

Basics for Pet Parents



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Animal proofing your home or pet room

It is important to ensure your home or pet room is safe for the animals. Here are some things to consider before bringing a pet animal into your home.

- Ensure all medications and cleaners are out of reach of jumping, climbing kitties
- Keep trashcans covered or inside a latched cabinet
- Place dangling wires and mini-blind or drapery cords out of reach or wrap with protective covering, such as vacuum hose or PVC pipe
- Remove houseplants (see list below for types and symptoms)
- Cover electrical outlets so little kitten paws and claws can't get caught in them
- Count heads when opening and closing closets to ensure no one is shut inside.

It is possible the animal(s) may cause damage to your home. Minimize this by using common sense when establishing your pet room and ensuring dogs and cats cannot be climbing on screens or other inappropriate items. TLCS cannot be held responsible for damages incurred by the pet animal.

Houseplants

Many house and garden plants are poisonous. The table that follows lists a variety of plants that are toxic and the symptoms that each plant can cause.

<i>Type of Plant</i>	<i>Symptoms</i>
Alocasia	Salivation and edema (swelling)
Amaryllis	Nausea and vomiting
Balsam Pear	Nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea
Bird-of-paradise	Nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea
Buckthorn	Nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea
Cacti	Contact irritants / mechanical injury
Cala lily	Salivation and edema (swelling)
Caladium	Salivation and edema (swelling)
Christmas candle	Nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea
Clematis	Nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea
Common Boxwood	Nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea
Daffodil	Nausea and vomiting
Dieffenbachia	Salivation and edema (swelling)
Elephant's ear	Salivation and edema (swelling)
English holly	Nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea
English ivy	Nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea

Euonymus	Nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea
Foxglove	Slow and irregular heartbeat with nausea and vomiting
Foxtail	Contact irritants / mechanical injury
Green Dragon	Salivation and edema (swelling)
Honey locust	Contact irritants / mechanical injury
Honeysuckle	Nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea
Hydrangea	Vomiting, stupor, difficult breathing, coma
Iris Nausea,	vomiting, and diarrhea
Jack-in-the-pulpit	Salivation and edema (swelling)
Japanese plum	Vomiting, stupor, difficult breathing, coma
Larkspur	Slow and irregular heartbeat with nausea and vomiting
Lily of the valley	Slow and irregular heartbeat with nausea and vomiting
Malaga	Salivation and edema (swelling)
Mock orange	Nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea
Oleander	Slow and irregular heartbeat with nausea and vomiting
Philodendron	Salivation and edema (swelling)
Poinsettia	Nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea
Pokeweed	Nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea
Wisteria	Nausea and vomiting

Safety

Toys

Never play with a cat or kitten with your hands or feet as this teaches them that biting and scratching people is OK.

Sometimes it's not about the actual toys, but rather the configuration of the play area. A good and inexpensive way to build a play station is by using plastic milk crates. Place them in a pyramid shape, with the top (open part) facing into the room. Secure them together. Then hang toys from them or put blankets and towels inside for sleeping. Cats and kittens alike love this!

Cats have an uncanny knack of making toys from many objects we wouldn't think of as toys. Not all of these are safe for the kitties; some are just plain dangerous. These are unsafe objects because they can be ingested::

- yarn,
- rubber bands,
- paper clips,
- plastic milk jug rings.

Some store-bought toys must be altered to be cat-proof. These include anything with small parts attached to them, eyes, ribbons, feathers. Oh, they are cute, but no fun to the cat when he/she pulls them off the toy and eats them!

Toy Comments

Soft toys - Soft toys must be machine washable and be able to withstand bleach to be appropriate for use with pet kitties. Avoid stuffed toys with fillings of nutshells or polystyrene beads. These can be dangerous if they cat bites them open.

Round plastic shower curtain rings - These are fun as a single ring to bat around, hide, or carry. Also fun when linked together and hung in an enticing spot.

Balls - Provide plastic rolling ones with or without bells inside, ping pong balls, or plastic practice golf balls, especially the ones with holes in them.

Paper bags - Be sure to remove any handles. Never allow a pet animal to play with plastic bags.

Sisal-wrapped toys - These are attractive to those cats who ignore soft toys.

Empty cardboard rolls - You can get these from the toilet paper or paper towels. They are especially enticing if you unwind the cardboard a little!

Wand toys You can make you own with a dowel rod from any home improvement or craft store. Put bird feathers (you've collected in the yard) on the end, or a plastic practice golf ball, or just a knot.

Track toys Track toys are great! Some come with cardboard scratching in the middle, others are covered.

Food and diet

It is imperative that all animals have fresh food and water daily. Equally important to note is the higher quality of food you choose to feed, the fewer stools you will clean up and the better health the animal will enjoy. Low quality foods include indigestibles and low quality nutrients, which do not absorb into the animal's body, and therefore are eliminated. High quality does not necessarily mean expensive; you have to read the label to know if you're buying high quality.

Some keys to getting high quality food are:

- Whole meat or single-source meat meal (chicken meal rather than poultry meal)
- A whole-meat source as one of the first 2 ingredients
- The type of meat is listed and not just stated as "meat"

- Whole, unprocessed grains, vegetables and not fragments and fractions (whole grain barley rather than rice bran, rice gluten, or brewers rice)
- Few sweeteners and not at the top of the list (corn syrup, sucrose)
- No artificial colors
- No propylene glycol – this is added to keep foods chewy
- No artificial preservatives (BHA, BHT, or ethoxyquin)

There are a variety of articles about foods, ingredients, and how to read a label. You are urged to consult the resources listed at the end of this manual to learn more.

