by drops into the nose rather than by injection. Your veterinarian will advise you on the most appropriate vaccines for your cat.

When should my kitten be vaccinated?

Generally kittens are vaccinated for the first time at between six and eight weeks of age and a second dose is given at ten to twelve weeks. A kitten will not be fully protected until seven to ten days after the second vaccination. Under specific circumstances your veterinarian may advise an alternative regime.

How often should booster vaccinations be given?

Booster vaccination has generally been carried out yearly, but as vaccines and knowledge change, recommendations for frequency of boosters evolve. The appropriate interval for boosters will vary with individual circumstances. Your veterinarian will discuss this with you. All cats should be examined and appropriate vaccines administered regularly. Senior cats are particularly susceptible to these infections as they grow old and their immune system becomes less efficient.



Many adult cats that have been vaccinated as kittens will be vaccinated every one to three years based on lifestyle risk assessment. That is, if your cat is at higher risk for realistic exposure to a disease, the frequency of vaccination may be increased. It is important to thoroughly discuss your cat's lifestyle with your veterinarian and determine the appropriate vaccinations and vaccination schedule for your cat.

The AAFP vaccination guidelines recommend that low-risk adult cats be vaccinated every three years for the “core” vaccines and then as determined by your veterinarian for any “non-core” vaccinations. It is important to note that feline leukemia virus (FeLV) vaccine is recommended by some AAFP members to be a “core” vaccine while other experts classify it as a “non-core” vaccine. Your veterinarian is the ultimate authority on how your cat is vaccinated

Will vaccination always protect my cat?

Vaccination will protect the vast majority of cats but under some circumstance vaccine breakdowns will occur. Reasons for such breakdowns or apparent ‘vaccine failure’ include:

Variations between different strains of viruses – This is particularly a problem for example with FCV infections, where, like the “common cold” in people, there are a large number of different strains. Available vaccines may only partially cross-protect against some of these strains.

Maternally derived antibodies – When a kitten is born and after it suckles its mother, it is acquires a proportion of antibodies from the mother. A well vaccinated queen cat will pass on some antibodies to the diseases she has been vaccinated against, and any others she has acquired naturally. Such antibodies protect the kitten against those diseases for the first two or three months of life, arguably the most critical period. However, during this same period, the maternally-derived antibodies can block the effects of vaccination of the kitten. This blocking effect decreases as the maternal antibodies gradually disappear over those two to three months. A point in time is reached when vaccination can be successfully given. Unfortunately, this point varies between kittens, mainly because the amount of maternal antibodies that each

kitten receives is variable. This is part of the reason that vaccinations are usually given two to four weeks apart in the kitten vaccination program.

The cat was stressed or not completely healthy at the time of vaccination – Stress can prevent a good response to vaccination. For this reason it is better to let a kitten settle into its new home for five to seven days before a vaccination is given. A physical examination is always given before vaccinating to help ensure the cat is healthy at that time.

The cat has been exposed to an excessive challenge dose of virus or bacteria in its environment and this has been sufficient to overwhelm the immunity.

The immune system of the cat is under-performing or incompetent because of some other disease, or complications associated with advanced age.

These are not the only reasons for vaccination failure but they are the most common.

If you feel your cat has contracted an infection for which it has been vaccinated then let your veterinarian know so tests can be undertaken to try and establish why vaccination has failed to be protective.



situations.

What are the risks of vaccination?

There are very few risks to vaccination. Your veterinarian will be able to advise you on specific details concerning your pet. You may notice your cat has a temporary loss of appetite or is less lively a day or two after a vaccination, but this should resolve within twenty-four to forty-eight hours. A very few cats may be allergic to one or more components of the vaccine and have more serious side effects such as difficulty in breathing, vomiting or diarrhea. If these signs occur, let your veterinarian know immediately. A rare form of soft tissue sarcoma has been associated with a reaction to vaccine or vaccine components in a very small number of cats. This association is controversial, and studies are in progress to investigate whether the association is real. The benefits of vaccination greatly outweigh these small risks in most

Which are the most important vaccinations to have?

This is a difficult question and will depend on individual circumstances, including the area you live in and the lifestyle of your cat. As mentioned before, certain vaccines are more routinely given and are regarded as “core” vaccines. Others may or may not be advised depending on the particular situation of your cat. Your veterinarian will be able to advise you of the most appropriate vaccination schedule for your cat.

Feline panleukopenia infection – FPV or FPV

This is an uncommon disease today because of widespread vaccination, but the risk remains widespread. When disease occurs it is a severe and often fatal gastroenteritis, with profound depression, dehydration and collapse. It is very contagious to other cats. Vaccination provides a high level of long lasting protection.

