**NEW KITTEN INFORMATION SHEET**

Congratulations on your new kitten. We hope you find the experience of owning your kitten a long and rewarding one. Following is some information on looking after your kitten to help keep them healthy and happy.

**VACCINATION**

Cats need to be vaccinated against a variety of nasty diseases.

The core F3 vaccination will protect against:

**Feline Enteritis** – a highly contagious gastrointestinal viral disease, causing vomiting and diarrhea, with a high mortality rate, especially in young cats under 1 year of age.

**Cat Flu** – ( Feline rhinotracheitis and Calicivirus) – a highly contagious respiratory viral disease, causing coughing, sneezing and runny eyes/nose. Death rate is low, but it can be carried for long periods and spread to other cats.

Additional vaccinations are available against:

**Feline Immunodeficiency Virus** ( FIV – Feline AIDS) *– this is* ***NOT*** *transmissible to humans!* FIV is a disease affecting the immune system. It is not curable and usually transmitted through bites from infected cats. Signs include weight loss, mouth and eye lesions, poor coat and chronic infections.

**Feline Leukaemia Virus** ( FeLV) – This also attacks the immune system and may cause a variety of signs, including weight loss, vomiting and diarrhea. Cats can be infected and show no signs. Some will remain chronically infected and shed virus.

Vaccinations are to be given at 6 – 8 weeks, 12 weeks, 16 weeks of age, then every 12 months for life.

FIV vaccines can be given in additional to your 3 kitten vaccinations. Adult cats will require a blood test to make sure they are not infected with FIV, then have a series of 3 injections.

FIV needs to be boosted annually.

**INTESTINAL WORMING**

All kittens can be born with worms which they contract from their mother, or, they can acquire worms at a very young age. Some worms can also infect humans, so good prevention and treatment is vital. We recommend treating every 2 weeks, from 2-12 weeks of age, monthly till 6 months, then every 3 months for life. There are oral and spot-on treatments available.

**MICROCHIP IDENTIFICATION**

By law in NSW, all cats must be microchipped and registered on the NSW Companion Animal Register (CAR ). If you travel, or move frequently they can also be included on the Australia-wide AAR. The microchip is inserted at the time of first Vaccination, or time of purchase, whichever comes first, before the pet is 3 months old. Microchipping is a method of permanently identifying your pet, which means it can be easily returned to you if it strays or goes missing.

**FLEAS and TICKS**

Fleas are present in our environment all year round, though particularly from August to April. There are far more fleas in your cat’s environment than you will ever see on your cat!

Cats can also be affected by paralysis ticks, which are common in this area year round. Signs include change in voice, hind leg weakness, vomiting and breathing difficulties. This is a life-threatening condition if left untreated and even with treatment, some pets will still die. Fortunately, there are now a few products available for flea and tick prevention on cats. Currently available products are:

* Bravecto spot-on – helps prevent fleas and paralysis ticks for 3 months
* Revolution Plus – monthly spot-on for ticks and fleas
* Frontline spray every 3 weeks from 2 days of age

.

***NEVER*** *apply dog products to cats as some can be lethal, particularly those containing permethrin*

**DESEXING**

We recommend that all kittens be desexed by 5-6 months of age.

Females can come into season as young as 4 months of age, and desexing will prevent unwanted litters, and certain tumours and infections.

Undesexed males are often very territorial, which can lead to fighting. This in turn can lead to Cat Bite Abscesses and infection with FIV; intact males also tend to spray urine.

**DENTAL CARE**

Cats are prone to tartar, gum disease and tooth decay. We suggest you treat your kitten to a RAW chicken wing or neck once or twice a week to exercise its gums and teeth. Other methods include teeth cleaning biscuits, plaque reducing powder, or manually brushing your cat’s teeth.

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

Your kitten will enjoy having some toys to play with and a scratching post may help preserve your furnishings if your cat is indoors for much of the time.

Toilet training is also important – you may need 2 litter trays in quiet places to encourage your kitten to use them. Make sure the litter tray is kept clean, as some kittens will not use an already used litter tray.

Keep your kitten, or cat, inside as much as possible, particularly at night, as this will reduce the opportunities for fighting and predation on native animals.

Do not give cats
ANY medications intended for humans, dogs or other animals without veterinary advise, as some of these can cause illness or even death in cats.

As well as obvious poisons, such as rats and snail baits, several plants are toxic to cats when eaten, for example lilies; chocolate can also cause illness, so take notice and seek veterinary attention if you are at all concerned.

If you have any questions or concerns, please discuss these with our veterinary staff.