



# Kitten Guide

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# **Recommended Feline Preventative Healthcare**

*Animal Medical Center of Mount Pleasant*

## **Vaccinations:**

Vaccination regimens are based on your cat's individual needs and risk factors.

**Higher risk cats**- live outdoors (completely or partially, including potential contact through window screens), stray/feral cats, cattery facilities, open multi-cat households, feline leukemia (FeLV) positive households, and/or households with unknown FeLV status. These cats should receive a **Rabies** vaccination every 3 years and annual vaccinations for **FVRCP (Feline Viral Rhinotracheitis virus, Calici virus and Panleukopenia)** and **FeLV (Feline Leukemia)**

**Lower risk cats**- live indoors and in closed multi-cat households in which all of the cats have tested negative for FeLV/FIV. Those cats which fall into this category should receive a **Rabies** vaccination yearly and **FVRCP** every 3 years. Vaccination against FeLV/FIV should be discussed with the veterinarian to determine necessity (*i.e.* boarding requirements.)

## **Dental Care:**

Due to the increase in periodontal disease among our patients, we recommend preventative dental care. Dental care options include routine brushing and/or dental treats (Hills T/D, CET Chews, etc.). Periodontal disease can lead to gingivitis, tooth loss, bad breath and can ultimately contribute to kidney failure, heart disease and liver disease.

## **Heartworm Prevention:**

Mosquitoes transmit heartworm disease, a parasitic infection of the heart and the blood vessels in the lungs. Recent studies have shown that 1 out of 8 cats in the Southeast have heartworm infections. The disease causes respiratory problems such as coughing, asthma and in severe cases, death. **At this time there is no adequate treatment for feline heartworm disease.** Year-round heartworm prevention is recommended for **both** outdoor and indoor cats.

## **Flea Control:**

Flea control products available for cats include monthly topicals and oral products. When used on a regular basis these products have been proven safe, effective and convenient. Our staff will be happy to help you decide which products are best for both you and your pets.

## **Deworming:**

A minimum of two dewormings is recommended for all kittens. Intestinal parasites are passed to kittens from their mother and/or picked up from their environment. Fecal exams are conducted to find parasite eggs. We recommend yearly fecal exams for all adult cats that spend time outdoors. **Some intestinal parasites can pose a potential threat to young children** so annual fecal exams are important for families with children.

### **Spaying and Neutering:**

Unless you are planning on breeding your pet, we recommend spaying/neutering all animals. Spaying your female kitten prior to her first heat reduces the risk of breast cancer by 95% and eliminates the problem of future uterine infections. Neutering your male kitten reduces his desire to roam and decreases the risk of future prostate problems and testicular tumors. Spaying and neutering provides convenience to the pet owner, better health for your pet and helps decrease the overpopulation problem.

## **FELINE HEARTWORM DISEASE**

Heartworm disease is a life-threatening condition that is unfortunately all too prevalent in our area of the country. While commonly associated with dogs, it is not a disease that is only found in dogs. Heartworm disease is being recognized as an increasing problem in cats. In dogs, we do annual heartworm tests to check for heartworm exposure. However, testing in cats is not as accurate. To compound this problem, there are no current effective treatments for heartworms in cats. While the disease is transmitted in the same way, it does not progress in cats the same way as it does in dogs. It only takes one single heartworm to be fatal to a cat. In cats, heartworms do not just lodge in the heart, but they can migrate to other areas such as the lungs or other tissues. Prevention is the key to managing heartworms. We recommend heartworm prevention be given twelve months a year. For cats, there are two options: oral or topical. Both are extremely effective if given properly, but no medication is 100% perfect. Consult your veterinarian for the best heartworm prevention option for you and your cat. We believe that this will help us to provide the BEST CARE for your pet.

### ***What You Need to Know About FIV and FELV Testing and Vaccination:***

The feline leukemia (FeLV) and feline immunodeficiency virus (FIV) test is a blood test used to detect exposure to or infection of one of these viruses. The feline leukemia test is often called the "Feleuk" test or abbreviated as FeLV test. The feline immunodeficiency virus test is also referred to as the FIV test or feline "AIDS" test. These tests can be run individually but are most commonly run together.

FeLV and FIV should be run on all cats with any concurrent illness or if a recent FeLV/FIV status has not been established. This test is also recommended on any new cat that is coming into the household. This test will reveal that either your cat is negative for both illnesses, which means that your cat has not been infected or exposed to either virus or that your cat is positive to either or possibly both. This means that your cat has been infected or exposed at some point in its life. We will often recommend retesting positive results, depending on the age, in the cases of kittens.