Feline respiratory virus infection

Disease is caused by FVR virus (FHV-1) or the caliciviruses (FCV) - sometimes simultaneously. The syndrome is commonly termed Upper Respiratory Infection (URI) or sometimes, erroneously, "Cat Flu". While not usually very serious, except in young kittens, it is a very common infection in unvaccinated cats and can cause long-term problems. Vaccination is only moderately effective as solid immunity to these viruses is not long term, and may be overcome by a high dose of virus in the immediate environment. Vaccination does significantly reduce the severity and duration of URI.

Feline chlamydial infection

This tends to be a particular problem in colony cats or in certain geographical locations. Chlamydiosis is a bacterial infection causing a painful inflammation and swelling of the conjunctiva or the membrane around the eye as well as upper respiratory infections. It has also been associated with infertility in queens. Infection in colonies of cats can last for long periods because protection against re-infection (immunity) is relatively short lived. Vaccination can help to prevent infection becoming established in a colony and can be used in conjunction with treatment where infection is already present.



Feline leukemia virus (FeLV) infection

This virus is widespread and infection of outdoor cats or cats in infected catteries is common. The vast majority of persistently infected cats will die either from tumors or as a consequence of the immunosuppression caused by the viral infection. Current vaccines provide a good level of protection and do not interfere with routine testing for the virus in breeding colonies. Because the virus tends to take many months before it causes disease, infected cats can appear completely normal and healthy. For this reason your veterinarian may suggest your cat have a blood test to make sure it is not infected before vaccination. Despite vaccination, a few cats will still become infected with the virus.

Feline Infectious Peritonitis (FIP)

FIP is caused by a coronavirus. Infection with the causative or related viruses is common, but the disease is uncommon, although cases occur from time to time almost everywhere. We do not understand why some infections lead to fatal disease whereas the majority of infections cause only minor illness. Vaccines are advised in some high-risk cases. Discuss usage with your veterinarian.

Rabies

This is such an important disease because of the almost 100% fatality rate of cases once symptoms occur, and because of its potential transmission to people by bites from infected

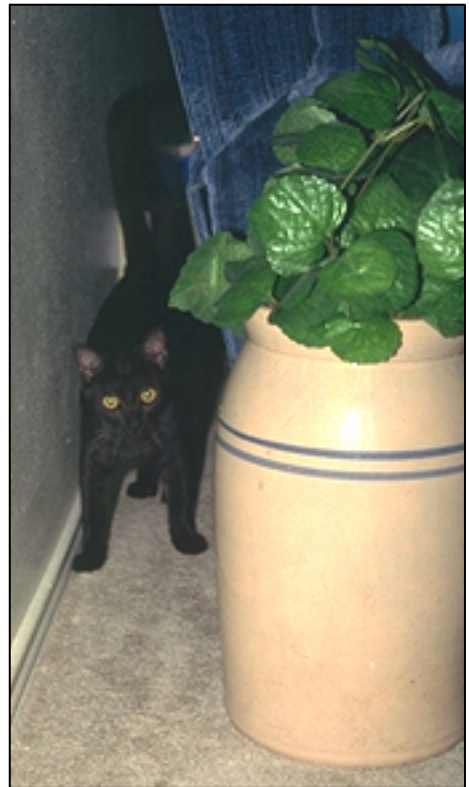
animals. Rabies vaccination is an essential part of the vaccination program for all cats. Your veterinarian will discuss the frequency of booster vaccinations needed for your cat.

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FELINE PLAY AND PLAY TOYS

What should I be looking for when I am buying toys for my cat?

The toys that you choose for your cat must take into account the natural behavior of the species. Often the simple ones are the best and ones that offer unpredictable movement, rapid movement and high-pitched sound are likely to provide your cat with hours of entertainment. Rolled up pieces of paper work very well, provided that you are on hand to move them in an unpredictable and exciting fashion. You can add to the value of this sort of play by rolling the paper down stairs or along ledges and incorporating an element of agility into the game. Cats also like to be able to pick their toys up, so small items are often more attractive than larger ones. If your cat appears disinterested in a toy it is possible to increase its incentive to play by attaching a tasty treat. You can also increase the variety of the “prey” that you offer by attaching different items onto the end of the string attached to a rod for different play sessions. Cats that initially show interest in chasing a toy may quickly lose interest. However, this may not be an indication that the play session is over, but rather that the novelty of the specific toy has worn off. In fact, for some of these cats the play intensity might be heightened and stopping might only lead to chasing of less appropriate objects such as your hands or legs. Therefore be certain to try at least one or two additional toys before ending the session.



