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KITTEN/CAT CARE RECOMMENDATIONS

Vaccinations: Continue vaccinations every 3-4 weeks until 16 weeks old. The final 2 boosters should be given after 12 weeks of age to ensure a strong immune response.

FeLV/FIV testing: We recommend this simple blood test for all kittens coming from unknown background, or with a mother that has not been tested to ensure that they are not carrying these fatal and highly contagious diseases. Symptoms of these diseases are sometimes not seen until later in life. Feline Leukemia vaccination is recommended for all kittens that may have ANY outdoor exposure, after they have already tested negative.

Internal Parasites:

- Kittens should be routinely dewormed every 2- 4 weeks for at least 4 treatments to eliminate common internal parasites. Please give the Strongid dewormer as prescribed.
- Please bring a fecal sample in the coming week for analysis to ensure all parasites are being treated.

Nutrition: We recommend feeding high-quality kitten food twice daily (three times daily for kittens less than 3 months of age). A scant ¼ cup of dry food twice daily, plus a small canned-food treat daily is recommended life-long. At 1-year of age, your kitten should be transitioned to a high quality adult maintenance diet. We highly recommend Hill's T/D (Tartar Diet) - this food is excellent nutritionally, and reduces tartar and gum disease by 50-70% by gently scrubbing the teeth every time your cat chews. Feeding this diet is an easy way to preserve oral health in your cat, when brushing teeth may be difficult.

Flea/Parasite Control: Outdoor cats and kittens should have monthly [Revolution Plus](#) applied topically to prevent fleas and internal parasites year-round. Indoor-only cats are still able to be infested by fleas travelling into the home through walls (apartments and duplexes), on shoes or clothing and on other pets (dogs or indoor-outdoor cats). Households with young children or immunocompromised persons are strongly recommended to keep all pets on year-round parasite and flea protection to prevent human health concerns.

Spaying/Neutering: Male cats should be neutered, and female cats should be spayed between 5-6 months of age. In addition to helping limit the severe pet overpopulation crisis, spaying and neutering helps to prevent urine marking and other undesirable behaviors in males, and the increased "yowling" of female cats in heat.

Dental Care: Healthy adult cats should receive their first comprehensive dental exam and dental cleaning starting at 4 years of age.

Permanent Identification: We recommend that a microchip be placed under your kitten's skin to help ensure that she is rapidly returned to you if ever lost. This can be done at the time of spaying/neutering if being done at 5-6 months of age, or can be done at one of the early kitten visits in animals where spay/neuter is going to be postponed. A microchip is recommended even for kittens that are not intended to go outdoors.

Indoor- only vs. indoor- outdoor lifestyle: We recommend that you consider keeping your cat indoors only. On average, indoor cats live much longer lives, and have many fewer traumas and medical problems than cats who go outdoors. Cats can live very full and enjoyable lives indoors only. The "Indoor Pet Initiative" on the Ohio State University webpage (indoorpet.osu.edu) has great information about enriching the environment for your indoor cat. Cats that are allowed outdoors can be kept safer by establishing a routine of coming in at night, when most cases of trauma occur.

Pet Health Insurance: Now is the time to investigate Pet Health Insurance if you have any interest. The website, petinsurancereview.com is an excellent resource for comparing coverage and premiums.

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Behavior:

Litterbox training and care: The vast majority of kittens take to the litterbox on their own. Litterboxes should be placed in a safe, easily-accessible location and should be easy for your cat to use (some cats prefer an open-box rather than a covered-box). We recommend fine, clumping, *unscented, dust-free* cat litter. There should be one litterbox per cat in the home, plus one additional. Feces and urine should be scooped daily to encourage good, ongoing litterbox use.

Scratching behavior and claw care: Cats and kittens **NEED** to scratch- it is part of their innate nature. It is important to provide various scratching objects, and to appropriately train your kitten where and where-not to scratch. Traditional vertical scratching posts and horizontal scratching surfaces (made of sisal-cord, carpet, or cardboard) should be placed prominently in the home environment where cats want to scratch. If your kitten is scratching furniture, Feliscratch© is a proven product containing catnip and appeasing pheromones which can be applied to appropriate scratching areas to train your cat or kitten to scratch where you want them to. It does take a little time, but positively rewarding them when they scratch in the right place will encourage them to continue that behavior. Try to match the scratching posts/ objects that you offer, to your cats individual scratching preferences. For example if they prefer to scratch on the carpet, provide a carpeted scratching post. We also recommend trimming your cat's toenails monthly to help prevent damage around the house- this is not a difficult procedure and we are happy to demonstrate! Much more information is available at FearFreeHappyHomes.com and IndoorPet.osu.edu.

Playtime: Kittens have exuberant energy and need constructive playtime to prevent unwanted behaviors. Throwing small toys (many kittens will quickly learn to fetch), having kittens chase the sash of a bathrobe or other thick cord, and using a small flashlight or laser pointer on the wall (not in the eyes!) all work very well. Prevent access to rubber bands, and small toys that kittens may swallow. Also prevent access to string, thread, dental floss, tinsel/ribbon- these commonly cause intestinal obstruction, requiring surgery, if swallowed. Kittens may occasionally "attack" our hands/feet- this is rarely true aggression but truly just exuberant play behavior. Simply end the interaction and re-direct your kitten to more appropriate play objects.

