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Feline Play Behavior

Of all the behaviors associated with kittens, play is probably the most familiar and the most important. But can kittens and cats be too playful? Many feline owners have a problem with their pet's play habits.

Background Information

1. Social Play

This involves two or more cats. This behavior is most prevalent during 4-16 weeks of age. After this, the amount of time spent in social play declines.

2. Object Play

This type of play increases around 7 weeks of age. This is important to learn since cats are solitary hunters. Predatory in nature, kittens do such things as stalking, pawing, biting and pouncing. Some forms of this behavior can extend throughout the cat's life.

3. Aggressive Play

Many kittens and young cats often rough play with people as if they were another cat. Most of these accidental rough play-attacks are out of play and fun. Cats, once again, are predatory by nature and manifest this through play techniques. Since inside cats are not going out everyday to hunt, they have pent up energy they need to vent which is often directed towards their owners. This is normal feline behavior that can be redirected.

Unfortunately, by reacting to this play in the wrong way, we can unintentionally reinforce this behavior and make it worse. Most cats love moving objects; so, attacking human feet, hands and wiggling fingers are perfect. On occasion, this may only be directed towards one person in the household. Kittens should be taught not to bite and scratch people.

When young kittens play together, they learn certain social rules, one of which is to play gently. For example, if a kitten would accidentally become too rough the other will hiss, growl and stop

play. It doesn't take long for the aggressor kitten to figure out that if she wants to continue to play, she needs to be gentler.

What can we do?

1. Educate owners about normal feline behavior. Inappropriate play directed towards humans does not mean that their cat is vicious or hateful. Punishment can be counterproductive and may strain the bond between cat and human.

Whenever kitty starts to bite or bring out her claws, screech or hiss, stop play and walk away. Try not to jerk your hand away. This may look like an invitation to play. When she starts to calm down or pulls claws back, praise her and resume play. You may want to give a yummy treat to enhance the likelihood of her doing it again.

2. Give cats appropriate outlets for their play/prey behaviors. Engage in vigorous play sessions 10 minutes twice a day using the recommended toys and games below. Redirect this energy to appropriate play objects and not body parts.

Some interactive toys are:

Wand with ribbon

Wand with feathers

Fishing poles with fluffy things on the end: Feline Flyer™, Cat Dancer™

Fetching items: cat nip mice and balls, balls with bells, ping pong balls, plastic pull tabs from milk cartons

Independent toys and games:

Treat balls (treats are dispensed when ball is rolled)

Pavlov's Cat Scratch Fever™ (Del West Enterprise, San Diego, CA)

Scratching posts that dispense food

Puzzle boxes or houses made of cardboard boxes with holes so that cats can get their paws through to retrieve treats and toys

Toilet paper rolls with frozen canned food or Kitty Kongs™

Battery operated mice

Toys on bungee cords

Stuffed animals to act as surrogates

3. Remote punishing/Humane punishment

The goal is to ensure the cat or kitten does not associate the punishment with her owner. The cat should associate what she is about to do with a safe but unpleasant experience. Devices to accomplish this with include:

Spray bottle or water sprayer

Air horn

Compressed air can

Paperback (soft) book or pillow can be tossed toward the cat – NOT AT THE CAT! – that is crouching and ready to pounce (disrupt the behavior)

4. Anticipate when an attack is approaching. Are they at certain times of the day or in certain areas of the house? Try to block the areas or redirect the attack by using an appropriate toy that is on hand at all times. Place a bell on your cat so that you can know where she is.

5. Addition of a playmate may be an option for some. This is not recommended for all cats or all households. There are pros and cons to this lifelong choice. Please call to speak to a veterinary professional before the addition of another cat into a household.

What Every Cat Owner Should Know About the Litter Box

This handout contains information regarding the cat's domain; the litter box. Most cats are of a fastidious nature, thus there are important rules cat owners should follow. It is far easier to prevent an elimination problem than to cure one. Remember to THINK LIKE A CAT. They have a very keen sense of smell and although the box may appear clean and perfectly OK to us, it may not to the cat. Each and every cat is different and has specific preferences about where they chose to eliminate. House soiling is the most common problem with cats and the number one reason why many cats are relinquished to animal shelters throughout the country.