Should I buy catnip toys for my cat?

A number of cat toys are advertised as being impregnated with catnip and this substance can make the toys very attractive. However not all cats show a reaction and indeed as much as 50% of the cat population is not responsive to the chemical which is contained in this herb. Those that react will experience a period of mild hallucination when the chemical nepetalactone acts on their brain and will show a short-lived response of excitement that borders in some individuals on euphoria. There is no harm in this response and the chemical is not addictive, so if your cat is a responder giving access to catnip can add another dimension to his life! However, if he is a non-responder you may well be wasting your money!

My kitten loves to play a game that involves chasing my fingers as I run them across the back of the sofa or pouncing on my toes as I move them under the covers. Is it okay to play these games with her?

Chasing and pouncing are vital elements of feline predatory behavior and your kitten will spend hours engaging in these activities. When toes and fingers move rapidly across her field of vision they are seen as a suitable target and it can be very amusing to play with your kitten in this way. However, the problem is that your kitten will learn to target human flesh within a predatory context and as she grows up you may live to regret these seemingly innocent games. As a basic rule it is best to only play predatory games with toys that your cat can eventually catch and “kill” such as toy mice, pieces of food on the end of string or balls of rolled up paper. Therefore be certain to offer several play sessions with chase toys each day and schedule them at times when the cat has a history of becoming most active so as to preempt other forms of undesirable chase and play. Interaction with human hands should be limited to the context of affection and to being stroked and petted.

I have heard about cat toys that dispense food and wonder if these are a good idea?

These toys are often referred to as cat puzzle feeders and they can be a very useful way of increasing activity in sedentary or indoor cats as well as providing entertainment



for food orientated individuals, who will work hard to get the treats out from inside the device. They are available in many pet shops but it is easy to make your own from a plastic bottle, which has small holes in the side that are just big enough to release the pieces of dry cat food that are placed inside. As the cat knocks the bottle around the floor it will be rewarded with pieces of food and the fact that the bottle is transparent and makes a noise as it moves will help to keep the cat's interest. It is also useful to use small soft plastic bottles, which are easy for the cat to pick up

and carry around, as this appears to increase their level of attraction in feline eyes!

My neighbor has bought her cat an aerobic center – would you recommend one of these for my indoor cat?

Over recent years there has been a trend toward the use of cat aerobic centers and these can be very good value. They incorporate the opportunity to climb, balance and scratch and many of them have small toys suspended from them, which offer the opportunity to practice predatory skills. Providing an outlet for these sorts of behavior is essential for an indoor cat such as yours, but even when a cat has access to outdoors it can benefit enormously from this sort of equipment. More information is available in the handout 'Keeping an indoor cat happy'

What is a scratching post and why is it important?

Scratching posts do provide an opportunity for play but they are also very necessary since scratching is an important behavior for cats and one that needs to have an acceptable outlet within the home. Probably the most important features of a scratching

post are its height, its stability and its surface texture. Tall posts allow cats to scratch at full stretch and the surface material needs to offer a good purchase for the claws. Wooden scratching facilities can help to transfer scratching behavior into an outdoor context. If your cat is destined for an indoor life you need to avoid future confusion by ensuring that the material on the scratch post does not resemble any of your household furnishings. See our handout on scratching for more details.

When my cat was a kitten I played with her every day but surely as an adult these playtimes are no longer necessary?

It is a common misconception that cats only play when they are kittens, when in fact adult cats also benefit from regular playtimes and playful interaction with their owners. As they get older their play may alter, but the drive to chase, pounce and kill remains throughout the cat's life and games that allow for these behaviors are always popular.

When should I play with my cat?

The best time to play with a cat is when it appears to be naturally interested. Predatory activity will naturally occur around the times of dawn and dusk so morning and evening playtimes are likely to be the most successful. Sessions can be varied in length depending on each individual cat's interest but in general terms a number of short playtimes of 10-15 minutes each will be more beneficial than one long session of half an hour.

What is the best way for me to play with my adult cat?

Playing with cats using remote style toys has a number of advantages especially for the more independent adult cat. If a toy is being held in the owner's hand the cat will be aware of their presence and this can interfere with the full expression of their predatory behavior, as it does not seem "real". The close presence of human hands can also encourage cats to "play" with moving fingers and can encourage predatory responses towards owners' hands and ankles. The easiest way to encourage play while remaining a little distant from the cat is to use fishing rod style toys and the aim is to keep the object moving and let the cat repetitively stalk, chase and "kill" the prey. During a natural hunting sequence cats will often spend time observing the movement of potential "prey" without chasing it and while many owners interpret this as a sign that the cat is not interested in the toy the truth is that this cat has just become more efficient at waiting for the right moment to pounce.

