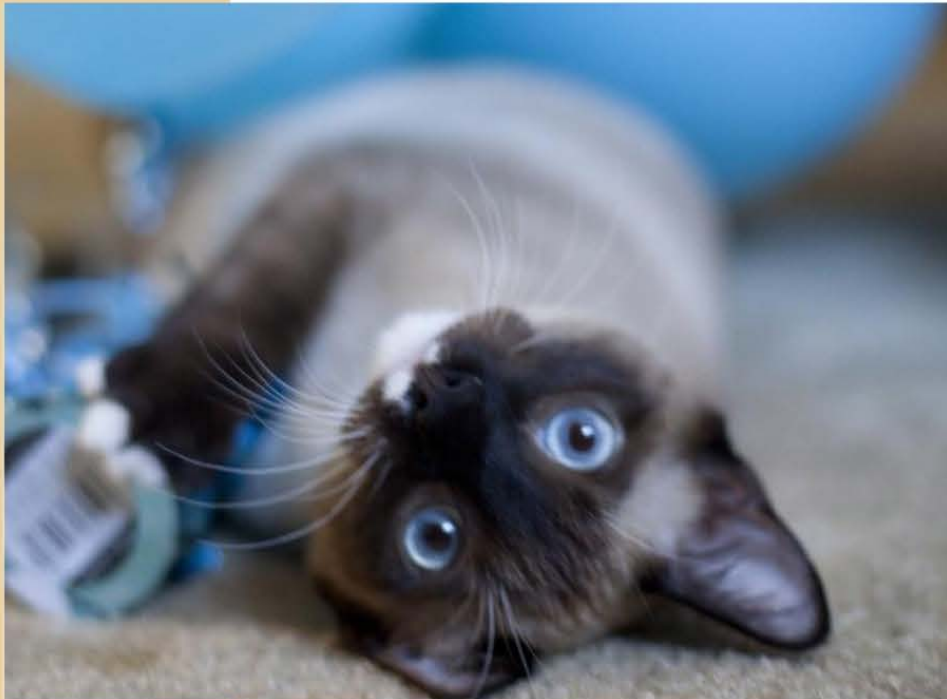


# SAULT STE. MARIE ANIMAL CLINIC



## NEW KITTEN GUIDE



"YOU are an important member  
of your pet's health care team!"



# THE FIRST YEAR

## FIRST APPOINTMENT (RECOMMENDED AT 6-8 WEEKS OF AGE)

- General Physical Examination and weight
- Feline Rhinotracheitis, Calici Virus, & Panleukopenia (FVRCP) vaccination (kittens from the Humane Society or Breeder may have this already)
- +/- FeLV/FIV (Feline Leukemia Virus/Feline Immunodeficiency Virus) Blood Test
- Fecal Examination
- Parasite Control - for Fleas/Intestinal Parasites depending on Fecal results and time of year

*TIP: THIS IS A GOOD TIME TO THINK ABOUT APPLYING FOR PET INSURANCE!*

## SECOND APPOINTMENT (RECOMMENDED AT 10-12 WEEKS OF AGE)

- General Physical Examination and weight
- FVRCP second booster vaccination
- +/- FeLV vaccination if in contact with other cats
- Fecal Examination
- Parasite Control - if not dispensed at previous visit



## THIRD APPOINTMENT (RECOMMENDED AT 14-16 WEEKS OF AGE)

- General Physical Examination and weight
- FVRCP third booster vaccination
- +/- FeLV vaccination if in contact with other cats
- Rabies Vaccination
- Fecal Examination (if not done at least twice previously)
- Parasite Control - if not dispensed previously

*TIP: THIS IS A GOOD TIME TO BOOK THE APPOINTMENT FOR SPAYING OR NEUTERING!*

## SPAY OR NEUTER

Spaying or neutering is the surgical removal of your cat's reproductive organs to prevent pet over population as well as avoid some health and behavioural issues as your cat gets older. Most cats will reach puberty between 7-9 months of age - but we will take several factors such as breed, size, and lifestyle into consideration when recommending the best age for your pet to have the procedure done.