Rule # 1: Location of the litter box

Most people, for good reason, want the litter box in an out-of-the-way location. Often that means the litter box ends up in the basement, utility room, bathroom, or a room most people do not use on a regular basis. This type of location could be undesirable for your cat for many reasons.

Kittens may not be able to go all the way to Siberia to use the box. They are still learning to use the box and may find out too late that they need to use one. If this is a new kitten or a new environment for a grown cat they may not remember where it is located, especially if it is in an area seldom frequented. Also, as a cat ages he may not be able to make it all the way down the steps and over the high sides of the box before he decides it's too much trouble. The cat may be startled while in the box. This is a very private moment for cats. If a washer changes cycles, a dog runs past from outside, or water falls on his head from a shower, this may become such a frightening experience that he decides to find a more suitable place to eliminate.

You will need to change your perspective and make compromises. The litter box should be an area which provides some privacy, but an area that is frequently visited by you. Any room with

a litter box should **always** remain open (no closed doors). Try to have a swinging door or cut a hole for easy access.

Also make sure that the litter box isn't too close to the cat's food, water or sleeping area. Make sure the location isn't too noisy or too busy. Could there be potential surprise attacks by other cats in the household, dogs or small children? This could trap the cat because of the one way exit.

Rule # 2: Type of Litter Box

Most of the commercial litter boxes are for people and not cats. They are too small, too shallow, and have lingering odors. Some cats are big or overweight and need bigger boxes so they don't have to try for 15 minutes to get comfortable. Plastic storage boxes offer more space than regular litter boxes and can be less expensive. Replace litter boxes annually. No matter how much you may clean them, urine reacts to plastic and changes the odor. Cats are better at detecting odors and will find them offensive before people will. Covered and hooded litter boxes offer security, but could potentially be too confining or hide the view of an ambush by a resident cat. These types of boxes trap odors and the cat has to hold its breath while relieving itself. A covered litter box may be of benefit to a small, timid cat that prefers complete privacy. Upgrade kittens to larger boxes as they grow into adulthood.

Rule # 3: Number of Litter Boxes

The general rule is to have one litter box for every cat in the household. Some experts even advocate an extra box as well. This means if you have one cat, she needs two litter boxes. If you have five cats, there needs to be six litter boxes. There are many reasons for this rule. This will ensure that if one box is occupied, there will be plenty of other options for elimination. Place the boxes in different levels and locations throughout your home. Also, there will be less opportunity for a litter box to be guarded by the dominant cat. Cats occasionally can be extremely territorial about their litter box and refuse to use it because another cat had just used it.

Rule #4: Cleaning the Litter Box

The average household cleans the litter box once a week. How would you like to use a toilet that was flushed once a week? These creatures are discriminate. To meet their needs the box should be scooped out 1-2 times a day. This is more frequent than owners care to do, but remember, you are thinking like a cat rather than like a person. The entire litter should be changed 1-2 times a week and the boxes cleaned with hot water and liquid soap only. Other cleaning products like ammonia and bleach can make the odor even worse for cats. If your cat is eliminating by the box, she is trying to tell you that he would like to use the box but he is repelled by the conditions of it.

Most cats will use litter that is less than two inches deep. People tend to think that if more litter is used they will have to clean the box less often. Not so, cats can smell odors trapped below the litter. Most cats have their own likes and dislikes but the majority of cats prefer NON-SCENTED, CLUMPING LITTER. Some cats are repelled by litter that has additives or

perfumes. Once again these are more for the benefit of the owner and not the cat. Fifty percent of cats will stop using the litter if the brand is changed, so try to stay consistent. You may need to use an assortment of litters and have your cat pick which one is suitable.

