

Park Plaza Animal Hospital

839 Ohio Pike, Cincinnati, OH 45245

(513) 752-3366

Julie O'Connell, D.V.M.

PROPER CARE FOR THE HEALTH OF YOUR CAT

VACCINATIONS: Vaccinations can prevent many serious diseases that your cat may be exposed to in its lifetime. Vaccination is inexpensive protection against costly medical treatment or even premature death. Vaccines include core vaccines (Distemper/Upper Respiratory, Rabies) that all cats should receive and non-core vaccines that may be needed based on your cat's lifestyle.

- ❑ **FVRCP Vaccine** - This vaccine, which protects against four different diseases, is commonly referred to as "distemper" or "upper respiratory" vaccine. Panleukopenia virus (feline distemper) can cause fever, vomiting, diarrhea, tremors or incoordination, and finally death. Rhinotracheitis, calicivirus, and chlamydia all can cause discharge from the eyes or nose, sores in the mouth or nose, fever, lethargy, pneumonia, and sometimes death. Although many cats and kittens will recover from these respiratory diseases, some animals become chronically infected and never fully recover. Kittens should be vaccinated every 3-4 weeks until they are over 3 months; older cats being vaccinated for the first time should receive a series of two vaccines 3-4 weeks apart. Annual vaccines are recommended after that.
- ❑ **RABIES Vaccine** - Rabies is a fatal neurologic disease that can infect all warm-blooded animals including people. By law, all cats 3 months of age and older must be vaccinated against rabies by a licensed veterinarian. In addition, owners must be able to produce a current rabies vaccination certificate. The first vaccine is good for one year; subsequent boosters are given every 3 years.
- ❑ **FELINE LEUKEMIA Vaccine** - Feline leukemia is a contagious virus spread between cats. It can also be transmitted from a mother to her kittens either in the womb or through nursing. The virus depresses the cat's immune system and leads to a variety of secondary infections and cancers, including leukemia. Feline Leukemia is incurable and usually fatal. We recommend all cats and kittens be tested for leukemia as early as possible. If your cat goes outside at all or is exposed to other cats that do, we recommend you vaccinate your cat for this disease. Two vaccinations 3-4 weeks apart are given to cats over 9 weeks old. Annual boosters are necessary to maintain good immunity.
- ❑ **FIP Vaccine** - Feline infectious peritonitis, commonly called FIP, can cause fever, weight loss, incoordination, eye problems, trouble breathing from fluid in the chest, or an enlarged abdomen from fluid. Cats showing signs of infection rarely survive. There is currently no definitive test for this virus; diagnosis is made based on symptoms and testing to rule out other causes. Cats most at risk are outdoor cats and ones that live in multiple cat households. A vaccine is available in the form of nose drops that are given 3-4 weeks apart to cats over 12 weeks old. Annual vaccination is necessary to maintain immunity.

- ❑ **FIV Vaccine** - Feline Immunodeficiency Virus, commonly called FIV, causes immune suppression and secondary infections. The virus is primarily spread by deep bite wounds. It is not contagious to people or animals other than cats. It is most common among outdoor cats, especially males or cats that fight. We recommend all cats be tested as soon as possible. Although a vaccine is available, it will interfere with future test results. We do not currently recommend this vaccine. Keeping your cat indoors at all times is the best protection against FIV as well as many other diseases.

PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS: Regular physical examinations are very important to your cat's health. Cats do not always show signs of early disease, nor can they easily communicate discomfort to us. In early stages, many illnesses can be treated to make your cat more comfortable and prolong your cat's life. Veterinarians can best detect and prevent problems such as heart disease, kidney or liver disease, dental problems, cancer and parasites by examining your cat on a routine basis. This also allows you to ask the veterinarian questions about behavior, nutrition, flea control or any other questions you might have.

INTESTINAL PARASITES: Parasites commonly found in cats in Ohio are **roundworms, hookworms, tapeworms, coccidia, and giardia**; some of these can be transmitted to humans as well. Cats may show no symptoms at all, or they may exhibit vomiting, diarrhea, anemia, weight loss, coughing, scooting, anorexia, dull hair coat, or a pot bellied appearance. Because these parasites can be detected before symptoms begin, we recommend having a stool sample tested annually as well as whenever your cat is showing symptoms.

FLEA CONTROL: In addition to making your cat itchy and miserable, flea bites can cause allergic reactions in the skin, leading to other skin problems. If swallowed, fleas can also transmit tapeworms to your cat. There are many simple and safe flea treatments such as Advantage™, Frontline™, and Revolution™. There is no longer any reason for you or your cat to put up with fleas! Please ask us which product would work best for your cat.

SPAY/NEUTER: We recommend spaying or neutering for all cats not intended for breeding. This lessens the number of unwanted pets and decreases the number of cats local shelters must euthanize every year. Of equal or greater importance is the increased quality of life for your cat. This surgery reduces the incidence of mammary tumors, life threatening infections of the uterus (pyometra), testicular tumors, and undesirable behaviors. We advise scheduling this surgery between 3 and 5 months of age to receive the maximum health and behavior benefits, but it can be safely performed in older cats as well.

DENTISTRY: Dental health is one of the most neglected areas of cat care. More than 70% of cats over 2 years old have periodontal disease. Bad breath, depression, drooling, anorexia, or pain while eating are signs of periodontal disease. Dental tartar can also lead to infection in the liver, kidneys, or heart. Regular examinations, professional scaling, and proper home dental care are needed to keep your cat's teeth healthy.