

Kitten Wellness Care Overview

Welcome to Malta Animal Hospital. We are delighted that you have chosen us to care for the latest addition to your family. The following is a basic disease prevention program that we follow to keep your kitten as healthy as possible throughout his/her life. At times we may modify this schedule to suit your pet's individual needs. We are here to answer your health care, diet, behavior and hygiene questions; we are available in- person, by phone and online. We encourage you to use the *PetSite* feature available at www.maltavet.com to help manage your pet's care. Using your personal *PetSite*, you can check your pet's health care reminders or communicate with us *whenever* you find it convenient. This **FREE!** tool will allow you to request appointments or refills, review lab results, print vaccine certificates, provide feedback and more! Our website also offers a *Pet Library* link where you will be able to access some of the most up to date pet care information available.

Parasite Prevention

Intestinal Parasite Prevention

During the first 4-6 months of your kitten's life, your kitten should be screened at least twice for intestinal parasites and dewormed frequently. Intestinal parasite screening can be accomplished by simply dropping off a small fresh stool sample at your convenience, or by bringing it to your next appointment. There is a lab drop-box situated at our front entrance for convenient after-hours sample drop off. Keep in mind that most intestinal parasites are microscopic, so typically you will not see them. False negative test results can occur if the parasite does not happen to be shedding eggs at the time of sample collection. Some parasites can be contagious to people (zoonotic). It is for these reasons we encourage owners to follow basic hygiene standards (handwashing, frequent litterbox cleaning, etc.) and have your pet's stool checked twice during the first 4-6 months. After that, your pet's stool should be checked at least once yearly and anytime your pet experiences vomiting, weight loss, or diarrhea.

Flea and Tick Prevention

Ectoparasite (flea/tick) control is vital to your pet's health. There are several important steps to controlling these dangerous pests, but the first step is using a quality topical flea/tick preventive. Your veterinarian at Malta Animal Hospital can help you choose the best product for your pet.

Heartworm and Intestinal Parasite Prevention

We recommend that all cats be placed on monthly parasite prevention. The most common parasites that we recommend prevention against are heartworms, roundworms, hookworms and tapeworms. Not all products will protect against all of these parasites so we recommend annual preventive deworming for all patients in addition to intestinal parasite screening.

Feline Leukemia/Feline AIDS Prevention

Feline Leukemia (FeLV) and Feline AIDS (FIV) are both potentially devastating retroviruses that may cause severe infections, anemia and cancer. They are transmitted by cat to cat contact. There is no documentation to date that these viruses are transmissible to people. Per the American Association of Feline Practitioners (AAFP) guidelines, we recommend that ALL cats be tested for Feline Leukemia and Feline AIDS at the time of introduction into a new household (adoption), tested again 60-90 days later, and whenever they are sick. We recommend keeping your newly introduced cat or kitten separate from any other household cats until after being tested. Keep in mind that there may be a 1- 3 month window from the time that a cat is exposed to one of these viruses until it will show up on a test (false negatives are possible.)

Vaccination Schedule

FVRCP: Feline Viral Rhinotracheitis (herpes), Calicivirus, and Panleukopenia

Kittens are vaccinated against Distemper (also known as panleukopenia; a fatal virus which wipes out the bone marrow), and multiple upper respiratory infections such as calici virus and herpes virus beginning at 6 to 8 weeks of age. Booster vaccinations are required every three to four weeks until they are at least 16 weeks old. An incomplete kitten vaccination series may leave your pet unprotected against these diseases. Older, unvaccinated cats must receive a series of 2 vaccines, approximately 4 weeks apart in order to be protected.

Rabies

Rabies is a deadly but preventable viral disease that is primarily spread through bite wounds from infected animals. Rabies is a significant public health concern because people, cats, dogs, ferrets, and many other animals are susceptible, and the consequences of infection are FATAL! In fact, once symptoms begin, Rabies infection is almost universally fatal... vaccination is the **only** protection against this deadly virus, and is so important that it is *required by New York State Law!* Cats are vaccinated every year against Rabies starting at 12 weeks of age. You will receive a Rabies Certificate at the time of vaccination. Malta Animal Hospital utilizes, a feline-only, adjuvant-free Rabies vaccine, the one year PureVax Rabies vaccine for the safest protection available.

