



Guidelines for Your Cat's Health Care

1. For Kittens the critical period of **socialization** ends when the fear response begins and is very variable between 3 and 9 weeks of age. You may have acquired your cat after it has socialized negatively or positively to humans and other species, like dogs. Getting your kitty accustomed to new things after this period can be challenging and should be done slowly, gently and in a limited fashion. Handling different parts of their body, inspecting and touching teeth, opening the mouth (not too much!), grooming ,etc., has to be done in a non-threatening way that does not stimulate a fear response or you might not get a second chance. Reinforce positive responses with gentle petting and friendly praise. Avoid correcting negatives and don't use punishment or harsh tones.
2. We advise annual **examinations** until senior years over 12 years of age or when your pet is on chronic medications when twice yearly is more appropriate.
3. As a **kitten** we advise a **stool analysis** every 3 months for the first 6 months, which may increase the frequency of deworming needed or indicate a need to change food or medication types. After the first fecal, all others for the first year are half price at any frequency. For **adults** once yearly is adequate for cats going outside. For indoor cats we do one more fecal at 2 years of age. In older years an annual urinalysis would be helpful, but a bit tricky to collect.
4. **Deworming kittens** involves 3 treatments, each 2 weeks apart, followed by monthly deworming until 6 months of age or longer if your kitten goes outside due to cycling larval stages, lack of resistance and increased risk of re-infestation. Outdoor cats should be dewormed at least once per year for tapeworms (December) and probably monthly between June and November for roundworms and hookworms. We suggest Revolution for outdoor cats.
5. **Dental care** should start at an early age by inspecting under the lips, touching teeth and getting the pet comfortable with head handling (very slowly). Ideally, eventually, you may be able to brush the outer surfaces once or twice daily with a tooth brush, with or without pet toothpaste. Tartar can be chipped off before it goes under the gum line if you notice it on the teeth, but at this time it may indicate the need for a professional cleaning. Dental diet is often all you have beside this to help keep the teeth healthy.
6. **Dental Program.** Cats can get early dental disease, a condition called feline juvenile onset periodontitis, which may include gingivitis, periodontitis and feline resorptive lesions. Although not as common as small breed dogs, they may require the first dental before 18 months of age. We advise a dental every 18 months once we begin. Our dental prices are at 75% to 85% of the OVMA guidelines in Ontario. We give 30% off repeat dentals if done within 18 months of the last. It is 43% of OVMA guidelines if combined with a spay or neuter should your kitty require early dental corrections.
7. **Nail Trimming.** Don't over-do it. If you cut too short your pet will experience pain and it will be very difficult to trim in the future. Trim just short of leaving a nice

triangular shaped nail. Don't cut where there is any pink. Help your cat by providing vertical and horizontal scratching posts and ideally a cat tree with carpeting to naturally groom the nails.