Changing foods

To prevent diarrhea, if you switch food brands, do so gradually. A mix of 1/3 new with 2/3 previous for 2 days and then opposite for 2 days will help the animal to adjust.

Cat food

Cats are carnivores and must have meat to survive. If allowed to eat on their own, cats will eat 10-18 meals evenly distributed throughout a 24 hour period. When diet is not artificially altered, cats select food according to its aroma, consistency, texture, and taste. They will also use previous experience to determine foods they like. Cats have a remarkable sensitivity to the taste of water, making it even more important to ensure they have good, palatable water.

CAT CARE

Grooming

The function of cat grooming is to reduce anxiety and conflict; this is also the reason why cats enjoy being petted. If you are petting kittens, they may not necessarily need grooming, but it is important to get them started on understanding the process and accustomed to the procedures, because in a few months, they will need it. An established routine will add to the health of the animal and will give you one more opportunity for interaction. To ensure a positive experience, keep grooming sessions short at first and provide a reward for positive behavior.

Cat nail trimming

It can be easy to keep nails trimmed and, thus reduce the desire for adopters to want to declaw the kitty. You can be part of this solution by getting the kitty used to having his/her paws handled and squeezed. Each time you play with or pet the kitty, touch or hold their paws; choosing which will depend on their level of tolerance. You can use the same nail clippers that humans use or you can use ones designed especially for animals; the preference is yours. It may be easier for you to do this with the help of another person. Always do this in a

place with good light. Apply a small amount a pressure to the cat's paw, until the claws are extended. You should be able to see the pink or "quick" which is a small blood vessel. Do not cut into the pink portion as it will bleed and be painful for the cat. This may need to be done every 10-14 days.

Kitten nail trimming

Kitten nails need to be trimmed as soon as 3 weeks; this keeps them from scratching mama as they nurse or each other (or you) when they play. It also adds one more element of socialization to the kitten's world. The more used to being handled and being with humans, the more well-adjusted and emotionally calm they will be.

Brushing

The more you know about a kitty and the better the kitty looks, the better his/her chances are of finding a good, quality new home. Regular brushing not only improves the kitty's appearance, it helps stimulate healthy skin. It also has the added advantage of knowing one more valuable trait about this kitty as some like brushing and combing, others hate it Flea combs are a must in your repertoire of grooming supplies, and they're not just for fleas! It helps to get the undergrowth from kitty, and because they are made of plastic, they seldom irritate the skin.

Bathing

It's possible you'll need and/or want to bathe your pet animal. We recommend using a skin conditioning shampoo, but whichever you choose, be sure the shampoo you purchase is designed specifically for cats or kittens.

Pregnancy and newborns

Pregnancy in cats can be as short as 57 days or as long as 70 days with the developing kittens growing an average of 1/8 inch (3mm) per day. Cats do not typically have physical problems giving birth as dogs do. The most common cause of death in kittens is chilling. Be very certain to keep babies warm without direct use of a heating pad. Cleanliness is important with newborns. Always wash your hands before handling them or anything in their environment. Harsh chemicals should be avoided because they may irritate and compromise

Litter box training

Placement is important. Do not place is next to their bed or their food and water; place the box in a quiet location. Adult pet cats with no un-weaned kittens need to be confined for their first days with you. A condo with shelves provides a perfect environment for this. This also provides an opportunity to train or re-train for litter box issues. For kittens less than 6 months use unscented, clay litter. It is also good to have a kitten litter box; these are smaller and have shorter sides than cat litter boxes, allowing the kittens easy access in and out of the box. Since kittens tend to eat the litter, using the scoopable can lead to stomach ailments and expensive surgery when the litter clumps inside them. After each feeding, put the kittens in a litter box. Gently take their

paw and scratch the litter with it to encourage them. Be sure to give lots of praise when they first start using their boxes. They may not “go” at first, but this practice gets them accustomed to the idea.

Not using the litter box

First and foremost, don't chastise the cat or rub his/her nose in it. If you catch the cat in the act, thump on the wall to startle him or her. Then, quietly put the kitty in their litter box and clean up the mess. If you are using the same litter box for other pet cats, you must clean it with an enzyme cleaner. A cat has a much keener sense of smell than you or I. **Scooping the box every day is essential.** Do not use a cat pan liner and do not use scented litter.

ILLNESSES

Upper respiratory infections (URI's)

These are very similar to human colds. The cat is often congested and cannot smell its food. Tempting your pet cat with smelly canned cat food, Hills A/D food (purchased at a veterinarian's office), baby food (no onions in ingredients, please), chicken broth, or even tuna in water (last resort as too much can cause diarrhea) will often get them eating again. You may have to coax them to eat by using your fingers, and even smearing it on their lips or nose. If your pet cat has not eaten for more than two days, force-feeding with a syringe may be necessary. If you don't know how to do this, we can describe this or show you how. *Nutraca* is a calorie and nutrient-packed supplement that even sick cats will often accept when not otherwise eating. This can be picked up at the rescue. Steam from a vaporizer or hot shower often helps clear the nasal passages. Keep the nose and eyes clear of discharge with warm, damp cotton balls. A cat that doesn't feel well appreciates some extra petting and quiet time in your lap. If you can coax your pet cat to eat, and its drinking water, the infection will usually run its course, and no additional treatment is necessary.