FeLV is a retrovirus that may cause suppression of the immune system, impairing your cat's ability to fight infections. FIV is a viral infection that attacks the immune system. It can promote a variety of symptoms including anemia and cancer. FeLV and FIV are not contagious to humans. There is no treatment or cure for FeLV or FIV, but there are vaccinations for both viruses that will aid in the prevention of them. The FeLV vaccine can be started as early as 9 weeks of age or at any point in the cat's adult life. It must be boosted 3 weeks after the first one is given and the cat must receive it every year afterwards. The FIV vaccine can also start at 9 weeks of age and must be boosted twice at 3-week intervals after the first injection. The cat must test negative for both viruses before being vaccinated.

## **Our Surgical Difference**

Spaying and neutering may be the only surgery your pet ever needs. These, along with dental cleanings, are the most common anesthetic procedures for pets. Please do not take it lightly - although common, it is still surgery, and you need to understand that there are important differences in how they are done. Saving a few dollars can be a painful mistake for your pet that can lead to organ damage or even death.

At the Animal Medical Center, we are leaders in the field of veterinary surgery. Our surgeons strive to provide your family members with a level of care that far exceeds the "generally acceptable level of care". We strive to reduce the possible negative outcomes through advanced monitoring equipment, highly trained surgical nurses, pre-anesthetic bloodwork, human grade sutures and surgical supplies, IV fluids and pain management. Our doctors have advanced training in surgical pain management, and we are recognized as leaders in this area of medicine. *Our doctors further the pledge of your pets' comfort and optimum recovery with the use of **Laser surgery** with every spay and neuter. The Laser ensures less bleeding, less swelling and therefore less pain and better healing after the surgery.*

When it comes time for your pets' surgery their medical history can be invaluable to the surgeon. We do not practice "one size fits all" anesthesia. Anesthesia is catered to and around your pets' specific needs, problems, or breed characteristics. We look at the whole animal and try to consider what other problems we can address to reduce the likelihood of having to undergo further procedures. Anesthetic records become an invaluable part of your pets' medical history. The base line bloodwork will be used to compare against future diagnostics as they age or develop sicknesses. Their response to anesthetic medications will assist in the planning of further treatment protocols.

***The extra steps that we employ to provide the safest, cleanest and most pain-free surgical experience your pet can receive are important to their short-term comfort and long-term well-being. We will not compromise their trust.***

# WHY NEUTER?

There are many medical and behavioral benefits to having your male cat or dog neutered:

1. CONVENIENCE TO OWNER
  - a. Usually stops tomcats from spraying foul-smelling urine in the house.
  - b. Reduces the annoying and embarrassing urge of male dogs to “mount” children and adult’s legs.
  - c. Reduces aggression against other animals.
2. BETTER HEALTH FOR YOUR PET
  - a. Eliminates your pet’s desire to seek out a female and reduces risks involved with a free-roaming animal (car accidents, etc.)
  - b. Reduces the risk of prostate problems and testicular tumors later in life.
3. HELPS DECREASE THE OVERPOPULATION PROBLEM
  - a. One male running loose for just a few hours can impregnate many females adding to the serious problem of unwanted puppies and kittens.
4. ELIMINATES SEXUAL FRUSTATION
  - a. A male sensing a female in heat is nearby can break down doors and jump fences in his desire to mate.
  - b. Let’s your pet relax and enjoy being part of the family.

## MYTHS

### **-Neutering will make my pet fat.**

Neutering does not make your pet fat or lazy. Too much food and not enough exercise are the main causes of obesity.

### **-Neutering will take away the “guard dog” instincts.**

Neutering a dog does not reduce his ability as either a guard or watch dog. He will still be as protective of his territory as he was before the surgery.

### **-Neutering will hurt him.**

Neutering is a safe and relatively painless operation done by a licensed veterinarian. Your pet will appreciate the freedom from sexual frustration.

# WHY SPAY?

There are many medical and behavioral benefits to having your female cat or dog spayed:

1. CONVENIENCE TO OWNER
  - a. Eliminates estrous or "heat" periods: no bloody discharge.
  - b. Eliminates the scent that attracts annoying males.
  - c. No need to confine your female while in heat.
  - d. Eliminates the frantic pacing and crying by the female while in heat (cats are especially vocal at that time).
2. BETTER HEALTH FOR YOUR PET
  - a. Eliminates all the problems and potential risks involved in pregnancy and birth.
  - b. Eliminates the common problem of cancer of the uterus as the pet gets older.
3. HELPS DECREASE THE OVERPOPULATION PROBLEM
  - a. By not bringing more unwanted puppies and kittens into the world.
  - b. Rids you of the worry of what to do with unplanned litters of puppies and kittens.
4. ELIMINATES SEXUAL FRUSTRATION
  - a. Decreases your pet's desire to roam in search of a mate: decreasing the problems involved with a free-roaming animal (car accidents, etc.)
  - b. Let's your pet relax and enjoy being a part of the family.