Rule # 5: NO Punishment

Owners can go crazy after finding a puddle or a pile somewhere in the house. They usually grab the cat and force them into the litter box. Cats hate to be forced to do anything and now may associate the litter box with unpleasant experiences. This is not very effective and now your cat may feel threatened, insecure and stressed. Right at the start, praise and reward your cat whenever you see her using her box. Use this practice on a regular basis from kitten-hood to the senior years. You can use small treats, cat nip, or verbal praising. Never take good behavior for granted. Cats learn best by rewarding good behavior.

WHY WE RECOMMEND SPAYING OR NEUTERING YOUR PET

First, overpopulation: Millions of puppies and kittens are euthanized every year at animal shelters because there are not enough homes for all of them. When your pet has a litter, even if you find homes for each animal, there will be one less home available for the animals at the shelter.

Second, health benefits: When females are spayed there is a 98% reduction in the possibility of developing mammary cancer. We also eliminate the chance of contracting a uterine infection – a common problem when older animals go through a heat cycle. When males are neutered we eliminate the possibility of testicular cancer as well as greatly reduce problems associated with the prostate gland.

Lastly, behavior management: Behavioral problems are reduced in spayed and neutered animals. Following surgery your pet's personality will not be adversely affected and you will likely see a decrease in unwanted behaviors. Intact animals are more likely to roam and fight because they look to establish territory and find mates. They also tend to mark their territory which can mean urinating inside the house.

Note: spaying and neutering can reduce an animal's metabolism. A reduction in volume of food is usually needed.

The Case For Microchipping

Microchipping is a relatively new option designed to solve an age old problem: recovering lost pets. Here are some facts to keep in mind when considering whether or not to microchip your pet.

1. More than 10 million pets are lost or stolen each year.
2. More than half of all impounded dogs and cats are without collars by the time they arrive at the shelter.
3. Only 16% of dogs and 2% of cats entering animal care control facilities are reclaimed by their owners. ¹
4. 56% of the dogs and 72% of cats received by the shelters are euthanized because the animals have no form of identification. ²
5. Collar tags can be lost and tattoos can fade or be altered, but HomeAgain microchips are permanent and tamper-resistant.
6. With a HomeAgain microchip and a one-time enrollment fee the animal is protected for life.
7. 3,000 to 4,000 lost pets are recovered each month thanks to the HomeAgain Microchip Identification System. ³
8. Spaying/neutering, vaccinating and microchipping make up a three-step program of responsible pet care endorsed by veterinarians around the country.
9. Microchipping is fast and affordable.
10. The HomeAgain Microchip Identification System is available for all dogs and cats.

¹ National Humane Society

² National Council of Pet Population Study and Policy

³ AKC Companion Animal Recovery Unit

WHY CATS NEED THEIR CLAWS

Why do cats scratch? This is normal behavior. Scratching is hard wired and not an activity the cats “just do.” It is unrealistic to expect a cat to stop an innate behavior. Owners try everything to stop their cat from scratching the furniture. You will end up frustrated if you try to STOP a behavior your cat knows he SHOULD be doing.

The purpose of scratching:

1. To condition claws by removing the outer dead sheath.
2. Marking behavior (cats are territorial) by visual and olfactory means utilizing scent glands in the cat’s paws.
3. To stretch and exercise upper body muscles and paws.
4. To provide an outlet for stress relief and to work off energy.
5. Life saving; enabling cats to climb to safety from an attacker.

A SCRATCHING CAT IS A HAPPY CAT. CATS WHO SCRATCH IN THE APPROPRIATE PLACES MAKE FOR HAPPY GUARDIANS. BEST RESULTS WILL COME IF YOU FOCUS ON MEETING YOUR CATS SCRATCHING NEEDS AND NOT TRYING TO INHIBIT THEM.