Dehydration is a serious concern.

Watch carefully to see if your pet cat is drinking water. You may have to carefully watch the level of the water bowl, and keep track of litter box activity. You can check for dehydration by pulling the skin up just a little lower than the back of the neck. It should be taut and snap back down. If it stands up or takes some time to go back down, the cat may be dehydrated. A lethargic cat is often dehydrated. If your cat is dehydrated, subcutaneous fluids may be necessary. This is a good skill to learn and you can be buddied up with an experienced pet parent who can teach you. There are several pet parents experienced with this and willing to make home visits to hydrate your cat. This may help a cat feel better sooner and will save money by not having to go to a vet. Please contact us right away if you think your cat is dehydrated. We may arrange a home visit, direct you to the rescue for fluids, or as a last resort, to one of the local veterinarians that bill the rescue directly. If your pet cat is extremely lethargic, it may be dehydrated, have a fever (over 103 degrees F, rectally, constitutes a fever), and/or a bacterial infection, and we would probably direct you to veterinary care. If nasal discharge is

thick and yellowish-green (vs. clear and watery), this may be an indication that a bacterial infection has set in, and antibiotics may be necessary. In this case, we will direct you to take your pet cat to the vet.

Other things to watch for that may require additional care or a vet visit:

- Loose stool or diarrhea - usually caused by parasites that may or may not be visible in feces. Depending upon the parasite, this can be treated with wormer picked up at the rescue or a vet visit.
- Continual vomiting or occasional vomiting that lasts more than a day or two.
- Extreme lethargy for more than 2-3 days.
- Eyes that are red and inflamed or have an extreme amount of discharge and swelling, vs. small amounts of discharge, usually in both eyes that is common with a URI. This can often be treated with eye ointment picked up at the rescue, but may need a vet visit if the infection doesn't respond within a couple of days.
- Any crumbly wax-like substance in the ears (possible ear mites). Ear mite medicine can be picked up at the rescue.
- Fleas or flea dirt (black pepper-like substance in the fur). *Advantage* is usually applied if fleas are noticed at the rescue. If you see flea dirt, we will find out if *Advantage* was already applied. One application lasts 30 days. If it hasn't or if you find live fleas, please bring your pet cat to the rescue for *Advantage* to be applied.

Handling an injured animal

Injuries and illness are traumatic experiences for both peters and animals. Always remember that even the gentlest animal, when injured, will bite. Take precautions to prevent this. Use the procedures that follow.

Cat restraint

Use this type of restraint for cats.

1. Place a blanket over the animal.
2. Approach the animal from behind and place your hands over the shoulder and under the neck.
3. When you pick up the animal, support the body between your arms.

Transporting injured animals

For severely injured animals, a stretcher is preferred. A stretcher can be improvised out of any rigid material, even heavy cardboard. If rigid material is not available a stretcher-sling can be made with a blanket or sheet. If injuries are not severe cats may be wrapped in a blanket. If the cat is afraid, cover his/her eyes.

EXPOSURE INJURIES

Just as humans are affected by extremes of heat and cold, animals can sustain severe injuries when exposed to temperature extremes for any length of time.

Chilling and hypothermia

Signs are depressed attitude, low body temperature (below 96 degrees), decrease respiratory rate, shivering (which is absent if body temperature is below 90 degrees); unconsciousness..

4. Move animal to a warm, protected place
5. Cover with blankets and gently rub the body (not extremities) to aid rewarming
6. Use an electric heater or heating pads (with caution so as not to burn) if body temperature is very low
7. If conscious, give warm sugar water
8. If unconscious, get to veterinarian immediately

Frostbite

Frostbite occurs most frequently in body areas sparsely covered with hair or areas of poor blood circulation (tips of ears, tails, scrotum). This is typical with stray animals.

9. Move animal to warm, protected place.
10. Rewarm by moist heat application (85 degrees) or immersions in warm water. Do not rub or apply pressure dressing or ointments.

Heatstroke

Heatstroke is most commonly seen in dogs that are confined in some manner in hot weather. Signs are heavy panting, difficult breathing, vomiting, rapid pulse, high body temperature (106-110 degrees), and collapse. To treat heatstroke:

11. Cool animal by submerging in cool water (NOT ice water).
12. Keep wet and cool.
13. Monitor temperature. When the temperature reaches 100 degrees, dry animal and discontinue cooling.
14. Encourage animal to drink, but DO NOT force.
15. If collapsed, contact a veterinarian as severe metabolic disturbances can occur.

COLLAPSE AND ACCIDENT

Quick, appropriate action can mean the difference between life and death in the event of an accident or collapse.

Do not:

16. Do not move the animal unless he/she is in danger (middle of highway)

17. Do not raise his/her head or prop it up because saliva, blood, or vomit may run to the back of the throat and block the airway Do not give the animal anything solid or liquid by mouth

Do:

18. Get the animal out of danger and treat for shock. Slip a sheet under him/her and carry the animal like a hammock. Cover the animal with a blanket and place a hot water bottle wrapped in a cloth next to him/her.

