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## **Diet**

Kittens need more energy as they are growing up and therefore should be fed a well-balanced diet specifically made for kittens. The premium brands, such as Science Diet, are very high quality and are perfectly balanced. Avoid feeding generic or store brands, since they often have not been used in feeding trial to evaluate the availability of nutrients contained in the food.

## **Vaccinations**

Your new kitten should receive the Distemper combination (FVRCP) vaccination at 3-4 week intervals, starting at about 8 weeks of age, until they are at least 16 weeks old. This vaccine protects against Distemper virus, Calicivirus, Chlamydia and Rhinotracheitis infections. We recommend this multiple vaccination series since the antibodies the kitten received from its mother will disappear somewhere between 8 and 12 weeks of age and we want to be sure that he or she is well protected against these diseases.

Once your kitten reaches 16 weeks old it can also receive its first rabies vaccination. The distemper vaccine must be given annually. The first rabies vaccination is good for one year, and all following rabies vaccinations will be good for multiple years.

If there is any possibility that the kitten will be outdoors or exposed to any other cats, we also recommend the Feline Leukemia Virus vaccination. This disease cripples the immune system thus making it unable to ward off all other infections. There is no treatment for the disease, and it is fatal, therefore prevention is the best option. We recommend testing your kitten for Feline leukemia before starting the vaccination. There is also a test for Feline Immunodeficiency Virus, which cripples the immune system similar to the feline leukemia virus. These tests require drawing a small amount of blood and results can be obtained in 20 to 30 minutes.

## **Intestinal Worms**

Many kittens have intestinal worms, such as hook and roundworms, and we routinely dispense wormer at the time of their first appointment. A stool sample should also be brought in with your pet's first appointment in order to diagnose any other intestinal parasites that may be present.

## **Neutering**

Your kitten may be neutered (spay or castration) once reaching three to four months of age. Removal of the uterus and ovaries (spay or ovariectomy) before the onset of the first estrus cycle can drastically reduce the chances of mammary cancer; and in addition will eliminate the possibility of uterine infections, uterine cancer and ovarian cancer. Castration, the removal of the testicles, will help to prevent many behavioral problems such as roaming, fighting and inappropriate urination, as well as eliminating the occurrence of testicular cancer.