*TIP: THIS IS THE IDEAL TIME TO HAVE YOUR KITTEN MICROCHIPPED!*

## GENERAL PHYSICAL EXAMINATION AND VACCINATIONS (RECOMMENDED AT APPROXIMATELY 16 MONTHS OF AGE THEN ANNUALLY)

You will receive reminder notifications for:

- General Physical Examination and weight
- FVRCP/Rabies/FeLV booster vaccinations as needed
- Fecal Examination
- Dispense Flea/ Intestinal Parasite Control as required

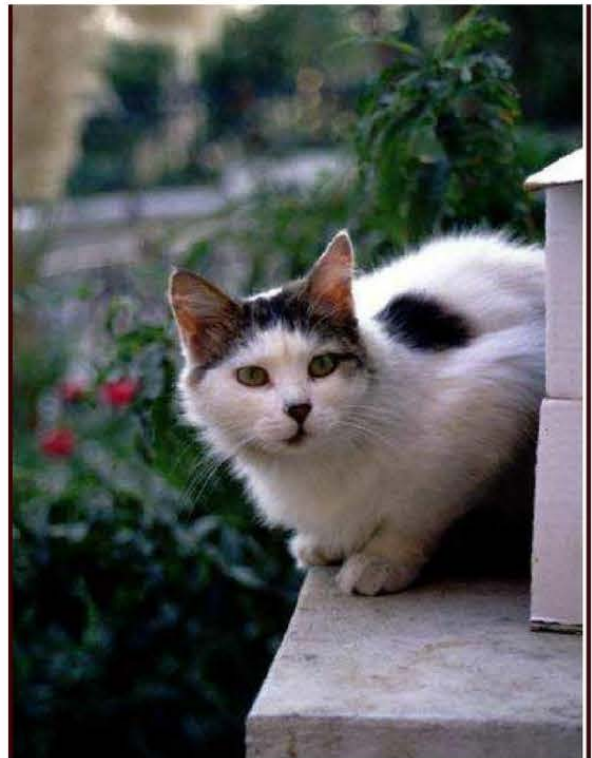
Remember, pets age more quickly than people. Even indoor cats should receive a complete general physical exam at least once a year.

**This is an example only - your cat's schedule will be tailored to his or her specific needs**

# FELINE LEUKEMIA VIRUS AND FELINE IMMUNODEFICIENCY VIRUS

**Feline Leukemia Virus (FeLV) and Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV) are viruses that affect cats only.** These viruses are somewhat similar to the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) in people; cats infected with FeLV or FIV develop severely compromised immune systems.

Infected cats can appear perfectly normal but will usually die within a few years of overwhelming infections or certain types of cancer. The viruses are transmitted by close cat to cat contact such as mutual grooming and bite wounds. Kittens born to an infected mother can be infected before birth or through their mother's milk. Fortunately, **a simple blood test can tell us if a cat or kitten is carrying one of these viruses.**



## FeLV/FIV Testing

**Who? All new cats or kittens entering a household should be tested.** This is particularly important if you have other cats at home that could potentially be at risk of being exposed. New cats should be kept separate from other cats in a home until the FeLV/FIV status of the cats is known.

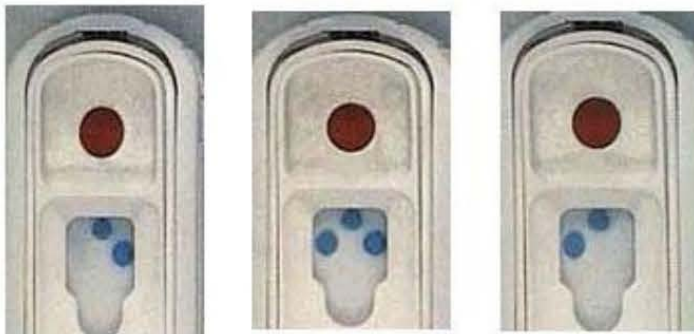
Any cat with chronic, unexplained disease and any cat with significant dental disease should be tested too.

**What? A screening test (ELISA) for FeLV/FIV can be performed on a small blood sample from your cat. Results are generally available within 48 hours.**

**When?** Ideally, testing should be done as soon as possible after acquiring the new kitten or cat. Samples may be obtained during a routine office appointment such as a "Health Check" or vaccination appointment. In some cases, we may ask you to leave your cat with us for a short while during the day if we need more time to obtain the sample.

**Why?** FeLV/FIV are devastating diseases for cats. While there is no cure, early diagnosis can help us keep affected cats as healthy as possible for as long as possible. More important however, is that early diagnosis can help prevent the spread of the virus to other cats.

FeLV Positive    FeLV and FIV Positive    FIV Positive



**Since it is impossible to tell if a cat or kitten is infected with one of these viruses just by looking at them (or by looking at the mother cat), we recommend that EVERY new cat or kitten entering a household be tested for FeLV or FIV.**





# FELINE LEUKEMIA VIRUS VACCINATION



An effective vaccination is widely used to protect cats against Feline Leukemia Virus. It offers good protection if the cat is at risk of being exposed to the virus in the future, it will not however help a cat who is already infected. This vaccine is not always part of the \*core\* vaccines that we give cats and you must let us know if you want your cat to have it.