19. Check the pulse. This can be felt on the inside of the cat's thigh where the leg joins the body.

20. Check breathing. If irregular, loosen the collar, if necessary, open the mouth, pull the tongue forward, remove any foreign debris, wipe away saliva, blood, or vomit, then give artificial respiration,

21. Check for heartbeat.

22. Treat bleeding. Stop any heavy blood flow.

23. Look for broken bones.

24. Contact your veterinarian or Emergency Clinic.

RECOVERING FROM INJURIES OR SURGERY

Occasionally there is an animal in need of extensive medical treatment. Injuries can be sustained in a variety of ways: being hit by a car, attacked by another animal, abused, or neglected. The pet care period for an animal recovering from surgery may vary from a few days to a few weeks, depending on the severity of the injuries and the treatment involved. These animals usually require daily medications, special diets, and regular veterinarian visits. Many need complete bed rest in order to fully heal and others may require some rehabilitation exercise. Depending on the mobility of the animal, an easily accessed, easy-to-clean area separate from your own animals is ideal. They will need a quiet play to stay where they feel safe and relaxed.

FOREIGN BODIES

Animal-proofing your house or petting room often can avert injuries from foreign bodies in the mouth, the eye, or the nose. Read the sections on animal proofing and toys carefully. Use the procedures that follow to treat your animal should an injury occur.

In the mouth

Grasp the animal's body firmly, open the mouth and push the lower jaw down with a pencil. Locate the object (use a flashlight if necessary) and remove it with fingers.

In the eye

Grasp the animal's body firmly, part the eyelid and examine the eye. If the object doesn't wash out, put 1-3 drops of olive oil in the eye. If the foreign body is penetrating the surface DO NOT attempt to remove it. Go straight to the veterinarian.

In the nose

Don't try to remove the object. Apply a cold compress to soothe the irritation and control bleeding. Contact the veterinarian.

MEDICAL AND HEALTH ISSUES

It is important that pet parents be able to interpret changes in an animal's appearance, bodily functions, and behavior in order to quickly note signs of illness. A pet parent must always be attentive, familiarizing themselves with the animal's habits so unusual changes in behavior can be recognized. Like people, animals sometimes have symptoms so severe it is obvious they require quick professional treatment.

Here is a short list of some symptoms that require **immediate attention**:

25. General Labored breathing, excessive panting, or incessant coughing
26. Vomiting of blood or bile
27. Severe diarrhea, especially if accompanied by vomiting
28. Pronounced limping or paralysis
29. Unconsciousness, seizures, or fainting

Eyes

Keep your pet animals' eyes clean of any discharge. Large, daily discharge can indicate infection of the eye or illness in the animal.

Ears

It is best to have the veterinarian check the ears for infection prior to bringing the animal home. Mites, bacteria, or plain old dirt can accumulate in the ears of animals that have been stray or unkempt; each of these requires a different treatment therapy.

Be aware of signs of ear problems: a foul odor, persistent shaking his/her head, rubbing it against the floor, holding it tilted to one side, or scratching his/her ears. Infections can settle deep into the ear canal, so don't be misled if you can't see any dirt or inflammation inside the ear. If signs are neglected, it can be painful and lead to long, involved treatment. See your pet care veterinarian.

IF A PET ANIMAL BECOMES SICK

Look for specific clues. The veterinarian will want to know details of behavior as well as appearance of fecal matter. Monitor patterns of symptoms. Be ready to explain when a problem began, how often it occurs, and whether the condition tends to arise at specific times (such as mealtime, bedtime, after exercise, etc.). Watch the clock. If mild symptoms do not disappear in 24 hours, call the veterinarian. Be careful when you examine the animal. They may not be in a very good mood if they don't feel well or are in pain. Keep small children and visitors away from the animal until he/she is feeling better.

Warning signs to watch for:

- Sneezing
- Coughing
- Gagging / hairball stuff
- Wheezing
- Tires easily
- Diarrhea
- Straining to urinate or defecate
- Bleeding from any part of the body
- Abnormal twitches
- Loss or decrease of appetite
- Change in attitude or behavior
- Lethargic or depressed
- Breathing heavily

COMMON DISEASES OR ILLNESSES

Allergic reaction - Cats

Signs are skin irritation, coughing, or respiratory distress. Since signs are slow to develop in cats, first aid is not very effective; you'll need to contact the veterinarian.

Constipation

A veterinarian should examine any cat that acts constipated immediately. The cat could have a urinary tract obstruction.

Diarrhea

Up to 3 weeks of age, diarrhea is usually related to too much food intake. It can also be a sign of infection, ingestion of foreign material, intestinal parasites (very common), poisoning, bacteria, viruses, or stress-induced factors.

- Diarrhea can occur if you've recently switched brands or types of food.
- Monitor closely because diarrhea can lead to dehydration.
- Withhold all food for 24 hours with adult animals, 12 hours with puppies and kittens
- Put on a bland diet and feed 2-3 small meals daily. (Broiled hamburger or chicken and rice are good bland diets)
- Give Kaopectate - dosage: 1 tsp for 5 lbs every 2-6 hours

Dehydration

Indications include dry skin, lack of skin elasticity, dry mucus membranes, or darker yellow color to the urine. This is a dangerous condition for a cat to develop and he/she will need attention. To detect dehydration: Gently grasp the loose skin above the animal's shoulders or along his/her rib cage, lift it, and let it drop back into place. If the skin drops back slowly or remains bunched up, the animal may be dehydrated. Look at the animal's gums. Dry, sticky gums are a sign of dehydration. Feel the animal's nose; if it is extremely dry, it could also be a warning signal. Pediasure in their water can help.