Other Resources: Much more information about health and behavior issues can be found at the following websites

- <https://fearfreehappyhomes.com/>
- <https://indoorpet.osu.edu/cats>
- <http://www.vet.cornell.edu/fhc/>
- You can find links to these sites and other helpful information via our [resources tab](#).

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FVH Additional Recommendations

- Nutrition is one of the most key elements of a pet's good health. We recommend a quality balanced diet be fed based on your pet's recommended ideal body weight established by your Veterinarian. Dogs may be fed dry or canned as desired and the total recommended daily volume may be broken up into multiple meals. Cats may be fed dry or canned, but we do encourage those cats receiving dry only to also be offered some canned each week. This can be important as many senior cats may require a change to a canned diet as they age. Fresh water should always be available. Calorie content of treats should be factored into total daily intake; if desired, you may wish to hold aside a portion of the daily feed and give as a treat. Maintaining the ideal weight is important in preventing diseases associated with obesity such as arthritis, heart disease, and diabetes.

For additional recommendations on quality diets available for your pet, we trust the Pet Stop, located in Sehome Village, to guide your decision-making process. Our LVT staff would be happy to review any diet you currently feed for nutritional quality, balance, and volume to feed.

- Training and socialization are very important to the well-being of your dog at any age. Tails-a-Wagging in Bellingham provides excellent, comprehensive puppy and adult dog training. Check out our website for other recommended trainers who use positive, reward-based training methods
- Undesirable behavior issues in dogs and cats can occur at any age and may be very frustrating to an owner. Often we can offer recommendations for altering behaviors through a consultation with our doctors or licensed veterinary technicians. Our recommendations for training systems and guides can be found through Dr. Sophia Yin's veterinary behaviorist website at www.drSophiaYin.com. Please also check out fearfreehappyhomes.com for information on understanding your pets' body language, behavior, and other tips. Free and paid subscriptions are available.
- **Why buy your prescription drugs and flea medications from Fairhaven Veterinary Hospital?**
 1. FVH purchases all of our drugs and prescription flea products directly from the manufacturer. Online pharmacies often get their product through diversion from domestic or foreign sources. Proper handling of product while in the possession of diverters cannot be guaranteed.
 2. FVH will not sell expired medications. Some online pharmacies have been found to sell outdated or short dated product.
 3. Manufacturers will only guarantee certain products in the event of an adverse reaction when purchased directly from a licensed veterinarian. Pharmaceutical manufacturers strongly believe their products will be used correctly only when discussed with trained veterinary staff. Human Pharmacies and online retailers do not have pharmacists trained in veterinary pharmacology; they are unfamiliar with how very different companion animals are from human patients.
 4. FVH is a family owned business that has been a proud member of the local community for 40 years. We provide local jobs, maintain high ethical standards, support many local non-profits, and work to create a client focused experience based on compassion.



FVH GENERAL CARE GUIDE

Species	Age	Recommendations
Feline Kitten	< 1 year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exam series (2) to assess proper development starting at 7-8 weeks of age. • Initial Feline Leukemia/FIV Blood Testing. • Fecal parasite analysis at first visit and again at 6 months. • Deworm 2, 4, 6 and 8 weeks of age; then monthly until 6 months of age. • Initial vaccine series based on risk assessment; complete by age 4-6 months. • Spay/Neutering at 5-6 months of age. Implant microchip identification. • Feed high quality kitten food until first birthday.
Feline Adult	1-10 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wellness exam once yearly. • Vaccine boosters based on risk assessment to include rabies by law. • Feed high quality adult diet and carefully regulate portion fed to maintain ideal weight. • Dental prophylactic cleanings every 18-24 months after 4 years of age. • Fecal parasite analysis yearly or as needed if indoor only.
Feline Senior	>10 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior Wellness exam every 6 months. • Vaccine boosters as indicated or discontinue based on risk assessment. • Full body system blood screen every 6-12 months. • Feed high quality senior formula or prescription diet as indicated and regulate portion fed to maintain ideal weight. • Dental prophylactic cleanings every 18-24 months. • Fecal parasite analysis/deworm yearly or as needed if indoor only.
Canine Puppy	<1 year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exam series (2) to assess proper development starting at 7-8 weeks of age. • Fecal parasite analysis at first visit and again at 6 months of age. • Deworm 2, 4, 6 and 8 weeks of age; then monthly until 6 months of age. • Initial vaccine series based on risk assessment; complete by age 4-6 months. • Spaying at 5-6 months of age. Neuter males <60 pounds 5-6 months; >60 pounds 12-18 months. Implant microchip identification. • Feed high quality puppy food until 1-1.5 years based on breed. • Enroll in puppy training and socialization classes starting at 9-14 weeks.
Canine Adult	1-7 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wellness exam once yearly. • Vaccine boosters based on risk assessment to include rabies by law. • Feed high quality adult diet and carefully regulate portion fed to maintain ideal weight. • Dental prophylactic cleanings every 18-24 months after 4 years of age. • Fecal parasite analysis yearly or deworm at wellness exam.
Canine Senior	>7 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior Wellness exam every 6 months. • Vaccine boosters as indicated or discontinue based on risk assessment. • Full body system blood screen every 6-12 months. • Feed high quality senior formula or prescription diet as indicated and regulate portion fed to maintain ideal weight. • Dental prophylactic cleanings every 18-24 months. • Fecal parasite analysis/deworm yearly.



