

Pediatrics

Getting a new kitten

“Can I keep ‘im? Ple-e-eaze?!?”

Kittens make such delightful pets, but as with any pet, they are a big responsibility. The Cat Doctor has a [Pediatric Program](#) designed to get your new kitten off to a healthy start.

Kitten Nutrition

The nutrition a kitten receives in her first six months has a lifelong effect on her health. We recommend feeding her Science Diet Feline Growth Formula in both canned and dry form. Science Diet foods are nutritionally complete, well-balanced diets, thus it is not necessary to add vitamins. But be sure to keep plenty of fresh water available; it's all the liquid your kitten will need. DO NOT give your kitten milk; it can cause diarrhea. At the age of 6-8 months you should switch to Science Diet Adult Formula.

Vaccinations

Your new kitten will need a series of vaccinations to protect her from common feline diseases. Our [Pediatric Program](#) encompass 3 visits for the following: [FeLV/FIV testing](#) ([Feline Leukemia](#) and [Feline Immunodeficiency](#) test), physical evaluation, vaccinations, and dewormings.

Parasites

Most kittens come complete with parasites. For this reason, kittens are routinely dewormed during their first two visits. We also carefully check for fleas, ticks and ear mites. [Heartworm prevention](#) is also started at this young age and continued monthly throughout your cat's entire lifespan. Our doctors will discuss with you which prevention plan is best for your cat's lifestyle.

Spays and Neuters

Cat population control concerns everyone, whether they own a cat or not. Without it, we'd be up to our calves in cats!! The increase in stray cats makes the transmission of disease (including rabies) much more likely. [Spay](#) and [neuter](#) procedures are usually performed around 6 months of age. In most cases, kittens will bounce back to normal very quickly following surgery.

Cosmetic Declawing

Often, a kitten's natural nail sharpening behavior can be eliminated through training before 6-7 months of age with 3-9 months being the most “trainable phase”. But if training fails, there are alternatives. Live with used furniture, trim nails regularly, apply nail caps (Soft Paws is a commonly found brand available in pet stores) or have your kitten declawed. At The Cat Doctor we see this as a last resort. For that reason, we use a technique that heals faster and is much more cosmetic than others. It's usually performed around 6 months of age and can be done at the same time your kitten is spayed or neutered. Call and speak to one of our knowledgeable staff members for advice on training or discuss [cosmetic declawing](#) with one of our veterinarians.

[Read This](#) helpful “How to” handout for ways you can help deter undesirable or destructive scratching.

[Click Here](#) for our In The News article, [The Declaw Debate](#), by Derek Woodbur, AAHA 2000