Here is a cat scratching strategy from your cat’s point of view. It consists of a three step plan:

1. Provide attractive areas to scratch
2. Make unacceptable areas for scratching unattractive and unappealing
3. Reward good behavior

A: SCRATCHING POSTS

This is very important for cats but a concept that is hard for humans to understand. Simply buying the first scratching post you find and putting it in an out of the way place for your cat will not do. Instead, think about providing a complete scratching environment geared to the likes and dislikes to your individual cat.

In order for a scratching post to be successful it should:

1. Be sturdy
2. Be the proper height
3. Be made from appealing material
4. Be in the proper location

The post should consist of a large heavy base which won’t tip over during a good stretch. It should be at least 28 inches tall so your cat can do a full stretch. It may need to be taller if you have a large or long cat. The scratching surface should allow the cat’s claws to draw through the material but provide enough abrasion to wear down the claws.

TEXTURES AND POST MATERIALS

1. Sisal
2. Rope
3. Bare wood
4. Tightly bound carpet
5. Whicker (baskets)
6. Corrugated cardboard

The best posts consist of one or more of these surfaces. Also try to figure out which surfaces your cat prefers. Different cats have different preferences. The post should consist of a seat on the top and plenty of play objects around. Better yet, a large multi-tiered playground would be great. Just remember to think like a cat. The better choices may not look that appealing to a human but feel great to a cat.

Keep in mind some cats are HORIZONTAL scratchers. Some cats scratch horizontally in order to stretch different muscles. Some prefer a vertical post. For these cats a tree stump, piece of wood on its side, or back of a carpet remnant are good options. Try the commercial Cosmic Catnip Scratchers®. These are long cardboard scratching posts. These can be upright, on a diagonal, or sitting on the floor. They are also inexpensive.

LOCATION

Too many feline owners place the scratching posts in out of the way places because they are unattractive. Remember, scratching is a visual marking behavior and you are usually the target. Scratching posts and pads should be put where your cat spends most of its time. Most cats like to scratch when making a grand entrance. So placing the post near doorways is an appropriate location. The front door is especially nice so your kitty can greet you upon your arrival.

This is a generalization of preferences where cats like to scratch. You may have to watch your cat to get an idea of where and when he prefers to scratch.

B: HOW TO MAKE THE APPEALING MORE UNAPPEALING

From your cat's perspective, we need to make the couch, chair and curtains undesirable for scratching. First, deterrents must be combined with the above recommendations and not to be used as the only tactic to modify scratching. Not all booby traps work for every cat. If the deterrent is not working, or worse, it is traumatizing the cat, then try something else. Secondly, make sure that your cat associates the deterrent with scratching and not with you. You want to get the idea across that the couch is an undesirable place to scratch, not that the guardian is undesirable. Lastly, be consistent, don't give the kitty mixed signals that he can scratch on the back of the couch today and other days it is not allowed.

EXAMPLES OF DETERRENTS:

1. Compressed air cans
2. Squirt guns
3. Wide strips of double sided tape
4. Clapping hands
5. Stomping of feet
6. Throwing a magazine/pillow in their direction
7. Aluminum foil
8. Runners with pointy ends outward
9. Unpleasant odors: citrus, menthol, perfume, soaps
10. Empty soda cans with a few pennies inside and the top taped shut. (Tie the can to a string. Place the string across where kitty scratches and the noise should be enough to make kitty flee).
11. Slip covers for sofas
12. Clear, hard plastic sofa protectors

C: REWARDING GOOD BEHAVIOR

Many guardians try to force their cat into using the scratching post by grabbing their paws and forcing them through the motions. Cats do not like this and really hate being forced to do something. You need to take the time to teach your cat how to use the scratching post, especially during kitty-hood. Give him lots of praise and rewards when he is sitting by or playing around the post. Feed him and talk to him by the post. He will soon learn that this is the best place ever to scratch. Use incentives like catnip and very yummy treats (tuna, turkey lunchmeat) to make the post more enticing. Whenever you see him by his post let him know how happy that makes you and special things happen here. If each time a cat scratches on something and it is a pleasant experience the more likely he will engage in that behavior again.