I have given my cat lots of toys but he only seems to play for very short periods of time and then get bored – is this normal?

Although cats are naturally playful creatures they are also designed for short bursts of intense physical activity interspersed with long periods of sleep. This means that short intense play sessions are the most beneficial in feline terms and owners often misinterpret the lack of staying power as a sign of boredom. In fact your cat's play pattern is perfectly normal and you can maximize the benefit of these short playtimes by

rotating the toys on a regular basis and ensuring that there is always something new and exciting to keep your cat's interest!

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FELINE SCRATCHING

Why do cats scratch?

Scratching is a normal feline behavior. Although scratching does serve to shorten and condition the claws, other important reasons why cats scratch are to mark their territory (both visibly and with the scent of the foot pads) and to stretch. Some cats may increase their territorial marking (e.g. scratching, urine marking) in situations of anxiety or conflict. Cats may also threaten or play with a swipe of their paws.

For cats that live primarily outdoors, scratching is seldom a problem for the owners. Scratching is usually directed at prominent objects such as tree trunks or fence posts. Play swatting with other cats seldom leads to injuries because cats have a fairly thick skin and coat for protection. When play does get a little rough, most cats are pretty good at sorting things out between themselves. Occasionally, rough play or territorial fighting does lead to injuries or abscesses that would require veterinary attention.



Cats that live primarily or exclusively indoors may run into disfavor with their owners when they begin to scratch furniture, walls, or doors, or when they use their claws to climb up, or hang from the drapes. Claws can also cause injuries to people when the cats are overly playful or don't like a particular type of handling or restraint. With a good understanding of cat behavior and a little bit of effort, it should be possible to prevent or avoid most clawing problems, even for those cats that live exclusively indoors.

Cats that go outdoors may be content to scratch when outside, and leave the walls and furniture intact when indoors. Cats that spend most of their time indoors, however, will usually require an area for indoor scratching, climbing, and play.

How can I stop my cat from scratching?

It is impractical and unfair to expect cats to stop scratching entirely. Cats that go outside may be content to do all their scratching outdoors, but the urge may still arise when the cat comes back indoors. Cats that spend most of their time indoors will of course, need outlets for their scratching and marking behaviors so don't be surprised if you come home to objects strewn all over the floor, scratches on your furniture, and your cat playfully climbing or dangling from your drapes. While it may not be possible to stop a cat from scratching, it should be possible to direct the scratching, climbing and play to appropriate areas indoors. Building or designing a user friendly scratching post, providing a regular daily routine of social play, object play and exercise, and keeping the cat away from potential problem areas will usually be adequate to deal with most scratching problems. Further details on providing an enriched indoor environment and encouraging appropriate play are discussed in separate handouts.

How do I design a scratching area for my cat?

Since cats use their scratching posts for marking and stretching, posts should be set up in prominent areas, with at least one close to the cat's sleeping quarters. The post should be tall enough for the cat to scratch while standing on hind legs with the forelegs extended and sturdy enough so that it does not topple when scratched. Some cats prefer a scratching post with a corner so that two sides can be scratched at once while other cats may prefer a horizontal scratching post. Special consideration should be given to the surface texture of the post. Commercial posts are often covered with tightly woven material for durability, but many cats prefer a loosely woven material where the claws can hook and tear during scratching. Remember that scratching is also a marking behavior and cats want to leave a visual mark. Carpet may be an acceptable covering but it should be combed first to make certain that there are no tight loops. Some cats prefer sisal, a piece of material from an old chair, or even bare wood for scratching. Be certain to use a material that appeals to your cat.

How can I get my cat to use its post?

Placement is important when trying to entice your cat to use a scratching post. Because scratching is also a marking behavior, most cats prefer to use a post that is placed in a prominent location. It may be necessary to place the post in the center of a room or near furniture that the cat was trying to scratch until the cat reliably uses it and then move it to a less obtrusive location. Even once it is moved it may need to remain in the room where the cat spends a great deal of time and wishes to leave their "message". A good way to get the cat to approach and use the post is to turn the scratching area into an interesting and desirable play center. Perches to climb on, space to climb into, and toys mounted on ropes or springs are highly appealing to most cats. Placing a few play toys, cardboard boxes, catnip treats, or even the food bowl in the area should help to keep the cat occupied. Sometimes rubbing the post with tuna oil will increase its attractiveness. Food rewards can also be given if the owner observes the cat scratching at its post. Products have been designed to reward the cat automatically by dispensing food rewards each time the cat scratches. It may also be helpful to take the cat to the post, gently rub its paws along the post in a scratching motion, and give it a food reward. This technique should not be attempted, however, if it causes any fear or anxiety. For some cats, multiple posts in several locations will be necessary.



