

Congratulations on your new pet! The experience is fun, but can be very scary. Hopefully, this packet will help explain the mysteries of raising your new family member.

Vaccines:

There are a number of vaccines out there that can get confusing. The following explains what they are and why they are important for protecting your kitten.

FVRCP (Feline Viral Rhinotracheitis-Calicivirus-Panleukopenia)

Feline Calicivirus/Herpesvirus:

What is it?

Feline calicivirus and feline herpesvirus type I (feline rhinotracheitis virus) are 80-90% of infectious feline upper respiratory tract diseases. The calicivirus can rarely result in a deadly pneumonia. The herpesvirus can result in frustrating chronic infections.

How is it spread?

Through direct contact with other cats or objects with which they come in contact (just like the common cold is spread in humans)

Feline Panleukopenia

What is it?

(Also called feline distemper): Highly contagious and deadly viral disease in cats. This virus is extremely hardy and able to survive extreme temperatures and humidity for many months. This virus affects cells that divide rapidly, such as those found in the bone marrow or intestines, and can ultimately lead to death.

How is it spread?

Through direct contact with other cats' secretions, such as urine and feces, or from an infected mother through the placenta.

Rabies

At the present time in the United States, feline rabies far exceeds that of all other domestic animals. This has become a major public health concern. Because of the routinely fatal outcome of the infection in cats and the potential for human exposure, rabies vaccination is *required by law*.

What is it?

A progressive fatal neurological disease in mammals.

How is it spread?

Mostly through wild animals such as skunks, raccoons, bats, and foxes as well as unvaccinated pets. The virus is spread through the saliva.

FeLV (Feline leukemia virus)

What is it?

Feline leukemia virus is the leading viral killer of cats. FeLV attacks and weakens the cat's immune system, leaving it unable to fight off other infections. FeLV can have one of two types. With the first type the virus attacks the immune system, predisposing cats to a wide variety of diseases. With the second type, cats can develop cancer in the form of tumors or leukemia.

How is it spread?

This virus is spread from cat to cat through saliva (grooming, sharing common water sources, bite wounds). It can also be transmitted from an infected mother cat to her kittens through her milk. Cats that are at most risk are those that are outdoor or outdoor/indoor cats and cats that are exposed to such individuals. Cats living in households with FeLV infected cats, cats of unknown infectious status, or indoor cats who live with indoor/outdoor cats are also at risk.

How do I know if my cat is infected?

Your veterinarian can do a simple blood test to determine if your cat is infected.

What do I do if the test is negative?

If your cat is indoors in a single cat household, it is recommended to have a two vaccine series as a kitten. This is to protect the cat in case of escape or future protection from contact with other cats (ie. another addition to your family in the future). If your cat remains indoor only and no other infected cats are introduced to your household then no future FeLV vaccines are needed.

If your cat is an outdoor cat, he/she will need annual vaccines. Annual testing is also recommended to make sure that no infection has occurred, as no vaccine is 100% protective.

What do I do if the test is positive?

There is no need to vaccinate against the disease since the cat is already infected. However, you should keep the cat indoors and not allow any contact with other cats. This will help to decrease the incidence of spread to other cats, as well as your cat's exposure to other infections that he/she will not be so able to combat.

FIV (Feline Immunodeficiency Virus)

What is it?

A virus that attacks a cat's immune system, impairing the ability to fight infections (similar to HIV in people but not transmissible to humans or other species).

How is it spread?

Through saliva, mostly by fight and bite wounds. Outdoor intact male cats are most likely to be infected.

How do I know if my cat is infected?

Your veterinarian can do a simple blood test to determine if your cat is infected.

Can I vaccinate my cat against FIV?

Currently, there is a vaccine available, but it is not recommended. If your cat escapes and is picked up by someone and tested for FIV, with the test currently available there is no way to distinguish if your FIV vaccinated cat is infected or vaccinated. Both the vaccinated and naturally infected cats will test positive. The reality is that most "stray" cats with a positive FIV test will be euthanized. This is not true for the FeLV test.