If your cat is already in the habit of using a piece of furniture put the scratching post next to that furniture. Once your cat has successfully developed the habit of using the scratching post instead then you slowly start moving the post away from the furniture ½ -1 inch every few days.

PUNISHMENT is truly an inefficient way to deal with scratching problems. This will cause your cat to either misbehave for attention or will only scratch when you are not around. This is detrimental because you will never be able to reward for scratching in appropriate places.

REMEMBER: any behavior that is reinforced tends to be repeated.

D: OTHER OPTIONS

Cutting a cat's nails on a regular basis will eliminate the barbed end reducing damage caused by scratching. There is also a product called Soft Paws. This is a vinyl covering that fits over your

cat's nails and needs to be replaced every 4-6 weeks. It acts like a protective barrier but lets your cat engage in feline scratching behavior.

There is also a surgical procedure called declawing. This is a common practice but not understood fully by cat owners. It is major surgery in which every toe is amputated from the bone in which it is attached. The tendons, ligaments, and surrounding soft tissues are removed. Basically, the cat ends up without the end of her front paws. Keep in mind how important scratching is to the feline psyche. Even declawed cats engage in scratching behaviors. The procedure is very painful and is an option of last resort. Pre and post operatively pain medication is a must! Additionally, there can be complications from this procedure. Cats can experience nerve damage, bleeding, bone chips, and claw re-growth. Declawing cats make them defenseless against attacks so they should be kept safely indoors.

There are also procedures such as declawing with laser and tendonectomy. Ask your veterinary care provider for information on these procedures.

In summary, cats need their claws for many reasons. Most countries do not utilize the declawing procedure. In some countries like England declawing is banned. The best way to prevent cats from improper scratching is by beginning their training while they are kittens. Teach them that scratching posts are the best place ever, not through force or punishment but by positive reinforcement. The problem with a cat scratching indoors may be a reaction to the lack of stimulation within the environment. Part of being a responsible caretaker for your cat is having a tolerance and understanding for his innate and natural behaviors.

RESOURCES:

Declawing Sites

<http://www.de-clawing.com> - a directory to all declawing sites on the Internet

http://www.amby.com/cat_site - comprehensive anti-declawing site

General Cat Sites with a Distinct Pro-Claw Philosophy

<http://www.maxshouse.com> – an informative cat site

<http://www.cats.about.com> – information and articles about vast cat topics

<http://www.catsinternational.org> – variety of articles and information about cat behavior

Scratching Products

<http://www.softpaws.com> – nail caps that limit scratching

<http://www.stickypaws.com> – humane and effective furniture protection

Sofa Savers – no website, telephone 972-790-6658

High Quality Cat Furniture

<http://www.angelicalcat.com> – Angelical Cat Company

<http://www.cdpet.com> – C&D Pet Products

<http://www.4yourcat.com> – cat furniture

<http://www.wadescattrees.com> – Wade's Cat Trees

Felix Katnip – no website, telephone 206-547-0042

Build Cat Furniture

http://www.amby.com/cat_site/declaw.html#build_it – lots of plans for building your own cat furniture

http://www.catsenternational.org/9_3.html - how to build a scratching post

Books

The New Natural Cat, by Anne Frazier

Think Like a Cat, by Pam Johnson-Bennett

Cat Be Good, by Annie Bruce

The Cat Who Cried For Help, by Dr. Nicholas Dodman

ENVIRONMENTAL ENRICHMENT FOR INDOOR CATS

We, being cat owners (or shall we say guardians of cats), ultimately decide what's best for them. We decide to bring them inside to keep them healthy and out of harm's way. Most of the time, indoor cats do not have the opportunity for social interaction, are not able to engage in normal feline behaviors (i.e. climb and hunt) and are placed in unnatural environments. They are expected to be content with these changes. It's essential to strive to recognize an animal's psychological need in order to obtain optimal health and well-being.

We must start to enrich the cat's environment and work to maintain behaviors comprising the animal's natural daily life. The environment should provide a cat with a feeling of...

