



Glenway Animal Hospital
6272 Glenway Avenue
Cincinnati, Ohio 45211
Phone: (513) 662-0224

Frequently Asked Kitten Questions

Congratulations on the arrival of your new kitten! The doctors and staff of Glenway Animal Hospital are committed to making sure that your newest family member lives a healthy, happy and long life. To help you and your kitten to start out on the right foot (and paw ☺), we've put together a list of some frequently asked questions and their corresponding answers. This list is not all-inclusive so if you have additional questions please don't hesitate to contact us!

What should I feed my new kitten?

You get what you pay for when it comes to pet food. Science Diet and Eukanuba are generally recognized as the best brands on the market but they're also the most expensive. As a general rule, you should feed your kitten the most expensive food that will fit into your budget.

How much and how often should I feed my kitten?

Feed your kitten 2/3 of the amount suggested on the kitten food bag. If this amount seems inappropriate please call us. Your kitten is an individual and may have unique needs.

Indoor cats especially, have a higher likelihood of becoming overweight as they get older. This is especially true in multiple cat households. Because of this, it is generally a good idea to feed your cat meals, versus leaving food down all of the time for them to "pick at". This will help regulate the amount that your cat is eating and will also help to keep your cats weight under control.

How do I litter box train my kitten?

Fortunately kittens usually will use a litter box without being trained to do so, but there are a few things you can do to encourage your cat to always use the litter box. These include:

- Don't change types of litter unless you call us first. Lack of consistency in litter is one of the most common causes of inappropriate elimination.
- You need to provide a litter box for each cat in the house, plus one spare. For example, if you have three cats you should have four litter boxes.
- Clean the litter boxes frequently. If a box is too dirty, your cat might not use it.

What should I do if I have an emergency?

If an emergency arises, call us first at (513) 662-0224. Our office is open from 7am to 6pm Monday through Friday, and from 8am to 12 noon on selected Saturdays. If we are not available you will be directed to call The Cincinnati Animal Referral and Emergency (CARE) Center at (513) 530-0911. The CARE Center is open twenty-four hours a day and seven days a week. Because it is located in Blue Ash, we recommend that you take a test drive to the CARE Center so if there is an emergency you are already familiar with the location.

How many shots will my kitten need in the first year?

Currently kittens are given a series of three FVR-CCP + VSCV vaccinations during their first year. These vaccines prevent against the main respiratory diseases cats develop, as well as Virulent Strain Calicivirus. VSCV is a newer addition to our yearly feline vaccination. VSCV is extremely contagious and can be transferred to your cat via your shoes and clothes. Upwards of 50% of unvaccinated cats that become infected with VSCV die even with aggressive treatment. Although we have not yet experienced an outbreak of this virus, we want to be sure your cat is protected if an outbreak does occur. If you have any questions regarding VSCV, please ask one of our team members. This vaccine will need to be boosted annually.

Your kitten will also receive a rabies vaccination around sixteen weeks of age. Hamilton County Law requires that puppies and kittens be vaccinated for Rabies before they are six months old. The first Rabies vaccine they receive will be good for one year. After that it will be given every 3 years.

Also, if your cat is going to be an inside/outside cat, your kitten needs to receive two vaccinations to protect against Feline Leukemia. This vaccine will also need to be boosted annually.

How do I know if my kitten has worms?

There are usually no visual signs of parasite infections, so you will need to bring in a fecal sample for us to test. This sample is sent out to a laboratory as the procedure they use to test each sample has been proven to be more accurate. We require two negative fecal tests before your kitten can be considered parasite free. This is an important test to perform because some worms that kittens carry can be passed on to people. As your kitten grows up, we will still need to check a stool sample twice a year, even if they never go outside. You should also bring a stool sample with you any time you bring your cat in for diarrhea, vomiting, etc.

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the Companion Animal Parasite Council also recommend that we administer Strongid-T, a broad-spectrum anti-parasitic medication to all of our patients at their wellness exams every 6 months. However, keep in mind that routine deworming does not eliminate the need for fecal testing or vice versa. Check out www.cdc.gov/healthypets/animals and www.capcvet.org for more information on parasitic and zoonotic (animal to human) infections.

Is there anything I can do to prevent fleas?

Some cats get fleas and some don't. Some clients prefer to prevent their cats from getting fleas while others prefer to take a "wait and see" approach. Inside cats are usually not at risk of catching fleas, however in recent years, we have seen an increase in indoor only cats getting fleas. If you would like to prevent fleas, there are medications that can help. Please ask one of our team members for more information.

Can my cat get heartworm disease?

Recently the veterinary community has become more aware of the threat of heartworm disease in cats. Dogs are the usual hosts for heartworm disease, but cats can also contract the disease if bitten by an infected mosquito. Dogs develop heartworm disease if the worms mature to the adult stage, but both the adult and the immature heartworms can cause disease in cats. Signs of heartworm disease in cats include coughing, breathing problems, vomiting, and even sudden death. Unfortunately there is no reliable test for feline heartworm disease and there is no cure, but feline heartworm disease can be prevented. Because of this, our current standard of care for our feline patients is to treat them with a monthly heartworm prevention agent. Fortunately these medications (Revolution or Advantage Multi) also prevent flea infestations and some gastrointestinal parasite infections. For more information visit www.heartwormsociety.org.