If a cat is dehydrated, try feeding canned pumpkin, watery canned cat food, or moisten their dry food with warm water. The pumpkin is especially good for overweight kitties as it adds fiber and vitamins without adding many calories

Hot spots

Signs are moist, inflamed itchy area on skin and will have wet hair around the area from licking. Hot spots are usually extremely sensitive, so it is best to muzzle the animal before treating. Trim hair widely from margins of inflamed area. Wash area gently with soap and water or antiseptic solution. Apply 1/2% cortisone cream or antibacterial ointment. Contact the veterinarian if irritation persists or if the animal will not allow you apply first aid.

Itching

In animals, the target organ for allergies is their skin. Signs are excessive scratching, licking and chewing feet, redness of skin, skin infections, head shaking, or weeping, irritated eyes. The irritant could be external (on the coat) or internal (inhaled). Bathe the animal to remove surface pollens or irritants. Apply soothing lotion (calamine) or 1/2% cortisone cream. Since animals can severely damage their skin by chewing, if symptoms persist, contact the veterinarian.

Loss of appetite

Check for fever, nasal blockage (if a cat can't smell, he/she won't eat), intestinal parasites, gastric upset, poor diet, tooth or gum problems.

VIRAL AND BACTERIAL DISEASES

Upper respiratory infection (URI).

This is a common problem in cats, somewhat like the common cold in humans. Symptoms are sneezing, coughing, ocular/nasal discharge, lethargy, fever, and loss of appetite. URI is seldom fatal and usually resolves within 1-2 weeks. Cat-to cat contact or airborne secretions cause it. Treatment consists of supportive care, including keeping the cat warm, minimizing stress and excitement, and offering good quality food, and plenty of fresh water. The secondary bacterial infections can make the problem worse and may require antibiotics and fluids, if necessary. Cats with URI will have stuffy noses and can't smell their food. This can make them reluctant to eat. Offer them smelly, wet food (canned tuna, a/d, baby food) and warm it to touch. Sometimes a little garlic powder sprinkled on top will enhance the smell.

Gently clean discharge from eyes and nose with a moist soft cloth. If very congested, put the cat in the bathroom a couple times a day for 10 minutes with a hot shower running (don't put the cat in the shower) to help moisten and loosen secretions.

Panleukopenia (distemper)

This disease causes vomiting, diarrhea, lethargy, fever, and loss of appetite. It is caused by exposure to an infected cat or to the virus in the environment. Consult your petting agency and veterinarian.

Feline leukemia (FeLV)

This disease is caused by a retrovirus, it's infectious, and it's fatal. FeLV can suppress the immune response or can cause cancer in the bloodstream or any body tissue, such as kidneys or spinal cord. It can cause tumors, chronic diarrhea, and anemia that make the cat susceptible to other diseases. Transmission to other cats is made from close contact with infected saliva – fighting, grooming, bites, shared food, shared water bowls. The virus can also be spread through urine and feces. The virus is short-lived outside of the cat's body and is easily killed by household disinfectants. Pregnant mothers can spread the virus to their kittens. There is no proven cure for FeLV: chemotherapy or radiation therapy can be used to help fight the cancers associated with FeLV; supportive care and antibiotics can be used in cats with secondary infections; and bone marrow transplants have been successfully performed. There is some promising work being done using drugs to stimulate the immune response.

Feline Immunodeficiency virus (FIV)

This disease is a retrovirus, which causes immuno-suppression and produces a disease similar to AIDS in humans after years of infection. It is transmitted through the bite of an infected cat. Consult your petting agency and veterinarian. Feline infectious peritonitis (FIP) This disease is caused by a common coronavirus and is transmitted through saliva. FIP is thought to be a mutation of the Feline Enteric Corona Virus. Often the disease will go unnoticed, but it will eventually develop into a slowly progressive disease and be fatal. Incubation is usually a few days to three weeks, but sometimes can be up to several months. Clinical signs include persistent fever, loss of appetite, and progressive weight loss. Some cats accumulate fluid in the abdomen, show neurological problems, and have diarrhea.

COMMON INTERNAL PARASITES

Internal parasites attack the heart, lungs, and digestive systems. Left untreated, they can be fatal. The following table contains information about treating internal parasites. Always consult your pet agency and a licensed veterinarian before beginning medical treatment.

Coccidia

Coccidia are a protozoan parasite most prevalent in kittens, but occasionally found in adult cats. The diarrhea associated with coccidia is seen primarily in kittens and is the first sign of this disease. Treatment will consist of about 10 days of medication in either liquid or pill form. Coccidia can be spread to other cats but will probably not cause clinical symptoms.

Heartworms

Heartworms are 9-11" long worms that live in a cat's heart or in the arteries going to the lungs (pulmonary arteries). Although they occur commonly in dogs, most people do not consider them a problem for the cat. However, recent studies of cats with heart and respiratory diseases have found an incidence of heartworms that is far greater than veterinarians previously thought.