- + Security
- + Complexity
- + The ability to control, or make decisions (achieve objectives)
- + Novelty
- + Opportunity for social interaction

As the saying goes, "Curiosity killed the cat", but boredom can as well. Cats engage in exploratory and investigative behaviors which function to obtain as much information about their own environment as possible. The stress of having a limited environment without stimulation may negatively impact both behavioral and psychological health. Some of these behaviors are...

- + Displacement activities
- + Elimination problems
- + Eating disorders

- + Anxiety-related disorders
- + Attention seeking behaviors (directed at human or self-directed)
- + Aggressive behaviors
- + Self injurious and compulsive behaviors
- + Psychotic behaviors

Modification Steps to Enhance the Indoor Environment:

1. Three Dimensional Spaces

Cats prefer to rest on elevated objects. Provide a variety of perches in more than one area and make them private enough for only one cat at a time. Resting places of different heights are also recommended.

- + Construct cat walks, walls
- + Cat condominiums
- + Cat trees
- + Window seats
- + Tents, igloos, tunnels
- + Book shelves and places especially for cats (remove breakable items)
- + Furniture
- + Remember to rearrange and move items to different spaces for novel exploration.

2. Feeding

Instead of one regular feeding location, divide their meals into 3 - 4 feedings and hide the food around in various sites. This is to stimulate “hunting” and “working for something”.

- + Hide in corners of rooms, under beds
- + Place the food behind furniture so they have to “paw it”
- + Hide high atop shelves, refrigerators
- + Place food and treats in intermittent feeding balls, puzzles, toilet paper rolls taped at one end, Kitty Kongs™
- + Offer very yummy treats like freeze dried liver, canned food, shrimp, chicken, turkey luncheon meat
- + Use a timer feeder, vary the times food becomes available each day

3. Touch and Olfactory Stimulation

Find acceptable scratching materials

- + Scratch mats (rug, cardboard, sisal)
- + Door hangers

- + Scratching posts in visible areas
- + Pieces of tree limbs with and without bark

Substrates for resting

- + Fleece-like materials
- + Taffeta
- + Burlap
- + Felt
- + Down
- + Sheepskin, fake furs

Other sensory stimulation

- + Catnip
- + Cat Grass
- + Felaway facial pheromones

4. Toys

Most cat toys are unlikely to maintain the interest of cats unless only a few toys are given at a time and on a rotating basis. Some examples of toys around the house are...

- + Ping pong balls
- + Milk bottle caps
- + Paper and foil balls
- + Balls with bells
- + Boxes piled with holes to investigate
- + Paper/shopping bags (no plastic)
- + 12 pack soda containers open at one end

Lots of interactive toys are found in multiple pet stores and over the internet. (See additional resources)

Other modalities:

Clicker training for treats

Massage therapy

Kitty Videos: Kitty Show 1-843-524-7928

PO Box 6345 Burton, SC 29903

Internet and Phone Numbers:

1. CatToys.com, PO Box 1401, West Chester, PA 19380
<http://www.cattoys.com> 877-364-8697
2. KatWALLks PO Box 470366, Tulsa, OK 74147
<http://www.katwallks.com> 866-528-9255
3. HDW Enterprises, Inc., PO Box 418104, Sacramento, CA 95841-8104
<http://www.hdw-inc.com> 916-481-2287
4. Me-ow-trageous Kitty Creations, 2545 West 10th St, Suite H, Antioch, CA 94509
<http://www.catfurniture.com> 877-778-6369
5. Interpets.com, 903 W. Waterloo Rd, Akron, OH 44314
<http://www.interpets.com> 877-414-7387
6. CoolPetStuff.com, PO Box 9091, Newport Beach, CA 92658
<http://www.coolpetstuff.com> 800-686-6599

Reading Materials

1. *Cat Massage: A Whisker-to-Tail Guide to Your Cat's Ultimate Petting Experience* by Maryjean Ballner
2. *How to Massage Your Cat* by Alice May Brock
3. *Showbiz Tricks for Cats* by Anne Gordon
4. *The Cat's House* by B. Walker
5. *Cat's Into Everything* by B. Walker
6. *Felinestein* by Suzanne Delzio and Cindy Ribarich, D.V.M.