## Who should be vaccinated for Feline Leukemia Virus?:

Any cat who has the potential to be in direct contact with other cats whose FeLV/FIV status is not known i.e.:

- cats who go outdoors on a regular basis
- \*indoor\* cats who might sneak out on occasion
- if you \*babysit\* or foster other cats
- if you have another cat at home whose FeLV/FIV status is not known or if you are planning on acquiring another cat

## When should Kitten/Cat be vaccinated for Feline Leukemia Virus:

Initially, kittens or cats should receive two FeLV boosters (needles) given one month apart and then receive a booster annually. These boosters are usually given at the same time as the other core vaccines (i.e. FVRCP and Rabies).

It is important to perform a blood test (FeLV/FIV test) on all cats and kittens before vaccinating them against Feline Leukemia for the first time because the vaccine will not help a cat who already has the virus in it's system. The vaccine can only protect the cat from becoming infected with the virus in the future.



# PARASITES

- **Parasites are very common in kittens** They are often infected with intestinal parasites (i.e. worms) by their mother before they are born or shortly after birth. They can also be infected with external parasites (i.e. fleas, mites, ticks) by their early environment.
- **It is very important that all new kittens are checked for parasites since they can cause serious health problems for the kitten and can pose a significant risk to human health as well.** We check for external parasites by giving all new kittens a thorough physical examination. To check for intestinal parasites, we need to perform a test on a sample of your kitten's stool (poop!) called a "Fecal Floatation" to check for microscopic parasite eggs.
- Stool samples should be less than 24 hours old. It can be brought in in a baggie, a disposable plastic container (ie margarine tub) or even a piece of tinfoil. We only need approximately a teaspoonful and a little kitty litter won't be a problem (But please make sure you actually have stool and not just a urine clump of litter!)
- Since the parasites only pass eggs in the stool at certain stages of their development, it is important we perform fecal floatations on each kitten at least twice during their early months and then at least once a year as adults. Many people choose to put their kitten on treatment that will prevent/treat some of the more common parasite infections as a precaution even if the fecal exam is negative.



**Parasite prevention for your pet is not only important for their health but for your entire family as well.** Some parasites which infect pets can pose a "Zoonotic Risk" - which means that:

- 1.) They can in some cases be associated with serious illness or disease in people.
- 2.) Young children, the elderly and people with compromised immune systems are at the greatest risk.

**Treating your pet with an effective parasite preventive on a regular basis can help to minimize the risks for everyone.**



# PARASITE PREVENTION



There are many products available on the market that claim to treat for various parasites such as flea, ticks and intestinal worms. **We recommend only using products prescribed by your veterinarian.**

We are able to advise you as to which product will best suit your pet's individual needs. Some "over the counter products" are either ineffective or are too harsh (especially for cats). We carry a variety of products that are safe, cost effective and guaranteed by the manufacturer when used properly.



NexGard COMBO spot-on, the first and only broad-spectrum parasiticide to treat cats for these key parasites: fleas, ticks, ear mites, roundworms and tapeworms.

Cats can become infected with TAPEWORM by hunting or by having fleas. Tapeworm can sometimes be diagnosed by fecal floatation or often the owner will see what looks like little bits of white/brown "rice" on the underside of the tail near the anus. If you think your cat might have tapeworm give us a call - don't worry we have effective medication available!

# SPAYING AND NEUTERING

## **We strongly recommend that all cats be spayed or neutered!**

- For female kittens, this involves either an ovariectomy (surgical removal of the ovaries) or an ovariohysterectomy (surgical removal of the ovaries and uterus) commonly referred to as a "spay".
- For male kittens, it involves surgically removing the testicles (neuter).
- The ovaries and testicles are the source of sex hormones in the body and are responsible for many undesirable behaviours and health issues in un-neutered adult cats.
- There are many health and behavioural benefits to spaying or neutering including decreased risk of mammary and reproductive cancers, decreased marking territory, decreased aggression towards other cats, decreased roaming and prevention of unwanted pregnancy.
- If male kittens are not neutered, after puberty they will develop a very strong smelling urine and they will 'mark' territory by urinating on vertical surfaces - ie spraying.
- If female kittens are not spayed, once they reach puberty they will start going into 'heat' (estrus) and become very vocal and exhibit undesirable behaviours.
- These procedures require general anesthesia and may require an overnight stay in the hospital.