8. **Weight Control** is especially important in the first year. Obesity is extremely common in cats because they tend to be given free access to food and often don't get a lot of outdoor activity like dogs. They often gain a pound or more a year. Once obesity sets in it is very, very difficult to turn around. The best treatment is prevention, so don't over feed your cat. A gram scale may be very helpful in controlling 24 hour food consumption to maintain a trim belly, easily palpable ribs and still disperse food over the day. However, twice daily limited feeding may work. Adjust type and quantity to different life stages and activity levels to maintain ideal body weight.
9. Should you have an emergency when our office is closed, we refer you to our sister practice the **Ottawa Animal Emergency and Specialty Hospital** at 1155 Lola St, **613-745-0123**. It is a daytime specialty center with neurologists, dental specialist, anesthesiology, and internal medicine, among other specialties, as well as an evening, weekend and holiday emergency hospital. During opening hours if your pet is sick and you can't get time to make an appointment we do take a limited number of **drop-off appointments**. If that fails we may be able to help you over the phone with a **phone consult**. We want to make sure we are there for you somehow should your pet need attention.
10. We suggest **pet insurance** especially for outdoor cats. There are a number of companies to choose from. Excluding preventative medicine in the policy would lessen the costs. We may be able to offer a 1 month free trial pet insurance from Trupanion or PetSecure pending pre-existing conditions and a normal examination.
11. We advise all cats be **spayed or neutered** to help control the pet over-population problem and to decrease the associated unnecessary euthanasia of healthy animals. There are also medical and behavior reasons that support this recommendation. Female cats are very vocal during heat periods that are variable and unpredictable in frequency. Male cats tend more to mark urine (spray) when they become mature, which is 90% correctable by neutering alone. We suggest sterilizing your cat between 5-8 months of age. We **DO NOT perform declawing** procedures in cats as it is actually a digital amputation procedure and causes unnecessary pain and potential chronic problems. It is becoming illegal worldwide.
12. We suggest your cat have a **microchip implant** especially if it goes outside. This is a permanent rice sized marker that we inject under the skin above the shoulder blades. This is required now for international travel and is what the city/ SPCA /HS scans for if your cat becomes lost. We scan all new patients when they first come to our practice.
13. We advise **high quality nutrition** and kitten food until 12 months of age. Dental diet is highly recommended after 1 year of age. We carry Royal Canin Dental formula and Hills Prescription diet T/D. Feed to maintain ideal body weight and prevent obesity by monitoring body condition and body weight regularly. Always have fresh water available for your cat. Royal Canin Calm diet is highly recommended in multi-cat environments if there is conflict.
14. We advise monitoring the inner workings of your pet by doing **wellness blood screens**. Although not mandatory we suggest doing the first blood screen before the

- first anesthetic procedure to screen for congenital problems. After that we suggest doing blood work every 3 years until your pet is 12 years of age. Afterward it is advised we do annual blood screens as disease are more common in senior years and the screen is mandatory before any anesthetics at this age. The immunosuppressive diseases Felv and FIV should ideally be tested for in all cats especially new pets in a multi-cat home and those with outdoor access.
15. **Flea and internal parasite prevention** are advised between June and November annually for outdoor cats only. If you also have a dog make sure he has flea prevention during this period to avoid him bringing fleas into the home to infect your cat though. There is no non-toxic treatment for tick prevention yet for cats. We recommend Revolution for cats during the summer and Milbemax for tapeworm treatment at the end of the fall.
 16. **Vaccinations.** Rabies vaccination is a requirement. The first rabies needs to be followed by the second in less than 12 months to allow for legal 3 year status after the 2nd vaccine. PRC is considered a core vaccination, while Leukemia is considered a non-core vaccine. The AAHA advises leukemia to be given to all kittens up to the first year and then for outdoor cats only after that. We try to give vaccines to a minimal level and spread out the vaccines so less are given per year. Kittens need a series from 6-9 weeks to over 13 weeks of age, which usually mean 2-3 visits followed annually.
 17. Cats are prone to stress related behavioural and medical conditions. We encourage you to check **out the indoor pet initiative for tips on preventing stress related problems** (<https://indoorpet.osu.edu/cats>). We have a diet called Royal Canine Calm that helps treat stress related issues and multiple cat household conflicts. There is also pheromone sprays you can use that have proven to decrease stress/ anxiety in indoor cats.
 18. **We want to thank you for choosing Beechwood Animal Hospital for your pet's medical care.** We invite you to our website, www.beechwoodah.com, for further information, helpful links and a video tour of the facility. We have whole body and dental digital radiography, ultrasound, therapeutic laser therapy, in-hospital laboratory, surgical suite and dental station with 3 anesthetic machines. We have high quality monitors for anesthetics (Resp. CO2, BP, PO2, Temp, and ECG) and a Bair Hugger body warmer. **Our price policy** is to keep all our prices between 70 to 85% of the Ontario Veterinary Medical Association guidelines in Ontario.

Our mission statement is as follows:

To provide thorough, thoughtful, and tailored veterinary services for all animals entrusted to our care, with an emphasis on patient safety, comfort and well-being.

To communicate with our clients in a clear, concise, and respectful manner; to listen to concerns, and prioritize diagnostic and treatment options in a sincere and compassionate manner.

To empower and educate our entire team so we all contribute to the health of our patients; to promote and actively pursue continuing education for all staff members