One of the difficult things about diagnosing heartworms is that there are no consistent clinical signs. The most common signs are coughing and rapid breathing. However, both can be caused by several other diseases. Other common clinical signs include weight loss and [vomiting](#), also common in other diseases. Some cats seem to be normal, then die suddenly. This happens due to a reaction within the lungs to the young heartworms or when dead or live heartworms enter the pulmonary arteries and obstruct the flow of blood to the lungs. Consult your veterinarian.

Roundworms

Roundworms are a common parasite in dogs and cats and are zoonotic. They live in the stomach and intestinal tract and can reach up to 5" long. Transmission occurs by direct contact with contaminated soil, ingestion of host (beetle, rodents, etc), and from mother to offspring during lactation or in utero. Heavy

infestation causes puppies and kittens to appear thin and pot-bellied. Coughing, diarrhea, and vomiting may also occur. The worms appear like white earthworms and may be seen in stool or vomit. Deworming is a common practice and good preventative. Good sanitation can be maintained by keeping stools picked up in the yard and this practice is paramount to preventing reinfestation.

Tapeworms

There are several types and species of tapeworm, but all types have an intermediate host (fleas or rodents) in which the larvae stage develops. Transmission occurs when the animal ingests an intermediate host harboring the larvae. Typically this occurs while grooming/licking themselves or another. Symptoms may include dullness, irritability, increased appetite, dry and harsh coat, and mild diarrhea. Tapeworms will appear as flat, white, rice-like worms approximately ½” long in fresh feces or around the animal's anal region. The veterinarian can treat; prevention requires vigorous flea control and not allowing the animal to ingest rodents.

COMMON EXTERNAL PARASITES

External parasites attack the skin, ears, and eyes. While irritating for both the animal and humans in the home, they are seldom fatal. Left untreated, serious complications can arise from secondary infections. The following table contains information about treating external parasites. Always consult your pet agency and a licensed veterinarian before beginning medical treatment.

Ear mites, otodectic mange, ear mange

Ear mites are tiny white parasites that live on the surface of the ear canal and feed upon skin cells and debris. They reproduce quickly and produce numerous offspring. Ear mites create a flaky, dark brown, sometimes waxy discharge in the ear canal. Most puppies and kittens acquire ear mites from their mother while still in the nest. The infected animal will shake their heads and scratch or rub their ears. These are highly contagious to other dogs, cats, and rabbits. They can travel outside the ear and may be all over the animal's fur. Treatment includes applying a topical miticide medicine to the ears, cleaning the ears, and thoroughly dusting the infected animal with flea powder or bathing him/her with an insecticidal shampoo. Treatment can also include an injection of Ivermectin, which kills ear mites systemically.

Ticks

Ticks feed on blood. The insects embed themselves in the skin and causing redness, swelling, irritation, and painful itching. Treatment begins with physically removing the ticks. Prevent the animal from roaming in open wooded areas and around livestock will reduce the chance of getting ticks.

Sarcoptic mange (scabies)

This mange is highly contagious to humans and animals. Sarcoptic mange is caused by a microscopic, spider-like mite burrowing into the skin and causing the animal to scratch and bite with intensity. Scabs, crust, and hair loss patches occur due to the scratching and biting, and are commonly found on the earflaps, legs, face, and elbows. Consult your petting agency and veterinarian.

Fleas

Fleas are the most common external parasite. Fleas feed on the animal's blood and depending upon the severity of the infestation can cause anemia or even death. Signs of infestation include seeing the dark brown insect on the skin along with the eggs (white specks) and feces (black specs). Flea eggs can drop on the carpet, furniture, animal's bedding, and cracks or indentations in floors. The hatch cycle can take only a few days to complete. If the animal has fleas, there is a good chance he/she also has tapeworm. This is because fleas are a common carrier of this internal parasite and the fleas are ingested during grooming or licking activity. Another problem is the animal may have an allergic reaction to the fleas if bitten. This sets off a cycle of constant itching and scratching, and the animal will begin to lose hair, especially around the tail. Scratching can severely damage the skin, causing "hot spots." Control is a multi-step process, which includes treating the animal and the environment. Eradicate fleas from the house and the yard. Treat animals by bathing, dipping, spraying, powdering, or applying topical medications. See your veterinarian if you find fleas on pregnant or nursing animals. Vacuuming the house and washing the animal's bedding daily is necessary, since insecticides usually do not kill flea eggs unless high concentrations are used. The most effective way to remove eggs from the house is by using a vacuum cleaner. Before you begin, treat the vacuum bag by placing flea powder inside it or spraying it with flea spray. When you finish, empty the bag immediately. .

ZOONOTIC DISEASES

Zoonotic diseases are diseases animals can transmit to humans under natural conditions. An animal need not appear ill in order to be contagious. Similarly, people may show no symptoms or be quite ill. Some zoonotic diseases, like rabies, can even result in death. Zoonotic diseases can be acquired by direct contact with an infected animal or by indirect contact with infected materials such as urine, feces, hair, or saliva. Many internal and external parasites are considered zoonotic.

Campylobacter

Transmitted by ingestion of infected animal feces. Human symptoms include abdominal pain, cramps, fever, chills, and bloody diarrhea. Always wash hands after working with animals.