## **We prioritize your pets patient safety and comfort by:**

- Performing a Pre-Anesthetic Blood Screen prior to anesthesia
- Using only premium injectable and gas anesthetic agents
- All patients are intubated (a breathing tube is placed in the windpipe) Heart rate, pulse, breathing, anesthetic levels and oxygen concentrations (+/- blood pressure and EKG) are monitored continuously using a combination of high tech monitors and good old fashioned, 'hands on' clinical skill
- Liberal but judicious use of pain killers (analgesics) help ensure a safe, comfortable experience for your pet
- Using blankets and warming pads
- Only using individual surgical packs and suture packs for each patient
- Our state of the art surgical equipment is sterilized in our state of the art sterilizers

**A preanesthetic blood screen (PABS)** is a series of laboratory tests performed on a blood sample to help identify patients who may be at a higher risk of complications during general anesthesia and surgery.

Using our comprehensive in house laboratory, we are able to screen your pet for abnormalities in liver and kidney function, protein levels, red cell and platelet numbers - all of which are important for responding to the demands of general anesthesia and surgery.

Performing a PABS can help to identify a pet who might be at a higher risk of complications and take steps to help minimize these risks.

**Since most kittens will reach puberty at 7-9 months of age, we usually recommend spaying or neutering at 6 months of age.**



# KITTEN SOCIALIZATION AND TRAINING



Cats are popular pets because they are relatively independent and usually require very little training. As the owner of a new kitten however, you have a 'window of opportunity' between approximately 8-12 weeks of age where they are particularly receptive to new experiences without being overly fearful. This is a good time for supervised exposure to children, dogs and other cats. It is also an ideal time for a kitten to learn to accept gentle handling of feet and face for nail trims, future physical exams and tooth brushing. A kitten that receives lots of gentle voluntary cuddle time learns that interaction with people is desirable. They should receive lots of positive reinforcement for good behaviour with praise, petting (if they are enjoying it) and treats.

- A kitten that bites or plays too rough should not be harshly disciplined - they should be told a gentle but firm no and be redirected to play with an appropriate toy. In some cases, if the kitten is really wound up, it may be preferable to remove them from the situation by putting them in another room until they have cooled down.
- It is a great idea for kittens to become used to traveling in a crate while they are young - this will make future travel or trips to the vet much less stressful for everyone! Leaving the crate out 'as part of the furniture' with the door open and treats, food, a comfy blanket or toys inside can make it familiar and attractive to the kitten.
- Kittens have a very strong prey drive - playing games that involve chasing toys or balls or 'cat dancers' can help make sure your feet are not the target. Using treat dispensing toys (Eggcensizer) or maze food dishes will help provide some of the mental stimulation they crave.

- Cats scratch (usually vertical) surfaces to mark their territory and because it seems to feel good. They have scent pads in their feet, so even declawed cats will still go through the motions. They can be trained to use scratching posts instead of furniture. Make sure the scratching post is in a desirable location and sturdy enough that it won't move when the cat pulls on it. Spraying it with catnip spray or cat pheromone can make it more attractive. You can attempt to discourage scratching of the furniture by spraying a cat with a water bottle or making a loud noise. However, unless you can do it without the cat knowing you are there, they will often just learn not to do it in front of you, or worse, make the cat afraid of you. There is a product called soft paws - soft glue on nail tips - that can prevent damage to the furniture but they take a tolerant cat and a very dedicated owner to keep them on for extended periods of time.
- Kittens can be equally happy as an 'only cat' or part of a multi-cat household. When introducing a new kitten or cat to a household, (after it has been tested and known to be healthy and free of parasites, FeLV and FIV) make the introduction to other cats slowly. First put cats in individual rooms then switch rooms so that they can smell the presence of another cat before seeing them. Then let them communicate through a door - so they can hear each other and even reach a paw underneath the door - then you can let them meet face to face supervised. Be particularly aware that older cats may not appreciate the overly enthusiastic play overtures of a kitten - please make sure that older cats have set periods of time or places they can go to to get away from a rambunctious play mate.



# MAKING A TRIP TO THE VET LESS STRESSFUL FOR YOUR CAT

Sadly, after the first year vaccinations and spaying or neutering, many cats do not see a veterinarian on a regular basis. This can be due in large part to the well meaning owner's perception that trips to the vet are very stressful (for both them and their feline friend) - but it can put cats at significant risk of serious health issues going unrecognized and being left untreated!

**Feliway** is a synthetic cat pheromone – or 'Happy Hormone'- that helps comfort and reassure cats by mimicking the natural feline facial pheromone that happy cats use to mark their territory as safe and familiar) \*Feliway Spray is available for purchase at Sault Ste. Marie Animal Clinic.

