



Welcome!

We are so glad that you have added a kitten to your household, and we wish to welcome you to our clinic! We have been awarded the title of Cat Friendly Practice through the American Association of Feline Practitioners, meaning we have worked above and beyond to maintain the most stress-free environments, handling, and medical care for your kitty companion. In this folder you will find information that is primarily oriented towards kittens, however, most of the information can be applicable to adult cats as well. **Please feel free to ask us any questions about these or any other issues you have involving your pet!**

Important Information:

When you come in with your kitten, we will hand you a towel or small blanket that is sprayed with a pheromone called Feliway, which helps to reduce stress while at the clinic. We also have a cat-friendly lobby, where we have feline specific seating, and cubby's in the benches so that you can slide your carrier into them. This allows your cat to feel hidden during this time of increased stress.

Hours and Directions:

Monday-Friday: 7:30am - 6:00pm

Saturday: CLOSED

Sunday: 2:00pm – 4:00pm *

Phone: 304-343-6783

Email: staff@valleywestvets.com

Address: 301 Virginia Street West, Charleston, WV, 25302

**On Sunday's the lobby is open. There is no doctor on staff at this time.*

Doctors:

Dr. Thomas L. Isaac, Jr., DVM

Dr. Amy Keith, DVM

Dr. Amy Isaac, DVM

Dr. Allyson Tupta, DVM

Dr. Katie Kobyra, DVM

Dr. Megan Graham, DVM

Dr. Ashley Payne, DVM

Examinations: Every new kitten should have a full physical examination upon ownership, then with each set of vaccines. This will allow the doctor to make sure your new kitten is in good health, and to discuss preventative medicine, and answer any questions you may have. These exams are as important as the vaccines we give!

Lifestyle Choice: If your kitten remains indoors only, their risk of trauma and infectious disease decreases, however, they are at an increased risk of obesity due to decreased exercise. Cats that have an indoor/outdoor lifestyle can have a more “natural” and stimulating environment but are at higher health risks. Please let us know your lifestyle plans for your kitten, so that we can create a medical plan to keep your new family member healthy.

FELV/FIV Testing: Feline leukemia (FELV) is a viral disease that can cause anemia, immune system suppression, and tumors. It is highly contagious and fatal. It may be transmitted from mother to kittens or from one adult cat to another. Transmission occurs through means such as sharing a water bowl or bite wounds. Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV) is another viral contagious disease that is passed from cat to cat, typically through fighting. This disease causes suppression of the immune system and may limit the cat’s ability to protect itself from bacteria and viruses. Vaccination is key for prevention based on your pet’s lifestyle. We do recommend bi-yearly testing for adult outdoor cats.

Fecal Flotation: This test checks for intestinal parasites and is recommended for all kittens. Please bring a small, fresh stool sample (in a plastic bag or container) with you to your kitten’s appointments. A common misconception is that a cat doesn’t have parasites if you don’t see them in the stool; however, many parasites are too small to be seen without a microscope. *Please see the handout included in this folder for additional information regarding intestinal parasites that can affect your kitten.*

Diet: Kittens should be fed 2-3 times a day. We recommend switching to adult food at 1 year of age. We encourage you to feed your kitten canned cat food in addition to dry food, as the canned food is lower in carbohydrates and less calorie dense, and it also helps to prevent health problems such as obesity, urinary tract disease, kidney disease, and diabetes. Since indoor cats tend to gain weight more easily, we do recommend that you feed them an indoor version of dry food, as it is typically less calorie dense. We recommend the following food companies because of their knowledge of pet nutrition and quality control, Science Diet, Royal Canin, Iams, and Purina. **We do not recommend raw or grain free diets.**

Heartworm and Intestinal Parasite Prevention: Heartworms are a blood parasite that can be carried by mosquitos to cats. They live in the heart and can cause heart failure and death. They can be difficult to diagnose in cats, and even more difficult to treat. A monthly topical prevention is recommended year-round to kill heartworm larvae and common intestinal parasites. It is started at 8 weeks of age and is recommended lifelong.

Flea and Tick Prevention: Charleston (and the surrounding areas) is home to a thriving population of fleas and ticks, which can cause discomfort, anemia, and other diseases in your

cat. We have several products here that are effective in eliminating fleas and preventing re-infestations, one of which also covers your cat's monthly heartworm prevention!

Spay/Neuter: We recommend that your kitten be spayed/neuter for health and behavioral reasons as well as population control. It is usually recommended when your kitten is around 4 months of age. Spaying cats before their first heat cycle prevents pregnancy and uterine infection. Neutering a male cat at 4 months of age generally prevents urine marking in the house and greatly decreases the cat's desire to roam and to fight with other males. Please discuss these procedures and the best time to perform them with your veterinarian during your kitten's visit.

Enrichment: Two kittens will play together all day long, in between naps that is. If you have a single kitten, you will need to provide a lot of play time! Your new kitten will adapt somewhat to your schedule, sleeping when you are out and (hopefully!) while you are sleeping. There are a huge variety of cat toys (catnip stuffed, small balls, etc.). Cats also respond well to "fishing pole" style toys where there is a stick and a string with a feather attached at the end. These toys allow you to play with your kitten without making your fingers the object of play. Kittens will also benefit from cardboard boxes, cat trees, and scratching posts. Vertical spaces allow cats to observe from a safe distance.

Scratching posts are also a wonderful alternative to your furniture, and are essential for your kitten's welfare as scratching is a normal behavior. Each cat prefers something different than the next cat. Most cats like sisal or cardboard, but some prefer carpet or other material. Cats may prefer to scratch vertical, diagonal, or horizontal surfaces, so you should offer a variety of options for your kitten. We also offer a product here called FeliScratch that entices your kitten to scratch at designated posts and cat furniture.

Litterbox Training: Problems associated with the litterbox can be difficult to live with. We recommend preventing litterbox problems to the best of your ability. We recommend that you have one litterbox per cat or kitten plus one additional (2 cats = 3 litterboxes). The box should be as large as possible (typically we recommend 1.5 times the length of the cat from nose to base of tail). The box should not be in a noisy or hard to reach area of the home. Covered litterboxes are pleasant to us, but not to your kitten. They can have little airflow, and can be awkward, so be aware that your kitten may be reluctant to use a covered box. Most cats prefer clumping unscented litter. Daily scooping is also vital in preventing your cat from urinating outside of the box.

Cat Carrier Tips and Tricks: Most people get their new kitten and only use the carrier when taking them to the veterinarian. Then their kitten (which eventually becomes an adult cat) only associates the carrier with car rides and the veterinary hospital. We would like your cat's carrier to be a "safe haven" especially when at our hospital. Cat carriers that opens from the top, or that you can remove the top off of, often are the least stressful at the veterinary clinic, as your kitten won't need to be pulled out of their safe space, instead we can gently pick them up. Put something soft in the carrier, so that your kitten has something comfortable to lay on as opposed to hard plastic. At home, leave the cat carrier out at all times with the door open! Try

putting food, toys, catnip, and treats in the carrier (but not all at the same time). If your cat gets comfortable in the carrier, try closing the door for a couple of minutes-not for long! The day of the vet visit don't give your cat much to eat. If he is hungry, he may take our treats as "comfort food" in the exam room.

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