FVH Parasite Detection and Prevention Guidelines

- **DETECTION (Fecal microanalysis)**
 - Puppies and Kittens- Test at initial visit and again at 6-18 months of age.
 - Adult Dogs and Cats
 - Annual fecal analysis for all patients.
 - Fecal performed whenever abnormal feces or unexplained weight loss present.
 - Dogs that frequent a boarding kennel, play facility or dog park should be tested regularly or as required by the organization.
 - Cats and dogs on parasite prevention products should still be fecal tested annually to detect Giardia, Coccidia, and other less common parasites that are not cleared by current prevention products.
 - Clients should provide a fresh sample in a baggie or small container; generally, a 3oz. sample is sufficient. Results are available within 24-48 hours.
- **PREVENTION (Deworming and Parasite Prevention Products)**
 - Puppies and Kittens
 - Prophylactic deworm at 2, 4, 6 and 8 weeks of age, then deworm monthly until 6 months of age.
 - Adult Dogs and Cats
 - Year round use of parasite prevention products are recommended for all dogs ([Interceptor Plus](#)), outdoor cats, and indoor-only cats that live in a household with dogs or young children ([Revolution Plus](#)).

Common parasites to our area (*Heartworm is not currently a concern for our area*):

- **Fleas/Ticks**- Treat monthly with [Credelio](#), orally (Dogs) or [Revolution Plus](#), topically (Cats). Pets should be treated year-round since our winters are not harsh enough to suppress flea and tick populations. Infestation may lead to allergic dermatitis, anemia, itching and, in rare cases, serious disease for companion animals. Severe infestation may also require treatment of environment.
- **Roundworms**- Primary route of infection is via mother at birth, direct ingestion via the environment or ingestion of infected vertebrate host. Can occur in cats throughout life, but less common in adult dogs. Children and individuals with suppressed immune systems at higher risk for transmission and can lead to serious medical disorders.
- **Coccidia**- Protozoa with primary route of infection coming from contaminated environment or ingestion of contaminated host; People are not considered at risk for transmission. To prevent do not allow ingestion of wild animals and solicit only properly cleaned pet facilities.
- **Tapeworms**- Various species are prevalent and infection typically via ingestion of fleas or contaminated host. Can be a zoonotic, although rarely causes serious human medical concerns.
- **Giardia**- Differing forms affect cats, dogs and people with transmission between groups not currently demonstrated. Infection is through direct fecal-oral contact with cysts or contaminated water source/environment.
- **Toxoplasmosis**- A very serious zoonotic disease transmitted through the feces of infected cats to humans. Prevention in cats is best achieved by not allowing hunting of wild animals that may be infected, ingestion of raw or undercooked meat, and daily removal of feces from litter box. Pregnant women and immunosuppressed individuals should avoid cleaning of litter boxes and wear gloves when gardening to avoid exposure to cat feces. Additional recommendations are available at www.capcvet.org.

Fairhaven Veterinary Hospital Parasite Prevention Recommendations

Cats



- **Best product available for cats.** Prescription only with current exam.
- Prevents and treats fleas, roundworms, and ear mites.
- Topical dries very quickly and remains effective for 1 month.
- FDA approved product; High safety margin. May be used in kittens starting at 8 weeks of age.



- OTC topical with fast flea killing action. Recommended for cats with flea allergy dermatitis (FAD).
- Maintains efficacy for 1 month.
- Safe, natural organic ingredients.
- Excellent for use around children.
- High safety margin.

Dogs



- **Best product available for dogs.** Prescription only with current exam.
- Prevents and treats fleas and ticks.
- Highly palatable hydrolyzed beef flavored tab. Ok for food allergy patients.
- Fast flea killing action, >99% of fleas killed within 8 hours.
- Maintains efficacy for 1 month. FDA Approved; High safety margin.
- Safe in puppies 8 weeks of age and weighing >4.4 pounds.
- Must be administered with food for maximum efficacy.



- **Best product available for dogs.** Prescription only with current exam.
- Treats roundworm, hookworm, whipworm, and tapeworm infestations.
- Prevents heartworm when travelling with pet outside of northwest WA.
- Highly palatable chicken flavored chew. Not recommended for food allergy patients.
- Safe in puppies 6 weeks of age and weighing >2 pounds.
- FDA Approved; High safety margin.



- OTC with fast flea killing action within 30 minutes of ingestion.
- Maintains efficacy for 1 month.
- Safe, natural organic ingredients.
- Administered orally with no topical residue; excellent for use around children.
- FDA approved product; High safety margin.