



# TOP 10 RULES OF GREAT KITTEN CARE

**1. Kitten Vaccinations** begin at 6-8 weeks of age, with boosters every 3-4 weeks until 16 weeks old, to protect against very contagious diseases. These vaccinations protect against:

**Rabies** – Viral infection of the brain that is 100% fatal: State Law requires all cats, dogs, and ferrets to be vaccinated for rabies because it is contagious and fatal to humans.

**Rhinotracheitis (Herpesvirus)** – Viral infection that can cause upper respiratory disease, resulting in lethargy, anorexia, sneezing, nasal and ocular discharge.

**Calicivirus** – Viral infection that can vary from mild to severe, and infection can even be fatal; can cause oral lesions and respiratory disease.

**Panleukopenia (Parvovirus)** – Viral infection that is highly contagious and may result in death.

**Feline Leukemia virus** – Viral infection can lead to hematologic, neoplastic, and immune disorders.

**2. FIV/FeLV testing** should be performed at least once your cat's life. It tests for FeLV (feline leukemia) and FIV (feline AIDS). Both viruses are contagious to other cats, and if we know that your cat is positive we can make recommendations for his/her health as well as recommendations to reduce the risk of infection to other cats. It can take 3-4 months from the time of exposure before the infection will be detected by the test, so in general, cats coming from unknown backgrounds should be tested prior to bringing them into a household. Kittens should have an initial test, then retested when they are over 6 months old.

**3. Intestinal parasites** can be present when your kitten is born. Roundworms and Hookworms can lead to severe illness when large amounts are present in your kitten's intestines and also can be transmitted to humans. Your kitten should be dewormed with each booster vaccination. A fecal test should be done as a kitten to be sure these worms are gone and also to test for other parasites like coccidia and giardia that can also infect your kitten. We recommend giving Revolution every 30 days as it prevents infection with the common intestinal parasites.

**2. Heartworm prevention** should begin at 6-8 weeks of age. Heartworm is transmitted through a mosquito bite, and can live in the right side of the heart leading to heart failure early in your pet's life. To prevent Heartworm, we recommend a Revolution to be given every 30 days year round.

**5. Flea prevention** should be used year round due to Nebraska's ever-changing weather. Fleas can transmit intestinal worms and are a nuisance in your house. We recommend Revolution to be applied every 30 days.

**6. Spay/Neuter** should be done at 5-6 months of age to help control the unwanted pet population. Having your female spayed can help avoid uterine infections and breast cancer. Having your male neutered can help prevent prostate cancer and testicular cancer, along with avoiding unwanted behaviors.

**7. Microchip** can help your kitty be found if he/she is ever lost. A pet is reunited with its family every 6 minutes using this technology. A tiny, rice-sized microchip is placed under the skin between the shoulder blades.

**8. Dental Care** should begin as a kitten to prevent dental disease as he/she ages. Dental disease causes bacteria to be released into the bloodstream, resulting in your pet's liver, kidney, and heart valves to become diseased. By 3 years of age, 80% of cats have some degree of dental disease. Brushing your pet's teeth once daily with pet toothpaste is the most effective, and least expensive, method of preventing dental disease. Some food, treats, rinses, and gels are helpful also.

**9. Nutrition** is as important for your pet as it is for you. A good quality kitten food will provide proper nutrition and should be given until your kitten is 1 year old.

**10. Environmental enrichment** should be provided for indoor cats. Use toys and food/treats to encourage natural hunting behaviors. Provide adequate separate spaces for resting, sleeping, using the litter box, and hiding. Kittens enjoy vertical spaces such as cat trees and window perches. Scratches posts and cat grass are outlets for cats to exhibit their natural behaviors and prevent destruction of furniture. Start socializing with other animals and humans (slowly) at an early age.