What can I do if the cat continues to scratch my furniture?

Despite the best of plans and the finest of scratching posts, some cats may continue to scratch or climb in inappropriate areas. The first step is to determine if there is excessive scratching and whether anxiety is a factor. Scratching of new areas and sites may be related to anxiety and marking behavior. Examine the history closely to determine whether there have been changes in the household around the time that the scratching problem arose, such as the introduction of a new cat, moving or a change in schedule. Also look for other signs of anxiety such as a change in appetite, a change in social behavior (e.g. more aggressive or more withdrawn), or the onset of urine marking. When, where and how often the cat scratches might be a clue as to the possible cause. If the cat is not satisfied to scratch in one or two selected areas, then look at the environmental and household factors that might lead to anxiety. If the cat scratches new objects or furniture in the home, this might be a marking behavior. Cats that scratch in a particular room, or on a particular person's possessions may have a relationship

problem that might need to be resolved. Providing the cat with a more enriched daily routine, including multiple feeding sessions, additional opportunities for social / predatory play, and new objects to manipulate and explore, may help to better settle the cat at times when it might otherwise be scratching. In addition to determining the cause and trying to resolve the underlying anxiety, the feline facial pheromone Feliway may be useful to reduce marking when sprayed on the inappropriate locations (but not to deter normal marking of preferred scratching sites).

If the scratching is not anxiety related, but the targets of scratching are undesirable for the owner, a little time, effort, and ingenuity might be necessary. The first thing to consider is partial confinement or “cat-proofing” your home when you are not around to supervise. If the problem occurs in a few rooms, consider making them out of bounds by closing off a few doors or by using child-proofing techniques such as child locks or barricades. The cat may even have to be kept in a single room that has been effectively cat proofed, whenever the owner cannot supervise. Of course the cat’s scratching post, play center, toys, and litter box should be located in this cat-proof room.

If cat-proofing is not possible or the cat continues to use one or two pieces of furniture, you might want to consider moving the furniture, or placing a scratching post directly in front of the furniture that is being scratched. Take a good look at the surfaces of the scratched furniture and ensure that the surface of the post is covered with a material similar to those for which the cat has shown a preference. Some scratching posts are even designed to be wall mounted or hung on doors. Placing additional scratching posts in strategic areas may also be helpful for some cats. Another option is to try using a feline facial scent on scratched surfaces. This may help to reduce scratching at these sites but the cat will still need alternate areas to scratch. Keeping the cat’s nails properly trimmed or using plastic nail covers, are also useful techniques for some owners.

How do I punish my cat for inappropriate scratching?

All forms of physical punishment should be avoided since they can cause fear or aggression toward the owners, and at best, the cat will only learn to stop the scratching while the owner is around. Indirect, non-physical forms of punishment may be useful if the owner can remain out of sight while administering the punishment. In this way the cat may learn that scratching is unpleasant even when the owner is not present. Water rifles, ultrasonic or audible alarms, or remote controlled devices are sometimes useful.

Generally, the best deterrents are those that train the pet not to scratch, even in the owner’s absence. If the surface or area can be made less appealing or unpleasant, the cat will likely seek out alternative areas or target for scratching, (hopefully acceptable scratching posts). The simplest approach is to cover the scratched surface with a less appealing material (plastic, a loosely draped piece of material, aluminum foil, or double-sided tape). Another effective deterrent is to booby trap problem areas so that either scratching or approaching the area is unpleasant for the cat (e.g. motion detector air spray, motion detector alarm, odor repellents or a stack of plastic cups that is set to topple when the cat scratches). Of course, neither remote punishment nor booby traps will successfully deter inappropriate scratching, unless the cat has an alternative scratching area that is comfortable, appealing, well located, and free of all deterrents.



My cat is using her claws to injure family members, what should I do?

The first thing you need to do is determine why the cat feels the need to use her claws. If the cat is anxious, fearful or frustrated then she may be using her claws to escape. A cat that uses its claws on the owners in play or when climbing onto or jumping off of the owners laps may be improved by nail trimming, directing the cat into acceptable play or identifying and preventing situations in which the cat might use its claws. A more in-depth behavioral assessment is needed to determine why your cat is now clawing at family members.