- **Invest in a good quality cat carrier** that can open or be unscrewed from the top so the cat does not have to be 'dumped' out of the carrier
- **Make the Cat Carrier part of the furniture:** The cat carrier should not be dug out of the closet (+/- accompanied by thumps, bangs and cursing) once a year only to have the cat dragged out from under a bed and unceremoniously jammed inside five minutes before it is time to leave!! If possible, leave the carrier in a quiet, pleasant part of the house with the door open and an irresistible blanket inside. Frequently leave treats inside and spritz the carrier with **Feliway** or even Catnip spray. The idea is to make the carrier a familiar and pleasant place to the cat. When it is time to travel, do not clean out the carrier but **leave familiar smelling blankets and toys inside.**
- **Leave your cat a little hungry prior to the trip** and bring some food or favourite treats to be doled out as a distraction. (We do have treats here, but cats being cats, often won't take them unless they are familiar with them)
- **Resist the urge to swing the carrier as you walk.** If possible, hold the carrier in two arms close to your body so that there is minimal swinging or jolting of the cat inside.
- **Cover the carrier with a familiar smelling blanket or towel** to diffuse bright light, muffle sounds and minimize visual stimuli.
- **Drive carefully with smooth stops, starts and turns and the radio turned off (or at least turned down).** Secure the carrier in the car so that it is not sliding about. If the waiting room looks busy, you can **wait in the peace and quiet of your car (if weather allows) for your turn.** You could even call us from your car and we would be happy to signal you when it is a good time to come inside.
- Feel free to **ask for the exam room to be spritzed with Feliway spray before you and your cat enter it.** (We generally try to do this for cats but it never hurts to remind us!)
- **Place the blanket or towel you have been using as a liner for the carrier on the exam table** and place your cat on that nice warm familiar surface as opposed to the strange smelling, cold metal. You might even be able to use it to partially cover parts of cat at different points throughout the exam so that they feel less exposed and more secure.
- **If your cat does not want to come out of the carrier, take the top off by loosening a few screws and leave the cat sitting in the bottom half.** Keep the cats head facing towards you if they appear nervous and let us start from the back end when examining.
- **Resist the urge to over reassure your cat** – your cat will be picking up cues from you. Don't talk in a high pitched baby talk but instead speak slowly in soft, low tones – if your cat senses you are calm and relaxed, that will go a long way towards keeping them calm and relaxed.
- **With a little time and effort, we can make the experience more pleasant for everyone and your cat's overall well being is certainly worth the effort!**



For cats that get exceptionally stressed or fearful, ask us about options for pre-medicating. Gabapentin can be given at home 2-4 hrs prior to the appointment and can significantly reduce stress and anxiety levels for your cat (and everyone else involved!)

# LITTER BOX TRAINING

One of the best things about cats as pets is the ease with which most of them are litter trained. Here are some tips for working with the cat's natural affinity for the litter box:

**Keep the litter pan clean! Scoop at least once a day!** Scoopable/clumping unscented litters are best since they leave just enough trace scent to stimulate the cat to go there again Do not use harsh smelling disinfectants or cleaners- cat sense of smell is much stronger than ours and they will be overwhelmed by harsh chemical smells Place the litter pan in a quiet yet accessible area

**At least one litter pan per cat** - even though they all may use all pans For very young or very old cats, one litter pan per floor Covered vs. uncovered may depend on personal preference of cat and or owner Walls/entry should not be too high for very young or older cats Ensure that smaller, timid or older cats have access to a litter box where they will not be 'ambushed' by other pets.



**One of the biggest reasons for a cat to end up in a shelter is for not using a litter box consistently - Often a little attention to details such as keeping the litter box clean and in an appropriate, acceptable area for the cat can PREVENT such problems from occurring!**

## Indoor vs. Outdoor Cat?

### Outdoor cats are at higher risk for:

- getting a bite wound or developing an abscess
- being hit by a car
- flea infestations
- intestinal parasites
- FeLV or FIV
- toxins such as antifreeze
- becoming prey for wildlife or dogs
- exposure to rabies
- simply "disappearing"



**Most indoor cats are very happy living the pampered life** (particularly if they never have known anything different).

If you are concerned that your indoor cat might lack stimulation or social interaction, you could consider:

- providing good access to windows/window seats where the cat can watch wild life and people
- providing adequate stimulation through toys and playing games with them
- building or purchasing an outdoor enclosure - a 'Catio'
- training your cat to walk on a leash with a secure harness on
- getting another cat for company (please talk to us first about making sure the new addition is an appropriate companion and is free of disease such as FeLV and FIV)



# PET HEALTH INSURANCE

There are several companies offering Pet Health Insurance to help cover the cost of unexpected veterinary expenses. Many plans do not cover routine veterinary care such as vaccinations and spaying but will reimburse the owner for unexpected veterinary costs incurred as a result of illness or trauma. The cost and the amount of coverage varies from plan to plan. We have included some pamphlets in your folder but further information is available in pet magazines or on the internet.