Giardia

Transmitted by ingestion of the parasite, via infected animal feces or contaminated soil or water. Symptoms include diarrhea, loose or watery stool, stomach cramps, and upset stomach and can lead to weight loss and

dehydration. Some people have no symptoms. Always wash hands after working with animals and using the toilet yourself; avoid drinking untreated water; wash fruits and vegetables well before eating.

Leptospirosis

Transmitted through contact with urine or carcasses of infected animals. Symptoms in people include fever, chills, weakness and in some cases anemia and jaundice. Consistently using gloves when handling urine and urine soaked materials followed by a thorough washing of hands will prevent the spread of this disease.

Rabies

Rabies is a fatal neurological disease transmitted through the bite of an infected animal. Symptoms include dramatic behavior change (becoming vicious or unusually affectionate), hiding or roaming long distances, attacking inanimate objects, vocal changes, drooping jaw, profuse drooling, staggering, paralysis, convulsions, and death within days. Consult your petting agency and veterinarian.

Toxoplasmosis

Typically, humans are infected by eating contaminated meat, but humans can also be infected by ingesting or inhaling infected oocysts in cat feces. Healthy individuals who are infected exhibit no symptoms, but individuals who are pregnant or have a compromised immune systems may exhibit severe symptoms including neurological and vision problems. Wearing gloves and cleaning litter boxes daily will prevent this.

Ringworm

Ringworm is a zoonotic disease, meaning it is contagious to humans and animals. It is a fungal disease producing dry, scaly, hairless patches (called lesions), usually around earflaps, face, tail, and toenails.

Ringworm is transmitted through direct contact with the fungal spores. Ringworm often appears as irregularly shaped spots of fur loss. The skin of the furless area will look rough and scaly. The spot will get larger and additional spots will appear on the face, ears, and paws first. Sometimes the spots will be more regular rings with furless scaly circles and a visible red ring at the outside edge.

On people and dogs, ringworm is most often shaped in a regular ring. The dog's fur will fall out, leaving a round bare spot with a visible ring. Ringworm causes little distress and is not an emergency, but it is highly contagious, itchy, and takes patience and diligence when applying medicine because it is a stubborn spore.

Most healthy adult cats have some resistance to ringworm and never develop symptoms from the fungus. Young cats (under one year) and cats with a suppressed immune system are most susceptible to infection.

Exposure to a Wood's lamp, which makes the fungus glow, sometimes can detect ringworm. The best method is to call the veterinarian, collect a scraping, and perform a culture. This takes about one week. Ringworm requires extensive treatment and can take up to 4 months to resolve in healthy animals. Treatment includes

clipping the hair around the lesion, being careful not to irritate the skin as that may spread the fungus then applying a topical anti-fungal medicine prescribed by a veterinarian. Ringworm spores are able to survive for long periods in an environment. This makes cleaning and sterilization a critical part of the treatment regime.

Disinfect with a bleach and water mixture.

If you suspect your pet animal has ringworm: Isolate the animal immediately. Limit handling the animal. Take the animal to the veterinarian for a check. Disinfect all toys, towels, blankets, etc with very hot water and bleach Disinfect all food and water bowls, carriers, and anything else the animal has come into contact with. Vacuum all upholstery and rugs thoroughly. Wash yourself thoroughly and change clothes after handling the infected animal.

If you have petted a litter with ringworm, it is best to wait 4 weeks before petting a new litter.

KITTEN DEVELOPMENT

The sensory world of a kitten in the first 2 weeks of life is dominated by temperature, touch, hearing, and smell. Sense of smell plays a central role in suckling. Kittens will sleep 90% of the time and eat the other 10%. They should nurse vigorously and compete for nipples; newborns can nurse up to 45 minutes at a time. Make sure to monitor their eating, ensuring they nurse at least once a day and there isn't a lot of jockeying for positions. Baby kitties should be content and mostly quiet the first couple weeks; healthy kittens seldom cry. When un-weaned kittens are crying and wandering away from the mother, this is a sign of distress. Wandering away is a problem because kittens aren't able to control their body temperatures and chilling is a major cause of kitten mortality. Perhaps the kitten isn't getting enough milk because Mom isn't healthy enough to provide enough. Until the kitten is able to eat on his/her own, you may need to supplement with syringe feeding KMR to the kitten and some NutriCal. As soon as they can eat on their own, or close to, you can mix all meat baby food (feed only high quality baby food) with the KMR for a very soupy gruel. If you have a kitten exhibiting this and you are supplement feeding, be sure to weigh the kitten daily; it is the only sure way to know if the kitten is growing and thriving.

Weight — A steady daily weight gain is the best indicator that a kitten is doing well. At 5 days, a kitten should weigh 3-7 oz; by 10 days 4 ½ - 9 ¾ oz; by 15 days 6- 11 ¾ oz; and so forth

Eyes— A kitten's eyes start to open at 7-10 days after birth and are fully opened by the 16th day. When the eyes open, the iris is blue-gray and will change to normal adult color by 4-6 weeks. The visual system isn't fully developed until 3-4 weeks.

Ears — Ear canals open between 5-8 days and ears become erect by 15 days.

Teeth — Teeth start to erupt shortly before 2 weeks and change from milk teeth to adult teeth around 3 1/2 months.