*This client information sheet is based on material written by Debra Horwitz, DVM, Diplomate ACVB & Gary Landsberg, DVM, Diplomate ACVB
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OVARIOHYSTERECTOMY OR SPAY SURGERY

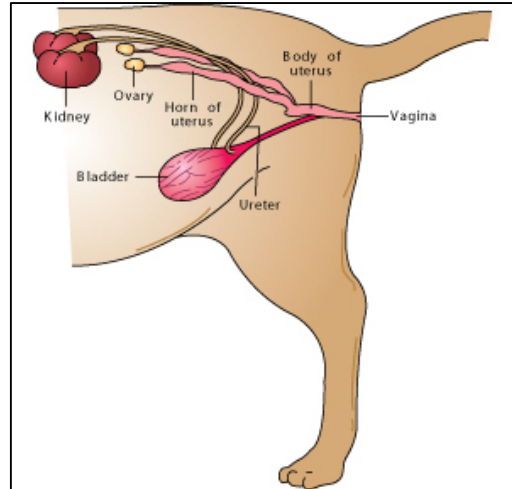
What is meant by ovariohysterectomy or spaying?

Spaying is the common term used to describe the surgical procedure known scientifically as an ovariohysterectomy. In this procedure, the ovaries and uterus are completely removed in order to sterilize a female cat.

Why should I have my cat spayed?

We recommend that all non-breeding cats be sterilized. Here are several health benefits associated with spaying your cat.

- Spaying eliminates the risk of ovarian and uterine cancers.
- Breast cancer is the number one type of cancer diagnosed in intact or unspayed female cats.
- If your cat is spayed before her first heat cycle, there is less than ½ of 1% (0.5%) chance of developing breast cancer.
- With every subsequent heat cycle, the risk of developing breast cancer increases.
- After 2½ years of age ovariohysterectomy gives no protective benefit against developing breast cancer.
- Pets with diabetes or epilepsy should be spayed to prevent hormonal changes that may interfere with medications.



Are there other benefits to spaying my cat?

The most obvious benefit is the prevention of unplanned pregnancies. There is no medical or scientific reason for letting your cat have a litter before she is spayed.

Once a cat reaches puberty, usually at around seven months of age, she will have a heat or estrus cycle every two to three weeks for most of the year, unless she becomes pregnant. She will be “in heat” or receptive to mating for approximately one week in each cycle. During “heat” she may display unsociable behavior such as loud and persistent crying and frequent rubbing and rolling on the floor. This behavior coupled with her scent, will attract male cats from miles around. Removal of the ovaries will stop her estrus cycles.

When should I have my cat spayed?

Spaying should be performed before the first estrus or “heat cycle”. Most cats are spayed between four and six months of age although some veterinarians choose to spay cats at two to three months of age. It is possible to spay your cat if she is pregnant.

What does a spay surgery involve?

This is a major surgical procedure that requires a full general anesthetic. You will need to fast your cat the night prior to surgery. Most cats return home within forty-eight hours after surgery.

The operation is performed through a relatively small incision made most commonly in the midline of the abdomen, just below the umbilicus. Both ovaries are removed along with the

entire uterus. The surgical incision will be closed with several layers of sutures. In many cases, skin sutures will be placed, and these will be removed after seven to ten days.

Are complications common with spaying?

In general, complications are rare during spaying of cats. However, as with all anesthetic and surgical procedures, there is always a small risk. The potential complications include:

Anesthetic reaction

It is possible that any individual animal could have an adverse reaction following the administration of a drug or anesthetic. Such cases are impossible to predict, but are extremely rare. Pre-operative blood work is a useful screening test that may detect pre-existing problems which could interfere with the pet's ability to handle the anesthetic drugs.



It is important that you properly fast your cat prior to surgery according to your veterinarian's instructions. In addition, any signs of illness or previous medical conditions should be reported to your veterinarian prior to any sedation, anesthesia or surgery.

Internal bleeding

This can occur if a ligature around a blood vessel breaks or slips off after the abdomen has been closed. This is very rare, and is more likely to occur if the cat is extremely active. Clinical signs include weakness, pale gums, depression, anorexia or a distended abdomen.

Post-operative infection

This may occur internally or externally around the incision site. In most cases the infection can be controlled with antibiotics. This most commonly occurs when the cat licks the site excessively or is in a damp environment.

Sinus formation or Suture Reaction

Although extremely rare, occasionally the body will react to certain types of suture material used during surgery. This results in a draining wound or tract that may appear up to several weeks after the surgery was performed. Often a further operation is required to remove the suture material.

Will spaying have any affect on my cat?

