



COMPANION

ANIMAL HOSPITAL, SPRINGFIELD VA
Companions for life

Congratulations on Adopting a New Kitten!

You have taken on the awesome and wonderful responsibility of caring for another living, feeling individual. In doing so, you are making a promise that you will tend to your pet's needs, comfort, and well-being. Your kitten relies solely on you for adequate shelter, access to fresh water, and good daily nutrition. Your kitten will depend solely on you to assure that all health and medical needs are met and that he/she is kept safe. When bringing a kitten into your home and into your family's lives, you are responsible for seeing that this new family member receives daily attention, adequate exercise, proper training, and above all, love from the human members of the family.

Our job at Companion Animal Hospital is to help you meet the needs of your pet. The first visit is your first step in a lifetime of good care. All kittens go through a basic health care program, which includes the following:

1. Starting at 6-8 weeks of age, a series of **distemper** vaccines are given **every 3-4 weeks** until your kitten is at least **16 weeks old**. An examination accompanies most vaccinations. The final vaccine in the series is good for one year. Every subsequent vaccine is a 3-year vaccine.

Distemper (FVRCP): A combination vaccine. It contains 3 antigens which protect your cat from the following diseases:

Feline Viral Rhinitis: Herpes virus responsible for many upper respiratory infections in cats. Symptoms include teary eyes, nasal discharge, loss of appetite, and fever. Indoor cats can get upper respiratory viruses too, as the viruses can travel in the air and on humans, so it is important to get your kitten/cat vaccinated even if you plan on keeping them indoors.

Calicivirus: A virus that causes upper respiratory distress as well as ulcers on the tongue and mouth.

Panleukopenia: A virus which causes severe, often fatal vomiting and diarrhea in cat. "Distemper" refers to this virus.

2. The first **rabies** vaccine is given between **12 and 16 weeks of age**. The initial (first) vaccine is a 1 year vaccine. Either a 1 year or 3 year vaccine is given after depending on the kittens life style.

Rabies: Caused by a virus that is almost always fatal. Rabies poses a great risk to animals and human. Rabies is widespread (usually in wild animals) and is present in Northern Virginia. It is usually contracted through the bite of an infected animal. All dogs and cats are required by law to be currently vaccinated against rabies.

3. **Feline Leukemia Virus (FeLV):** This virus suppresses the immune system of infected cats. Direct cat-to-cat contact is required for transmission. We recommend testing all cats for this virus. For cats that go outdoors or that are exposed to cats whose vaccination history is unknown, we recommend vaccinating against FeLV. You should discuss your cat/kitten's risk of acquiring FeLV with the doctor during your appointment. **All cats and kittens should be tested before being brought into a home with other animals.**
 4. **Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV):** This virus also causes immunosuppression. Cats acquire FIV primarily from bite wounds from cats carrying the virus. Therefore, cats that roam freely outdoors are at highest risk. There is currently no vaccination for FIV, so it is extremely important to monitor your cat/kitten's outdoor activities and to discuss this risk with the doctor. **All cats and kittens should be tested before being brought into a home with other animals**
 5. **Fecal parasite test:** Fecals are tested for the presence of worms and parasites **once a year**. Please bring your kitten's fecal sample to your appointment if possible. If multiple cats share a litterbox, only one fecal sample is required
- At these early visits, the doctor will also discuss how to care for your pet's ears, teeth, nails, and coat. Diet and litterbox/house training will also be discussed.
 - **We welcome *any* questions you may have about your kitten's health and well-being. Please do not hesitate to ask!**

Congratulations on the addition of your new family member!