## MYTHS

### ***-Spaying will make my pet fat.***

Spaying your pet will not make her fat and lazy. Too much food and not enough exercise are the main causes of obesity.

### ***- Spaying will hurt her.***

Spaying is a safe and relatively painless operation done by a licensed veterinarian. Your pet will appreciate the freedom from sexual frustration and repeated parenthood.

### ***- I will find homes for my puppies and kittens.***

You may be able to place your puppies or kittens but are they all good homes? And remember each time you place one of your puppies or kittens; somewhere else an animal is being killed because there was no home for him. Right now, in the United States 15 million animals are being euthanized each year.

# Dangerous Foods

Common food items that can be dangerous to your pet if ingested:

- **alcoholic beverages**
- **apple seeds**
- **apricot pits**
- **avocados**
- **cherry pits**
- **candy and gum containing Xylitol, a toxic sweetener**
- **chocolate**
- **coffee**
- **garlic**
- **grapes**
- **hops, used in home beer brewing**
- **macadamia nuts**
- **moldy foods**
- **mushroom plants**
- **mustard seeds**
- **onions**
- **onion powder**
- **peach pits**
- **potato leaves and stems**
- **raisins**
- **rhubarb leaves**
- **salt**
- **tea**
- **tomato leaves and stems**
- **walnuts**
- **Yeast dough**

# Household Dangers

## PET PROOFING YOUR HOME

Just as parents childproof their home, so should pet owners' pet-proof theirs. Four-legged members of the family, like infants and small children, are naturally curious and love to explore their environment with their paws, claws, and mouth. But they can't know what is dangerous and what is not... so it's up to you to make your home a haven. The following tips can help ensure that your pet enjoys a long, happy, and accident-free life in your care.

### All Around the House

- Install screen windows to guard against falls.
- Don't let young pets out on balconies, upper porches, or high decks.
- Many house plants, including dieffenbachia, elephant ear, spider plants, and more are poisonous if eaten. Remove them or put them out of reach of hanging baskets.
- Puppies & kittens love to chew when they're teething, so unplug, remove, or cover electrical cords.
- Don't leave a room where a fire is lit, or space heater is being used unattended.
- Plastic bags pose a suffocation risk.
- If your pet can put something in his mouth, he probably will.
- Don't leave small, sharp, easily swallowed objects lying around.

### In the Garage

- Cats enjoy naps near a warm engine, so before you start the ignition, honk your horn and make sure your pet is not under or near the car.
- Pets like the smell and taste of antifreeze and windshield washer. They are both highly poisonous.
- Tightly cover all containers and wipe up any spills.
- Paint, gasoline and other dangerous chemicals should be stored out of reach.

### In the Kitchen, Laundry Room & Bathroom

- Never leave burners or irons on unattended.
- Dangerous household chemicals such as bleach and ammonia should be stored out of your pet's reach.
- Check before closing washer and dryer lids - your pet might climb in and become trapped.
- Keep toilet lids down-small pets can drown if they fall in.
- Medicines, shampoo, suntan lotions and other personal care items can poison your pet. Make sure he can't get hold of them.

### Out In the Yard

- Some outdoor plants, like ivy and oleander, can be poisonous to pets.
- Keep pets away from lawns and gardens treated with chemicals.
- Store garden tools and chemicals securely.
- Keep garden shed locked.
- Cover swimming pools and hot tubs- your pet might fall in and not be able to get out.

### Avoiding Cat-astrophes

- Many objects used as cat toys- yarn, string, rubber bands, aluminum foil- can be extremely harmful if swallowed.
- Cats love to sleep in warm, dark places, so close drawers, chest, and closets- your pet might suffocate if trapped.
- A cat looks adorable with a ribbon tied around its neck... but it poses a suffocation risk. Instead, opt for a breakaway collar.

### Dog-gone Disasters

- Eliminate hooks or similar objects placed at your dog's shoulder height- his collar or harness could become tangled, and he could choke.
- A tall perimeter fence or invisible electrical fence around your property will minimize the risk of your dog running out into traffic or roaming far from home.

### Home For the Holidays

- Tinsel, icicles, Christmas tree lights and glass ornaments will be sure to tempt your pet's curiosity-but all could be lethal if chewed or swallowed.
- Poinsettia, holly and mistletoe are poisonous to your pets.