Feline Infectious Diseases

Feline Leukemia Virus (FeLV) – This common virus disrupts the cat’s immune system and is typically fatal within 1- 3 years after infection. It is transmitted by close cat-to-cat contact such as grooming, sharing food dishes, or biting.

Rabies – This incurable fatal disease is transmitted by contact with saliva of infected animals. The state of North Carolina requires that all cats be vaccinated against rabies because it poses a threat to humans.

Panleukopenia (aka feline distemper) – This virus is similar to parvovirus in dogs causing diarrhea, vomiting and bone marrow suppression which is often fatal in young kittens.

Rhinotracheitis (a feline herpes virus) – This widespread and severe upper-respiratory virus poses a serious threat to cats of all ages, and is especially devastating in kittens. Once exposed, the virus can cause symptoms such as ocular and nasal discharges on and off for the cat’s lifetime.

Calicivirus – This highly contagious virus may cause upper respiratory infections, pneumonia, and/or painful ulcers in the mouth.

Chlamydia – This infection of the mucous membranes of the eyes and nose is highly contagious. Symptoms include conjunctivitis, sneezing, and heavy salivation.

Feline Infectious Peritonitis (FIP) – This progressive and fatal disease is seen most often in young adults. Symptoms typically include intermittent fever, anorexia, and weight loss. The available intranasal vaccine is not very effective preventing disease and is only recommended in catteries.

Feline Disease Prevention

1. FeLV/FIV testing – This is simple 10-minute blood test that should be done on all adopted or stray cats/kittens **before** introducing them to your cats. Since these diseases are not treatable and they are contagious, this is the most important part of disease prevention in cats. Cats that test positive should be isolated from other cats indefinitely.

2. Vaccinations – In recent years, we have learned that vaccines may cause side effects or other types of disease in a small percentage of cats. Therefore, we must consider the risk of contracting the disease versus the risk associated with the vaccine itself. For outdoor cats, the risk of contracting certain diseases is higher so vaccines are recommended. For adult indoor only cats, this risk is very low and therefore we typically recommend vaccinating with fewer vaccines.

The following feline vaccines are available at our hospital:

FRCPV – Feline Rhinotracheitis-Calcivirus-Panleukopenia Vaccine

FeLV – Feline Leukemia Vaccine

Rabies 1-year Vaccine and Rabies 3-year vaccine

CSAH vaccine/general health protocol:

8-9 weeks old Kitten exam and fecal
FRCPV #1

12-13 weeks old Kitten exam and fecal
FRCPV #2
FeLV #1

15-16 weeks old Kitten exam and fecal
FRCPV #3
FeLV #2
Rabies 1-year Vaccine

5-6 months old Spay or neuter

1 year, 4 months old Annual exam and fecal
Rabies 3-year Vaccine
FRCPV –booster every 1 to 3 years depending on lifestyle
FeLV – outdoor cats, continue to booster every year

3. Annual Exams – These routine physical exams are essential in helping us keep your pet healthy. Dental disease, heart disease, parasites, and weight loss or obesity are just a few examples of diseases that are better treated if caught early on. These visits also allow us to update you on new developments in veterinary medicine.

4. Parasite prevention – We recommend Revolution applied monthly to cats to prevent heartworm disease, fleas, ear mites, hookworms, and roundworms.

COMMON HOUSEHOLD ITEMS THAT COULD HARM YOUR PET:

Presented by ASPCA
For poison emergencies, call 1-888-426-4425

The ASPCA established the Animal Poison Control Center (APCC) to help pet parents and veterinarians with poison-related emergencies. The APCC is staffed by board-certified veterinary toxicologists and professionals specifically trained in veterinary toxicology. They're available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year and have assisted with more than 850,000 cases. For more information and a free magnet, call 1-888-426-4911 or visit the website at www.asPCA.org/apcc.