When should I have my cat spayed or neutered?

It is best to schedule these surgeries just before your kitten turns six months old. Female cats go into heat at around six months of age and it is best to have their surgery done *before* they go into heat. This decreases their chances of developing mammary cancer later on, and eliminates the possibility of unwanted kittens.

Should I let my cat go outside?

Cats that are allowed to go outside have more health problems and usually a shorter lifespan than cats that are kept exclusively indoors. It is also more expensive to take care of outside cats due to the need for more vaccinations and the increased risk of injury from other animals and people. If you decide to let your cat go outside please let us know so we can make sure they are properly vaccinated.

What are microchips?

Microchips are a form of permanent identification for your cat. The chip itself is the size of a grain of rice and is placed under the skin above the cat's shoulders. Once the chip is in place, a scanner can be used to determine your cat's ID number. More and more humane societies, veterinary offices, and most research labs scan new cats so if your cat should get lost or stolen a microchip may help to get your pet safely home. Please ask if you would like more information regarding microchips or visit HomeAgain.com

Is there such a thing as health insurance for cats?

There are several companies that offer pet health insurance, but because the concept is relatively new, we advise a "buyer beware" attitude. Two companies that currently offer pet health insurance are:

- Pets Best Insurance, 1-877-PETSBEST, www.petsbest.com
- Pet Care Pet Insurance Programs, 1-866-275-PETS, www.petcareinsurance.com

What kind of things should I be doing at home with my kitten to make sure they remain healthy and happy?

There are many things you can do at home to ensure the health of your pet. Since your kitten can't tell you when something is wrong, the responsibility falls to you, their owner, to make sure they are as healthy as they can be. A few examples of things you can do at home include:

- **Watch for change in behavior or attitude.** Cats are very good at hiding when they don't feel well, so little changes in behavior or attitude may mean something is off. Appearing excessively tired, not hungry, drinking more than usual, differences in their bathroom habits, changes in vocalization, etc. are all examples of these changes. If you ever have a question about something your kitten is doing or how they are acting, please call.
- **Take time to play with your kitten's ears, feet, and mouth.** Now we understand that there are some cats who will never let you do these things, however if your cat will allow you, being able to do this will make things like tooth brushing and nail trims go much smoother as they get older. Some things you can do include; playing with their feet and toes, getting them to allow you to open their mouth, and massaging their gums.
- **Making sure your indoor cat has plenty of things to play with and do throughout their day.** Cats who live strictly indoors require more attention than some people realize. Cats are very bright creatures who need things which stimulate them and enrich their day, or they will try to find amusement elsewhere (like on the side of your new couch ☺). At Ohio State University's College of Veterinary Medicine, they have developed the "Indoor Cat Initiative", which contains a lot of information on providing your indoor cat with the necessary enrichment. If you have any questions after looking over this, please call.
- **Learning to trim your cat's nails.** We know that this is not always a simple thing to do and can sometimes be frustrating, however starting this when they are younger makes it easier to continue when they're adults. Our technicians/assistants would be happy to demonstrate to best way to trim your cats nails.
- **Brushing your cats teeth.** Just like with people, good oral health helps promote good overall health in your cat. Aside from giving your cat bad breath, dental disease can also lead to pain and, eventually, to organ failure. Getting into a routine of brushing your cats teeth daily will help to prevent these things, as well as the need for dental cleanings under anesthesia as often. Our technicians or assistants would be happy to walk you through how to brush your cat's teeth. We understand that not every cat is going to let you brush their teeth, and in that case, getting in the habit of looking in their mouth at their teeth at least once a week is also beneficial. It will allow you to know when tartar begins to build on your cats teeth or if a tooth looks abnormal, so we can get these things taken care of before they become serious. The veterinarian or one of our team members would be happy to

show you what to look for so we can make sure your kitten maintains good oral health.

- **Applying oravet.** Another way to promote good oral health in your cat is through the use of oravet. Oravet works as a barrier sealant on your cat's teeth, creating a slick surface that makes it harder for the tartar to bind to. Applying oravet weekly as well as brushing will help maintain their oral health for a longer period of time.
- **Last, but certainly not least, bringing them in to see us every 6 months!** Considering that your cat is going to age five to seven years for each calendar year, it is important for us to see them more than once a year. At Glenway Animal Hospital we have embraced the National Pet Wellness Month guidelines (www.npwm.com) and now have a twice a year wellness program in place. During the first visit each year, your dog will receive a comprehensive physical exam and any necessary vaccinations. Six months later we will perform another examination and also perform diagnostic tests, which may include bloodwork and urinalysis. Our goal is to detect subtle health issues before they begin to cause problems. At both visits we will also ask you to bring a fecal sample for us to microscopically analyze. If you have any questions about our wellness program, please ask.

Once again, congratulations on the arrival of your newest family member! If all of your questions have not been answered, please call us at **662-0224**. Our office is open:

Monday through Friday 7am to 6pm
First Saturday of the Month 8am to 12noon
Third Saturday of the Month 10am to 2pm

You can also reach us through our email address: **Glenwaypetdocs@fuse.net**