# Signs Your Pet Needs to See the Vet

- vomiting
- diarrhea
- unintended weight loss
- change in appetite-decreased or increased
- change in normal activity level: lethargy, hyperactivity, or restlessness
- limping
- sudden inability to move back legs
- crying in pain when touched
- clumsy or disoriented behavior
- seizures
- any loss of consciousness
- coughing, especially at night
- panting in a cat
- any difficulty breathing or labored breathing
- any blue, purple, or pale hue to the tongue and gums
- sudden collapse
- excessive drooling
- straining in the litter box without producing any urine
- crying out while urinating
- change in urination: location, frequency, amount, color, smell
- bloated abdomen
- sneezing excessively
- uncontrolled bleeding
- nosebleed or bruising anywhere on the body
- any unusual odor
- hair loss
- runny eyes or nose
- squinting

# Poisonous Plants

***This list of potentially dangerous house plants and outdoor plants is extremely long. Identification of all the different types of poisonous plants is not possible here, but a selected list of the most common plants that can be toxic to your pet follows:***

Alfalfa	Clover	Green Gold	Peace Lily	Ribbon Plant
Aloe	Cordatum	Nephtysis	Mexican	Rubrum Lily
Amaryllis	Coriara	Heartleaf	Breadfruit	Saddle Leaf
Andromeda	Corn Plant	Philodendron	Milkweed	Philodendron
Japonica	Creeping Charlie	Heavenly	Mint, Purple	Sago Palm
Angel's Trumpet	Crown of Thorns	Bamboo	Moonweed	Satin Pothos
Arrowgrass	Cutleaf	Holly	Morning Glory	Schefflera
Asian Lily	Philodendron	Horsehead	Mother-in-Law	Skunk Cabbage
Asparagus Fern	Cycads	Philodendron	Mushrooms and	Spinach
Australian Nut	Cyclamen	Hurricane Plant	Toadstools	Spotted Dumb
Autumn Crocus	Daffodil	Hyacinth	Narcissus	Cane
Avocado	Day Lily	Hydrangea	Needlepoint Ivy	Stargazer Lily
Azalea	Delphinium	Iris	Nephtysis	St. Johnswort
Bird of Paradise	Devil's Ivy	Ivy	Nettles	Striped Dracaena
US and Euro	Dieffenbachia	Jack in the Pulpit	Nightshade	Sweetheart Ivy
Bittersweet	Dumb Cane	Japanese Snow	Oleander	Swiss Cheese
Black Locust	Easter Lily	Lily	Onion	Plant
Bleeding Heart	Elderberry	Japanese Yew	Orange Day Lily	Taro Vine
Branching Ivy	Elephant Ears	(aka Yew)	Panda	Tomato Plant
Buckeye	Emerald Fern	Jasmine	Peachtree	Thorn Apple
Buddhist Pine	English Ivy	Jerusalem Cherry	Philodendron	Tree
Buttercup	Fern	Jimsonweed	Pertusum	Philodendron
Caladium	Fiddle-Leaf	Kalanchoe	Plumosa Fern	Tropic Snow
Calla Lily	Philodendron	Lace Fern	Poinsettia	Dumb Cane
Castor Bean	Flamingo Plant	Lacy Tree	Pokewood	Tulip
Cherry	Florida Beauty	Larkspur	Precatory Bean	Umbrella Plant
Cherry Tree	Foxglove	Lily of the Valley	Queensland Nut	Variable
Chokeberry	Fruit Salad Plant	Locoweed	Red Emerald	Dieffenbachia
Chinaberry Tree	Glacier Ivy	Lupine	Red Lily	Variegated
Chinese	Gladiolas	Macadamia Nut	Red-Margined	Philodendron
Evergreen	Glory Lily	Madagascar	Dracaena	Varneckeii
Christmas Rose	Gold Dust	Dragon Tree	Red Princess	Dracaena
Chrysanthemum	Dracaena	Marble Queen	Rhododendron	Wood Lily
Clematis	Golden Pothos	Marijuana	Rhubarb	Yucca

Symptoms will vary from animal to animal. Some may eat these plants and exhibit no symptoms; others will exhibit local irritants such as drooling, vomiting, diarrhea, irritation to the mouth and skin or swelling of area around the mouth. Extreme cases of poisoning may cause convulsions, tremors to the heart, respiratory and kidney problems, and in the most extreme cases, may cause coma or even death. It is good to note that most dogs and cats will vomit after chewing on plants. This probably does not mean poisoning. Only severe and persistent vomiting is a danger sign, especially when accompanied with one or more of the other symptoms.

***Be sure to know the names of all the plants in and around your home and keep potentially toxic plants out of the areas accessible to your pet. If your pet should happen to be poisoned by a hazardous plant or any other substance, contact your veterinarian immediately.***