***If you think your pet has been exposed to a poisonous substance, call the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center at 1-888-426-4435, and consult your veterinarian for follow-up care - it may save your pet's life.

Make your home a safer place by keeping your pets away from the following hazardous objects, plants, items, and trouble areas:

SUBSTANCES:

Keep your pets protected by storing the following medications and chemicals in secure containers and out of reach:

Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medications (ibuprofen, aspirin, etc)	Lighter fluid
Acetaminophen	Mothballs
Cold and flu medications	Anti-cancer drugs
Antidepressants	Solvents (Paint thinners, etc)
Vitamins	Flea and tick products
Insecticides	Liquid potpourri
Rodent bait	Slug and snail bait
Bleach	Oven cleaner
Diet pills	Lime/scale remover
Disinfectants	Fly bait
Fabric softener	Detergents
Lead	Tobacco products

FOODS:

You should never let your pets eat any of the following foods. Be sure to store these groceries where your pets cannot access them:

Avocados	Alcoholic beverages
Chocolate (all kinds)	Moldy/spoiled foods
Coffee (all kinds)	Salt
Onions and onion powder	Fatty foods
Garlic	Candy/gum
Grapes	Any food containing xylitol
Raisins	Raw yeast dough
Macadamia nuts	Tea leaves

OBJECTS:

These household objects can cause puncture wounds, choking, or internal organ damage to your pets; be sure the following are not left lying around:

Balls	Paper clips
Batteries	Plastic wrap
Twist ties	Socks
Buttons	Rubber-bands
Coins	Sharp objects
Cotton swabs	String
Glass	Yarn
Hair ties or pins	Dental floss
Jewelry	Towels
Nylons	Wax

PLANTS:

If you have any of these common plants inside or around the outside of your home, be sure they are in places where your pets can't reach, or consider getting rid of them altogether:

Aloe	Dieffenbachia	Marble Queen
Amaryllis	Dumbcane	Morning Glory
Andromeda Japonica	Easter Lily	Mother-in-Law
Asian Lily	Elephant Ears	Mountain Laurel
Asparagus Fern	Emerald Fern	Narcissus
Australian Nut	English Ivy	Needlepoint Ivy
Autumn Crocus	Eucalyptus	Nephthysis
Azalea	Ferns	Nightshade
Belladonna	Fiddle-leaf Philodendron	Oleander
Bird of Paradise	Gold Dust Dracaena	Panda

Bittersweet (American and European)	Florida Beauty	Peace Lily
Black Locust	Foxglove	Philodendron
Branching Ivy	Glacier Ivy	Poison Hemlock
Buckeye	Gladiolas	Precatory Bean (rosary pea)
Buddhist Pine	Golden Pathos	Privet
Caladium	Heavenly Bamboo	Red Emerald
Calla Lily	Honeysuckle	Rhododendron
Castor Bean	Hurricane Plant	Ribbon Plant
Ceriman	Hyacinth	Sago Palm
Clematus	Hydrangea	Satin Pothos
Cordatum	Iris	Schefflera
Corn Plant	Jerusalem Cherry	Striped Dracaena
Cycads	Jimson Weed	Sweetheart Ivy
Cyclamen	Kalanchoe	Tulip
Daffodil	Lantana	Water Hemlock
Daylily	Lilies (all liliium species)	Wisteria
Devil's Ivy	Lily of the Valley	Yew
	Lupine	Yucca

OUTSIDE OF THE HOUSE:

These potential dangers can cause burns, injury, entanglement, drowning, or toxic reactions. Make sure your pets are safe as they enjoy the outdoors by keeping them away from these hazards:

Fire pit/grill	Compost
Fences/gates	De-icing salts
Deck lattice	Compost
Swimming pools/hot tubs	Gasoline
Algae	Motor oil
Antifreeze/Coolant	Fertilizer/pesticides