**We strongly recommend pet owners review and consider insurance options - especially for young pets BEFORE they have any health issues that could result in exclusions being placed on their policy.**

**Microchipping is a safe, effective and permanent way to identify your pet.** A microchip is a small (about the size of a grain of rice) chip that is injected under the skin of your pet between the shoulder blades. **It is encoded with a number that becomes registered to your pet.** Information such as your address, phone number and some medical information (such as the pet is diabetic or epileptic) is stored in a computerized central data bank by the microchip company. Most Humane Societies and Veterinary Clinics are equipped with scanners that can read these chips and by contacting the microchip company they can identify your pet even without a collar or tags. **We recommend having your pet "microchipped" when they are in for their spaying or neutering.**

## DIET RECOMMENDATIONS

- **The diet you choose for your new pet will play a crucial role in your pet's overall health and development.** Proper diet will help maintain healthy teeth, skin, urinary tract and weight.
- Unfortunately, all pet foods are not created equal and there is huge variation in both the cost and quality of pet foods on the market. "Bargain Foods" may end up costing more in the long run!
- **Beware of pet food labels that make impressive claims - the pet food industry is not as well regulated as you might expect - some of those impressive claims may not be backed by valid science or research!**
- At Sault Ste. Marie Animal Clinic, we carry **premium pet foods** available only through Veterinarians (at comparable prices to pet store brands) that **provide optimal levels of nutrition backed by extensive scientific research.**
- Cats and some breeds of dogs can be prone to developing crystals in their urine which can lead to life threatening urinary tract blockages ...in the majority of cases, this can be avoided by feeding your pet the appropriate diet.

Cats are prone to developing crystals in their urine which can lead to life threatening urinary blockages. Diet plays a crucial role in the development of crystals but the recommendations will change with your cats stage of life and other health factors.

**PLEASE ASK US FOR A SPECIFIC DIET RECOMMENDATION FOR YOUR CAT**

# CRYSTALS: URINARY TRACT ISSUES IN CATS



Some of the most common reasons for a cat to visit the veterinarian are urinary tract issues - which can range from not using the litter pan to life threatening blockages. Here are some things for new cat owners to know about their feline friends:

- Cats originated as desert animals - able to conserve water by producing very concentrated urine.
- Concentrated urine is predisposed to the formation of crystals - which can then form into stones in the kidney, bladder and urethra. The type of crystal that forms will be affected by a number of things including the pH of the urine, the type of diet the cat eats and the age of the cat as well as other medical and metabolic issues.
- Crystals alone can be very irritating to the cat leading to an increased frequency of urination (i.e. going small amounts frequently) and inappropriate urination outside of the litter box - blood may or may not be visible in the urine.
- Crystals can lead to the formation of stones in the bladder or urethra which may require surgery to remove.
- **Male cats in particular, can develop blockages from a stone or multiple stones getting lodged in the urinary tract. This is a life threatening situation requiring immediate veterinary intervention!**
- Some cats will develop **idiopathic cystitis** - similar to idiopathic cystitis in women - associated with blood in the urine and increased frequency/painful urination with no obvious cause although diet, obesity and stress can play a role. Bacterial infections in cats are relatively rare.



***Choosing an appropriate diet for your cat can significantly reduce the likelihood your cat will develop urinary tract issues***

- The type of crystal your cat is at risk of developing will vary with your cat's age, breed and other health conditions - therefore dietary recommendations will vary.
- Encouraging your cat to drink water by providing fresh water in a wide dish (cats don't like when their whiskers push up against the edge of the water dish) Water fountains are a great way to encourage your cat to drink more water! (Please remember to change filter regularly)



Please ask us to recommend a diet **specific** to your cat's needs.

# FOOD FOR THOUGHT



One of the biggest decisions you will make as a pet owner is what type of food to feed your kitten. New cat owners are often bombarded by information (and misinformation) about pet food, pet food companies and the nutritional needs of a growing kitten.