FIP (Feline Infectious Peritonitis)

What is it?

The second deadliest virus in cats. Unfortunately, not a lot is known about the disease and it can be very difficult to diagnose. Once signs appear, FIP is almost always fatal, usually within 6 months. The incidence of FIP in a cat household is 1 out of 5000. It is much more common in households with many cats or cats from catteries.

Is there any vaccine available against FIP?

There is a vaccine for FIP, but it is not recommended since there is dispute whether the vaccine can actually cause the disease.

What are the signs that my cat might be infected?

Nonspecific illness, poor appetite, big fluid filled belly (abdominal distension), difficulty breathing, fever, inflammation of the eyes, and/or lethargy.

Is my cat at risk?

Cats that were raised housed in large facilities together or shelter animals under stress are most likely to be affected, although any cat is at risk.

Vaccine Protocol

Age in weeks	Vaccine	Testing
6-7	FVRCP	
9-10	FVRCP	Felv/FIV test and fecal at first visit
12-13	FVRCP FeLV	
15-16	FVRCP FeLV Rabies	

This chart is also an estimate based on the vaccines your puppy received prior to coming to our hospital. Kittens need vaccines every 2-4 weeks until 16 weeks of age, as their mother's immunity can wear off anywhere from 8-16 weeks. Every cat is different and of course we can't tell when that immunity will wear off.

Vaccine Reactions

With any vaccine, there is a small percentage of animals that have a reaction. These reactions can happen immediately after vaccination or up to 24 hours later. Signs to look for are facial swelling, vomiting, diarrhea, or difficulty breathing. If you should see any of those signs, please contact your veterinarian immediately. Some lethargy following vaccines is normal.

The development of a small, firm, non-painful swelling under the skin where the vaccine was given is not uncommon. The swelling usually goes away after several weeks. If this lump does not go away within 3 weeks let your veterinarian know.

Heartworm disease in cats

There is a misconception that indoor cats cannot get heartworm infection and therefore do not need to be on a preventative treatment. Heartworms are one of the most dangerous parasites for cats. They are carried by mosquitoes which can easily get into houses through windows and open doors. A recent survey showed that 55% of the cats testing positive for heartworm were kept exclusively or mostly indoors. Signs of heartworm disease include coughing, vomiting, breathing difficulties, sluggishness, and sudden death. Prevention in cats is easy. There are a number of possible treatments including chewable tablets and topical medications that can be given or applied once a month. Most of the heartworm preventions also are preventatives for intestinal parasites, and some work on fleas and ear mites. Talk to your vet to select the best product for your cat.

Pets, Parasites and People

Companion Animal Parasite Council

www.petsandparasites.org

Dogs and cats are not just pets. They are treated like members of the family. And like any member of your family, it's important to keep your companion animal healthy and free of parasites.

It is fairly common for a dog or cat to become infected with an internal or external parasite at some point in its lifetime. Parasites can affect your pet in a variety of ways, ranging from simple irritation to causing life-threatening conditions if left untreated. Some parasites can even infect and transmit diseases to you and your family.

Your veterinarian can help prevent, accurately diagnose and safely treat parasites and other health problems that not only affect your dog or cat, but also the safety of you and your family.

For more information on how parasites affect your dog or cat, the health risks to people and prevention tips, please visit us at www.petsandparasites.org.

What is a zoonotic disease?

Zoonoses, or zoonotic diseases, are those diseases that can be transmitted directly or indirectly from animals to humans. For example, some worms can be transmitted in the environment.

What is a vector-borne disease?

Vector-borne diseases are those transmitted by fleas or ticks among other parasites that infest dogs and cats. They can affect pets and people. Ticks can transmit a large number of "vector-borne" diseases in North America including ehrlichiosis, Lyme disease, relapsing fever, Rocky Mountain spotted fever and tularemia.

Parasites that may affect your pet

- Coccidia • Giardia • Mange Mites • Ticks
- Ear Mites • Heartworms • Roundworms • Toxoplasmosis
- Fleas • Hookworms • Tapeworms • Whipworms

Common questions about pets and parasites

Do fleas and ticks on my pet present a health risk to my family?