Other — Kittens should be able to stand by the day 21. By 4 weeks old kittens will start to clean themselves and can begin to eat from a bowl and use their litter box. Females are sexually mature between 4-12 months; males around 7-10 months. A healthy cat's temperature is around 101.5 degrees.

Fading Kitten — Once in a while, one or more kittens in a litter will begin to “fade” after a week or two of life. They will stop growing, begin to lose weight, stop nursing, and stop crawling. They may cry continuously and lose the ability to stay upright. The mother cat may push them out of the nest, where they often chill and starve to death. Kittens fade very quickly and probably will not recover even with intensive care. There is no clear cause of reason for this condition; it has been linked to birth defects, environmental stress, and infectious disease. Early veterinary treatment is imperative, but even with tube feeding, rehydration, and monitoring, many, if not most, fading kittens will die.

Orphaned kittens

Successful rearing of orphaned kittens requires providing them with a suitable environment, the correct quantities of nutrients for different stages of growth, and a regular schedule of feeding, sleeping, grooming, and exercise. You must also provide the stimulus for urination and defecation during the first 18-21 days of life. Do this by massaging the abdomen and perianal area after each feeding with a cotton ball or very soft wash cloth (you don't want to irritate the area) dampened with warm water. You can also use mineral oil on a cotton ball to stimulate the bowel. Kittens, after 4 weeks, can usually eliminate on their own.

You must also maintain their body warmth for them as kittens don't have the ability to regulate and control their body temperature. Keep them out of drafts and if necessary, use a 250-watt infrared heat bulb suspended above their crate. Never put a heating pad in their sleeping area as it can be too hot and can burn them. If you need to use the heating pad, place it in front of their sleeping area, at the opening of the crate and cover it with several thicknesses of towels. Kitten bedding must be changed daily, and sometimes more often. Wash dirty bedding with a little bleach to disinfect.

Kittens need exercise to promote muscular and circulatory development. Play with and handle them prior to each feeding. At least twice a week, and more often, the baby needs to be groomed with a soft, warm, and moist cloth wiped gently, imitating the mother's grooming licks. Cow's milk is not nutritious enough for kittens; they will slowly starve to death on it. If you can't get to a veterinary clinic or pet store to purchase KMR or Just Born for kittens, check the emergency recipe section for temporary substitutes. Test temperature before feeding. It should be warm without burning – around 100 degrees Fahrenheit (which is a kitten's body temperature). Never boil the food to warm it up, it will destroy the nutritional value. Placing the bottle in hot water for a few minutes or putting in the microwave for no more than 10 seconds can also accomplish warming. If constipation occurs, add 1 drop of vegetable oil to each kitty's formula no more than once daily until the problem is eased. Overfeeding can cause diarrhea and a host of other problems. Hand feeding can be challenging and yet, very rewarding. Every one who has done this has developed a method that works bests for them; you will too! Whether you use a baby animal bottle or a syringe, it's best to keep the kitten in a position similar to what they'd experience, if mama were there. In other words, don't turn the baby on his/her back. Keep the bottle at a 45-degree angle to reduce the amount of air getting into the kitten's stomach.

Kitten feeding

Feedings should occur every 2 hours until the 3rd week, at which time, every 4 hours at night (for your sanity). Below is a general guideline for how much to feed and when in their lifespan:

<i>Week of life</i>	<i>Amount to feed</i>
1st week	3.7 cc's per ounce of body weight

2nd week	4.9 cc's per ounce of body weight
3rd week	5.7 cc's per ounce of body weight
4th week	6.3 cc's per ounce of body weight

After each feeding session, you should give them a full-body once-over with a barely damp washcloth, using short strokes like mom would use. This keeps their fur clean, teaches them how to groom, and gives them the attention and “mothering” they crave.

Emergency feeding formulas

Remember these are to be used only for emergency feeding because they are not nutritionally complete for the long-term health of the kitten. Mix the ingredients well and keep in tightly sealed jar in the refrigerator.

Formula Ingredients and instructions

Kitten Formula 1:

- 1 can Evaporated milk
- 1 egg yolk
- 2 Tbsp Karo syrup

At feeding time, mix ½ of the estimated feeding amount with an equal amount of boiling water.

Once a day mix 1 drop of human infant liquid vitamins in each kitty's formula.

Kitten Formula 2: 8 oz. homogenized whole milk

- 2 egg yolks
- 1 tsp salad oil
- 1 drop liquid pediatric vitamins (optional)

Kitten Formula 3:

- 1 part boiled water
- 5 parts evaporated milk
- ½ tsp bone meal per 16 oz. fluid

REFERENCE GUIDES, WEBSITES, AND GOOD TO KNOW

(Note: where the attached material is in contradiction with this procedure, this manual takes precedent)



Kitten care
handbook.docx



Welcome Home our
new kitten-cat.docx



becoming_foster_par
ent.pdf

<http://www.aspcapro.org/>

<http://www.arf.net/resources/cat-behavior/>

<http://www.winnfelinehealth.org/>

<http://maxshouse.com/Truth%20About%20Declawing.htm>

<http://www.brevardlostpets.com/index.php>

For checking on applicants for animal abuse 'convictions':

http://www.pet-abuse.com/pages/cruelty_database/name_search.php