## Here is some 'food for thought':

**Sometimes bigger IS better!** While large corporations often get a bad rap for what they put into pet food, there are large companies that are very reputable. Companies like Hill's and Royal Canin are huge multinational companies with world class research centers staffed by THE leading experts in the field. All diets are thoroughly researched to make sure they do what they are intended to do without undesirable consequences.

- The sheer size of these companies gives them huge buying power so they can secure a **consistent supply of top-quality ingredients** – products will be consistent from bag to bag.
- Their foods are produced in their own factories which enables **superior quality control and accountability.**
- **Smaller or boutique brands may be good in theory, but, often do not have the same infrastructure for the level of quality control and consistency that the larger companies have.** For example, many smaller companies will 'outsource' the actual processing of the food to other facilities potentially giving up a significant aspect of quality control.
- **'Processing'** gets a bad rap as well but again it **enables the food company to ensure nutrients are stable and that the food is safe** for both your pet to be eating and your family to be handling.

**Beware of pet food diets that follow human dietary fads and trends.** For the most part these are relatively harmless (ingredients like blueberries are not likely added in enough quantities to have a significant antioxidant effect) but occasionally, lack of appropriate research can lead to significant, harmful effects. For example, it has recently come to light that large breed dogs, Golden Retrievers in particular, may be at increased risk of Dilated Cardiomyopathy – or heart failure – if fed a 'Grain Free' diet!

Raw diets are becoming increasingly popular – **At Sault Ste. Marie Animal Clinic we do not recommend feeding pets 'raw diets' because of the risk of bacterial contamination (for both people and pets).** We are also concerned about how well balanced they are for your pet's nutritional needs. People eat a variety of foods to meet their nutritional needs, but pets thrive on consistency – so small imbalances in a diet can lead to a significant nutritional imbalance for your pet.

Over feeding a kitten can lead to excess weight gain. It is a common misconception that cats will only eat what they need - **however most cats WILL over eat if fed 'free choice'.** It is always a good idea to measure the amount of food your cat is given!

There are many factors which will affect your kitten's overall long term health and quality of life. Some things, such as genetics and breed predispositions, you will have little control over. In other areas such as nutrition, vaccinations, parasite control, spaying or neutering, dental care and the judicious use of a leash, the choices you make as an owner can have a huge impact on your cat's health!



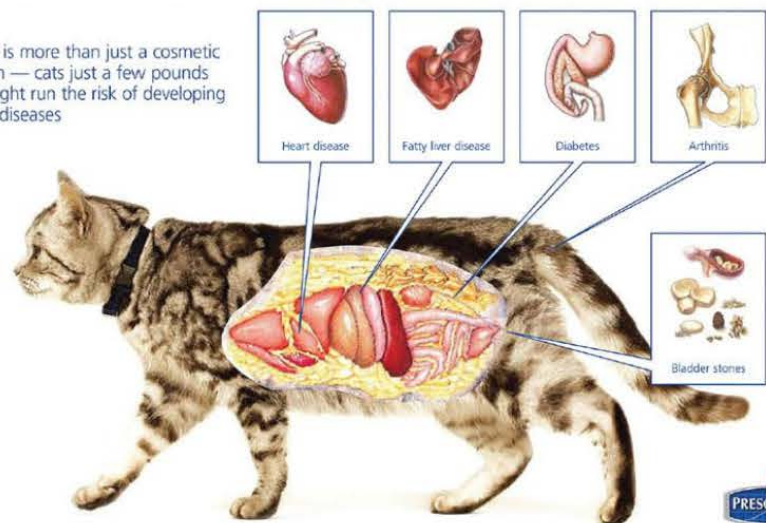
- **Feed good quality pet food with appropriate calorie density** (your average house cat does not need a "performance" diet....we can help you make an appropriate choice.
- **Invest in a measuring cup!** Feeding guides refer to 250 ml measuring cups....not coffee mugs or margarine containers.
- **Know your pet's weight and monitor it both "hands on" and by the scale.** Feel free to drop in any time with your pet to weigh them on our scales. There is no charge for this and it is a good way to monitor for changes.
- **Exercise your pet.** Cats can be encouraged to play with toys like lasers and some can be taught to walk on a leash as well. **Exercise is crucial for both your pet's physical and mental well being.**
- **Limit treats and avoid table food altogether** (we can recommend tasty low calorie treats).
- **Make your pet "work" for food** by using kibble dispensing toys or maze feeding dishes. This helps prevent boredom.
- **Kittens can be overweight even while still growing** - and overweight kittens tend to become obese adult cats.
- Slower, 'lean' growth will result in healthier growth.

Of factors you can control,  
**preventing obesity**  
is probably the single most  
important thing you can do to  
help your cat live a long and  
good quality life!