In the vast majority of cats, there are absolutely no adverse affects following spaying. In certain cats, notably the Siamese breed, the hair that grows back over an operation site may be noticeably darker, believed to be due to a difference in the skin temperature. This darker patch may grow out with the following molt as the hair is naturally replaced.

There are many myths and rumors that are not supported by facts or research. Be sure to address any questions or concerns you may have with your veterinarian prior to surgery.

KITTENS – GETTING OFF TO A GOOD START

How best should I introduce my new kitten to my home?

Your interaction with your new kitten begins on the ride home. Cats should always be transported in some kind of carrier in the car. By teaching your kitten to ride in a confined location you are providing safety as well as starting a routine that you can maintain for future car rides. Upon arriving at home, place the kitten in a small, quiet area with food and a litter box. If the kitten is very tiny, a small litter box with low sides may be necessary at first. If possible, duplicate the type of litter material used in the previous home (See our handout on 'House-training – using the litter box').

Set up a safe and secure area where you can leave your kitten when you are not available for supervision. This location should have a food bowl, water bowl, litter box, play toys, a scratching post and a resting area; be sure it is big enough to accommodate all these things. Since it is advisable to feed your kitten multiple small meals throughout the day, you may choose to also provide a feeding area in this room. Make sure to inspect the area for nooks and crannies where a kitten might hide or get stuck. All kittens and cats will need time to investigate their new surroundings. For a new kitten this is a more manageable task if you limit the available space initially. Be sure that any area where your kitten is allowed to roam has been effectively cat-proofed, which includes anywhere the kitten can jump or climb. Potentially dangerous items such as electric cords and items that might be chewed or swallowed (such as thread, rubber bands, paper clips, children's toys) should be booby trapped or kept out of reach (See our handout on 'Controlling undesirable behavior in cats'). After your new kitten has had some quiet time in a restricted location, slowly allow access to other areas of the home under your supervision.



Kittens are natural explorers and will use their claws to climb up onto anything possible. In the first few weeks, slow access to the home will allow exploration as well as the ability to monitor the kitten's behavior.

What should I do if I have other pets?

Although some kittens may show fear and defensive postures toward other pets in the home, most young kittens are playful and inquisitive around other animals. Therefore, it is often the existing pets that can pose more of a problem. If you know or suspect that your adult dog or cat might be aggressive toward the kitten, then you should seek professional behavior advice before introducing the pets to each other.

The kitten should be given a safe and secure area that provides for all of its needs (as above) and introductions with the existing family pets should be carefully supervised. At the first introduction there may be no immediate problems, and reinforcement of desirable responses may be all that is required.

If there is some mild anxiety on the part of your dog then introductions should be controlled, gradual, supervised and always positive. Your new kitten could be placed in a carrier or on a leash and harness so that it will not provoke your dog. Then using a leash for control, favored rewards and training commands, encourage your dog to sit or stay calmly in the presence of the cat. Dogs that are not well trained to settle on command may need their training reviewed and improved before introduction. Alternatively a leash and head halter could be used for more immediate control and safety. Calm investigation should then be encouraged and reinforced. (See our handout on using a head halter). Any initial anxiety on the part of the dog or kitten should soon decrease and, if the dog is prevented from rough play and chasing, the kitten should quickly learn its limits with the dog, including how to avoid confrontation by climbing or hiding. Initially it would be best to keep a dog and a kitten separated unless supervised. If, after some cautious initial introductions, there were still the possibility of aggression or injury then a behavior consultation would be advisable.



Most adult cats are fairly tolerant of kittens, so that keeping the kitten in its own area, and then allowing introductions when the cats are eating or playing, should help to decrease any initial anxiety. A leash and harness or a crate can be used to control one or both of the cats during initial introductions. A synthetic cheek gland scent, either as a spray or diffuser, may also be useful for easing introductions. Most cats and kittens will soon work out their relationship on their own, without injury. However, if there is a threat of aggression, then details of a gradual introduction program can be found in our handout 'Feline aggression: territorial and fear aggression to household cats'.



How can I prevent problems from developing?