Yes. Fleas and ticks can carry and either directly or indirectly transmit several potential illnesses of humans. For example, rickettsiosis (infection with Rickettsia) can be transmitted directly by ticks. Bartonellosis (infection with

Bartonella) is transmitted between cats by fleas and then may spread to people. Also, fleas serve as an intermediate host for tapeworms, which can infect both your pet and humans.

What kind of internal parasites or worms can infect my cat or dog?

There are a number of intestinal worms that can infect dogs and cats, and they vary according to the species. In general, these include roundworms, hookworms, whipworms and tapeworms, and they are very prolific. In fact, one worm can produce more than 100,000 eggs per day, which are then passed in the pet's feces and spread throughout the area the pet roams. Once in the environment, some of these eggs can remain infective and present a health risk for your pet and humans for years.

Are heartworms a parasite I should be concerned about for my pet?

Yes. Heartworms can be a very serious problem for both dogs and cats, especially those in mosquito-infested areas, as mosquitoes are a vector and intermediate host for the pest. Heartworms can kill or seriously debilitate pets that are infected with them. That's because heartworms live in the bloodstream, lungs and heart of infected pets. Your veterinarian can do a blood test to determine if your pet has heartworm disease. A year-round preventive program is most effective to keep pets free of heartworms.

If my dog or cat has intestinal worms, how can these parasites infect humans?

Roundworms are the most common intestinal parasite of pets and the most likely to be transmitted to humans.

www.HumanSociety.org

Humans can accidentally ingest infective worm eggs that have been passed through the pet's feces and left in the environment. The eggs can then hatch in the human's intestinal tract, and the immature worms can travel to various tissues in the body, including the eyes and brain, potentially causing serious infections.

For more frequently asked questions and answers, please visit us at www.petsandparasites.org or consult with your veterinarian.

Reducing risks for your family

You can reduce the risk of parasitic infection to your family by eliminating parasites from pets; restricting access to contaminated areas, such as sandboxes, pet "walk areas," and other high-traffic areas; and practicing good personal hygiene.

Disposing of pet feces on a regular basis can help remove potentially infective worm eggs before they become distributed in the environment and are picked up or ingested by pets or humans.

Year-round prevention

Parasites can infect your pet any time of year. External parasites, such as fleas and ticks, may be less prevalent outside during certain times of the year; however, they often survive in the house during the winter months, creating an uninterrupted life cycle. Other internal parasites, such as worms, may affect your pet all year long. That's why it's important to consult with your veterinarian to implement a year-round parasite control program.

What can I do?

Responsible pet parasite control can reduce the risks associated with transmission of parasitic diseases from pets to people. By following a few simple guidelines, pet owners can better protect their pets and their family.

- Practice good personal hygiene.
- Use a preventative flea and/or tick treatment year-round.
- Only feed pets cooked or prepared food (not raw meat).
- Minimize exposure to high-traffic pet areas.
- Clean up pet feces regularly.
- Visit your veterinarian for annual testing and physical examination.
- Administer worming medications as recommended by your veterinarian.
- Ask your veterinarian about parasite infection risks and effective year-round preventative control measures administered monthly.

For more important information about parasite control guidelines, ask your veterinarian or visit us at www.petsandparasites.org.

The Companion Animal Parasite Council

The Companion Animal Parasite Council (CAPC) is an independent council of veterinarians and other animal healthcare professionals established to create guidelines for the optimal control of internal and external parasites that threaten the health of pets and people. It brings together broad expertise in parasitology, internal medicine, public health, veterinary law, private practice and association leadership.

Initially convened in 2002, CAPC was formed with the express purpose of changing the way veterinary professionals and pet owners approach parasite management. The CAPC advocates best practices for protecting pets from parasitic infections and reducing the risk of zoonotic parasite transmission.

For more information about how parasites may affect your pet, please visit us at www.petsandparasites.org.

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