Feline Leukemia (FeLV)

In following American Association of Feline Practitioners (AAFP) guidelines, we recommended vaccinating all kittens against Feline Leukemia Virus. Initial immunization consists of a series of two vaccinations, administered three to four weeks apart. Thereafter, we recommend annual booster vaccinations for all cats who go outdoors, or are exposed to cats which go outside. FeLV is a potentially devastating life threatening disease for which there is no cure, and vaccination is highly effective in preventing infection.

A vaccine against **Feline AIDS (FIV)** does exist but it is currently not recommended due to potential adverse effects.

Spaying or Neutering

At 6 months of age we recommend that you schedule your pet to be spayed (ovariohysterectomy of females) or neutered (castration of males). We schedule elective surgery on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday

mornings. We will provide you with a complete outline of expected costs and pre-surgical instructions prior to the day of surgery. We will instruct you to withhold food after 10 pm the night before surgery and take the water bowl away the morning of surgery. Your pet should be dropped off at Malta Animal Hospital between 8 and 9 am on the day of surgery. We will perform a same-day pre-surgical examination, pre-anesthetic blood testing (if not already performed), and administer a pre-anesthetic medication before surgery to reduce anxiety, and act as part of your pet's pain management plan. Your pet will then have an IV catheter placed for easy administration of anesthetic agents, supportive IV fluids during anesthesia, and in case of emergency. This helps maintain blood pressure and hydration as well as provides us with direct access to the cardiovascular system. During anesthesia we will continuously monitor your pet's blood pressure, heart rate, oxygen level, CO₂ level, breathing rate, depth of anesthesia, and body temperature. Our sterile surgical suite is equipped with the very latest in patient warming devices (including medical grade warm water and warm air circulation, a warming cabinet for warm IV fluids and warm towels/blankets), anesthetic delivery and monitoring equipment, surgical lighting, even special air handling equipment to maintain positive pressure to help keep germs out! Your pet will be able to go home the same day (usually in the late afternoon or early evening). We send home at least three days of oral pain medication and provide post-operative discharge instructions. Keep in mind that your pet will need to be kept quiet for at least one week after surgery. This means no running, jumping, play activity, bathing, etc. All cats will go home with an Elizabethan collar to prevent licking/self-trauma of the surgical incision. We schedule an incision exam one approximately 1 week after surgery (at no charge), to ensure the incision is healing properly. Sutures are typically buried under the skin and are intended to dissolve. If your pet has any visible sutures or staples we will remove them ~14 days after surgery.

Microchip Identification

We recommend permanent microchip identification for all pets! This provides your pet with a form of identification if he/she is ever lost. The procedure consists of simply injecting a minute microchip (approximately the size of a grain of rice) under your cat's skin. Included in the cost of the microchip is registration in a national database. If your pet is ever lost, the microchip under their skin can be scanned with a handheld device, and the number can be traced back to you!

Dental Care

To keep your pet's teeth healthy and his/her breath nice and fresh, we recommend daily home care. Initiating this at a young age is recommended so your pet will be more accepting of the dental care. During one of your pet's wellness visits we will teach you how to brush your pet's teeth and discuss other home dental care options. You should brush your cat's teeth once daily and it should not take more than 2 minutes.

Declawing

We do not recommend declawing cats just for the sake of declawing. However, if your cat is destroying furniture, behaving aggressively with family members or other pets, or if any family member is immunocompromised, we consider properly performed LASER onychectomy (declaw surgery) to be a humane option as opposed to abandonment, re-homing or release to a shelter.

We perform all declaws with a CO₂ Surgical LASER which greatly reduces the discomfort and bleeding associated with other forms of declawing. All cats are provided with pre- and post-operative pain medications while in the hospital. All cats are kept in the hospital for at least one night, occasionally two nights to ensure proper healing. All cats are discharged with pain medication for three or more days, and antibiotics if indicated. We prefer to declaw cats at a young age (at the time of spay/neuter) as they tend to heal quickly. We generally do not recommend declawing cats that go outside, and we only declaw the front feet.