



## Love your pet... love your vet

### Kittens – a guide to your new kitten's care

#### Introduction

Firstly, many congratulations on the new addition to your family! This is an exciting time for you and we hope that you will have many happy, enjoyable years together. This handout covers some of the basic facts about keeping a new kitten, but if you have any further questions please contact the practice and speak to a member of the team.

#### Suggested Feeding Guidelines

- 6-12 weeks: 4 meals daily of Hill's Science Plan kitten food
- 12-16 weeks: 3 meals daily of Hill's Science Plan kitten food
- From about 16 weeks: 2 meals daily of Hill's Science Plan kitten food
- 1 year old: change to an adult Hill's diet
- Remember, Hill's Science Plan kitten food is a **complete** diet so you do not need to add any form of supplementation including milk

The Science Plan range is designed to satisfy all of your kitten's dietary needs from the beginning of its life, right up until the end. It's a fact that if you feed your cat a diet like Hill's Science Plan it will live a longer healthier life because it is less likely to suffer from problems like obesity and dental disease.

As your kitten gets older its dietary requirements change - with Hill's and Hillside Vets you don't need to worry about this because we will recommend the right diet for your cat regardless of its age, breed or lifestyle.

Actions speak louder than words though and it's a fact that our staff feed their pets on Hill's, so we really do practice what we preach.

## **Vaccinations**

- Your kitten should have a course of two vaccinations starting from the age of nine weeks. With the second usually being given at 12 weeks. Kittens should be vaccinated against cat flu, enteritis and leukemia [FeLV]
- Remember, older kittens still need vaccinating if the breeder has not already done so. If the kitten has only been vaccinated against flu and enteritis the leukemia vaccine can still be given at a later date
- We recommend kittens should not go out unsupervised until ten days after their second vaccination
- Once vaccinated, your kitten should receive a booster vaccination and a thorough health checkup annually.

## **Parasite Control - Worms and Fleas**

There are a number of parasites that can cause problems for both your kitten and the family. Understanding each and using the right products to protect your pet is the key to avoiding problems.

Did you know that many kittens are infected with roundworms via their mother's milk shortly after birth? It is very important that your kitten is treated regularly to eliminate these intestinal parasites. Untreated kittens can suffer from slowed growth, tummy upsets and in extreme cases death.

For kittens in close contact with children it is even more important that they are wormed correctly as children can become infected with roundworms too. Roundworm infection in children can be extremely serious with the potential to cause liver damage, asthma and even blindness.

Cats that hunt regularly are at increased risk of acquiring tapeworms. Although these worms don't tend to cause much harm they are worth preventing. They are sometimes recognizable as 'moving rice grains around your cat's bottom area!

Flea infestations in cats are very common and are best dealt with before they become a problem by the regular use of an appropriate flea control product. Left untreated fleas can cause extreme itchiness and affected cats can develop very nasty skin infections. Fleas also infest the house and will readily bite humans as well.

At Hillside we will assess the risk to your pet and family from each parasite and recommend an individual prevention plan accordingly.

The products recommended by Hillside Veterinary Centre are prescription only medicines. In order for you to obtain these products, your pet will need to have been examined within the previous 12 months.

We would NOT recommend purchasing flea and worm products from a pet shop or supermarket as they are rarely effective enough to protect your pet.

### **Neutering**

We recommend that both male and female kittens are neutered after the age of six months. Not only does this prevent unwanted pregnancies, it also has health benefits to our pets:

1. Neutering males can reduce the likelihood of testicular tumours and prostate problems and may prevent your cat from wandering too far. It can also prevent him from fighting as much with other cats.
2. Neutering females at an early age can reduce mammary gland problems and prevent serious uterine infections in later life.
3. Young male and female cats should be checked by a vet before the neutering operation to ensure that they are physically mature enough.
4. If you are considering breeding from your pet you should weigh up the pros and cons carefully; if things do not go according to plan it can be time consuming and expensive. If you require further advice about breeding contact the surgery.

### **Insurance & Microchips**

**Insurance** for your pet is something we strongly recommend. Veterinary fees can be expensive. There is no NHS for animals but many people want the same quality of care and treatment for their pets. More complicated procedures can cost hundreds if not thousands of pounds. We have a range of insurance leaflets available in the surgery, but please ask for advice if you are unsure.

**Microchipping** is a unique way of identifying your pet. A small microchip is implanted under the skin of your kitten's neck with little fuss. Should your pet go missing, most rescue centres and vets are able to scan for these chips and identify you as the owner. We now stock the Biotherm™ microchips that can read you pet's body temperature without the need for a thermometer in the bottom!.

### **Dental Care**

Keeping your cat's teeth in good condition is vitally important. It's a sad fact that over 85% of cats have painful dental disease by the time they are three years old. It's also a fact that it is preventable. Cat's teeth, like our own, are susceptible to cavities and tartar so regular oral hygiene is essential to keep them clean. Feeding the correct food plays a vital role in this.

### **Toys, playing & training**

Your kitten will need lots of toys to keep it occupied. Try not to buy toys with bits that can come loose and be swallowed. Avoid playing with cotton thread and

wool if the kitten is unsupervised as these too can be easily swallowed and cause serious problems.

Most kittens will automatically use a **litter tray** without needing to be trained. While the kitten is young a litter tray should always be readily available for use. If, as the kitten gets older, you would like him or her to use the garden instead, gradually move the litter tray nearer to the door, then outside and then into the garden. Eventually you can remove it altogether.

### **...and finally**

We hope that you will have lots of fun and pleasure from your cat over the coming years. If you need any further advice on the health or welfare of your cat, please don't hesitate to contact the surgery.

*Disclaimer: The information and advice contained in this handout is for general information only. It is not intended to be a substitute for a veterinary examination and/or specific treatment or advice. You should always seek advice from your veterinary surgeon.*

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