The key to preventing behavior problems is to identify and provide appropriate outlets for all of the needs of the kitten. This is especially important for the indoor cat since all of its play, predation, exploration, scratching, elimination and social needs will need to be channeled into acceptable indoor options. Sexual motivation can be reduced by neutering. Most of the physical activity of an outdoor cat would be focused on the hunt or on predatory and social play. Interactive play should therefore be designed as substitutes. To provide multiple predatory play sessions, use wands and movable toys or small light toys of plastic, fabric, feathers or fleece, that can be batted, chased and retrieved. Feeding can be broken up and made more interactive by feeding multiple small meals, some of which can be given in foraging toys, stuffed into feeding toys, or hidden inside bags and boxes. A cat's interest in exploration might be addressed by providing new toys that can be batted and chased, and new areas to explore such as paper bags and cardboard boxes. Interest might be stimulated and maintained by hiding food treats or catnip in the toys, exploration and climbing areas. In addition to social play session with owners, highly social and playful cats may also benefit from having a second social and playful cat in the home. A comfortable blanket or rug for napping, counters, shelves or play centers for perching, posts for scratching, and a proper litter area for elimination round out most of the cat's needs. One important rule of thumb is that each cat is different; you must choose the types of play and toys that are most appealing to your cat

and most appropriate for your household. (For more information, see our handout on play and investigative behavior).

Can I prevent my cat from becoming overly fearful?

Most kittens are highly social, but sociability and social play might begin to wane after two months of age. Therefore as soon as the kitten is obtained you should make every attempt to introduce the kitten to a wide variety of people (various ages, races, and infirmities) a wide variety of environments, other pets, and as many new stimuli (e.g. noises, car rides, elevators) as possible. One way to help insure a positive relationship with each new person, pet, place and event is to give the kitten one of its favored treats or toys with each new meeting and greeting (See our handout on kitten socialization and fear prevention).

How can I teach my cat to enjoy handling?

Depending on the personality and early experiences as a kitten, your cat may enjoy, accept, or dislike certain types of handling, from petting to bathing. In order for the cat to learn to accept and enjoy a variety of types of physical contact from humans, it is critical that the human hand only be associated with positive experiences and that all physical punishment is avoided. Begin with those types of handling that the cat enjoys or is willing to accept, and provide small treats at each of the first few sessions. Once the cat learns to associate food with these sessions, slightly longer or more intense sessions can be practiced. This type of handling can be used to help the cat become accustomed to, and perhaps enjoy, patting, grooming, teeth brushing, nail trimming, and even bathing. Over time you can introduce a brush or comb so that you can help keep your cat's coat clean and free of mats. Regular grooming will also help decrease hairball formation. Never force this type of handling upon your cat, as any negative experience will only make the problem worse and the cat more resistant to further handling.

It is important to remember that physical discipline is inappropriate. It can scare your cat and make him or her afraid of being picked up or held. To help with problems you might encounter, please see our handout on controlling undesirable behavior in cats.

Are there other things I should train my cat to do?

It can be very useful and enjoyable to train your cat to a few simple commands such as to "come" when he is called. This can be accomplished by starting early. Take either a food treat or the cat bowl and show it to your kitten while slowly moving away from the kitten and at the same time saying his name and the word "come". As the kitten follows and comes to you, give him the treat or food. With each repetition start a bit further away. Always reward the kitten when he gets to you with praise and a food treat. Remember not to proceed too quickly and make sure the kitten is successful each time. As the kitten learns the task, gradually phase out food rewards to a more variable schedule but always use praise and petting. Over time, your kitten should eagerly come when called. Similarly the pet can be encouraged to sit or give a paw. Use food lures to encourage the behavior and, when the pet responds consistently, add an appropriate word just before the cat displays the behavior.

Training your cat to accept the carrier without distress and fear will also come in handy over its lifetime. Using food rewards, delectable food, and play toys, you can entice the kitten to enter and explore the carrier. When the cat has voluntarily entered the carrier, the door can be briefly closed and then re-opened. Each time, try to leave the kitten in a bit longer before allowing him to exit. Be sure to never allow the kitten out when it cries or scratches at the crate or he will associate those behaviors with escape. Instead wait until the kitten is calm and quiet, praise him and allow him to exit. Do not keep him in longer than he can be good during the initial training; gradually increase the time inside. If car travel will be frequent, short trips can be taken

for practice to get the kitten used to traveling in the car. In some cases a very large cat crate can be used as a safe haven for your kitten and can also accommodate litter box, food and water. Feliway™ might help some cats to more quickly adapt to their carrier.

In summary, a cat can become very demanding of attention, play and affection. Begin early to teach your kitten how to ask nicely for interaction. Obnoxious behavior such as swatting, excessive vocalization, biting and pouncing should not be tolerated. If your kitten begins to exhibit these behaviors, quickly and quietly leave the area and cease all interactions. Once the kitten is calm and quiet, call him over and resume interactions. The goal is for the kitten to learn that calm, quiet responses get your attention, not wild or aggressive ones. For this to be effective you must be certain that you make time each day for appropriate interactions with your cat that include play, petting, grooming and naturally meeting his needs for food, water and a clean litter box.

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