- a 1oz cube of Cheddar cheese is the equivalent of eating 3.5 hamburgers for a 10lb cat!
- A 5lb weight gain for a 30lb dog is the equivalent of a 120lb person gaining 20lbs and a 2lb gain for a 10 lb cat is the equivalent of a 120lb person gaining 18lbs.

### Health risks linked to obesity











Obesity is more than just a cosmetic problem — cats just a few pounds overweight run the risk of developing serious diseases


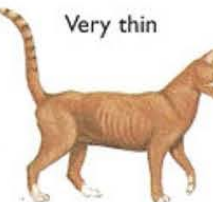

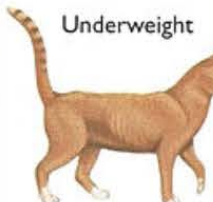

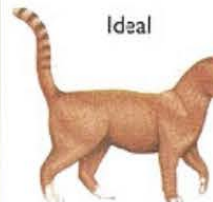






# FIT FOR LIFE

# BODY CONDITION SCORE



1	2	3	4	5
 <p>Very thin</p> 	 <p>Underweight</p> 	<p><b>Fit</b></p>  <p>Ideal</p> 	 <p>Overweight</p> 	 <p>Obese</p> 
<p>Ribs are easy to see or feel. When viewed from above, there is an accentuated waist.</p>	<p>Ribs are easy to feel. When viewed from above, there is an hourglass shape.</p>	<p>Ribs can be felt. There is a slight waist when viewed from above.</p>	<p>Ribs are difficult to feel. There is no waist when viewed from above.</p>	<p>Ribs are very difficult to feel. When viewed from above, there is no waist and a broad back.</p>

1	2	3	4	5
 <p>Very thin</p> 	 <p>Underweight</p> 	 <p>Ideal</p> 	 <p>Overweight</p> 	 <p>Obese</p> 

## Your pet is at a healthy weight if:

- Ribs are easily felt
- Tucked abdomen
- Waist is easily noted when viewed from above

## Your pet may be overweight if:

- Ribs are difficult to feel under the fat
- Stomach sags
- Back is broad and flat
- Waist is barely visible or absent

# DENTAL CARE



An important part of your pet's overall health care!

- **Dental diets can be an effective way to help prevent plaque and tartar accumulation** in pets. The shape, size and texture of the kibble encourages more chewing action by the pet and work somewhat like a "squeegee" to scrape the surface of the tooth clean.
- We recommend **Hill's T/d or Royal Canin** Dental diets and treats to help prevent plaque and tartar accumulation in healthy adult dogs and cats. These diets are extensively researched, clinically proven and guaranteed - if your pet won't eat it, you can return it for a full refund.
- **Appropriate chew toys or treats** can be helpful but be careful not to give your pet anything too hard. They can actually chip or break teeth with overzealous chewing. Avoid real bones as they can cause broken teeth, can splinter, be swallowed and they can be a source for significant bacterial infections.
- We carry a raw-hide chew treat called **Denta Pro Dental Chews** for dogs that not only encourages good chewing but are coated with an enzyme that will help prevent tartar formation.
- **Brushing is an effective way to prevent plaque and tartar from accumulating.**
- **Use pet toothpaste and a pet toothbrush.** Human tooth paste foams and is not designed to be swallowed; most pets don't know enough to "spit". There are many different models of pet toothbrushes available, you might have to try a few to find what works best for you. **Start brushing early in your pet's life before plaque and tartar have a chance to accumulate. Aim to brush everyday but even twice a week will make a significant difference.**

Puppies and kittens have deciduous or baby teeth that start to fall out around four months of age. By six months of age they will have their full set of adult teeth.



The only way to effectively treat **ESTABLISHED** dental disease is with a professional cleaning of the teeth under **general anesthesia**. Some pets may require additional treatment such as a root canal or extractions. Your pet's annual physical examination includes an assessment of oral and dental health and recommendations for appropriate treatment.

**Without intervention, most pets will accumulate plaque (a sticky, yellowish substance made up of bacteria and food debris) on the teeth. Plaque hardens into tartar followed by gingivitis, an inflammation of the gums. Left untreated this will progress to periodontal disease or a loss of the bony structures around the tooth.**

**Not only is dental disease associated with bad breath and tooth loss, it can be a significant source of pain and infection for your pet. Bacteria associated with dental disease can travel elsewhere in the body through the bloodstream and can cause life threatening infections in organs such as the heart and kidneys.**



# CATS ARE NOT SMALL DOGS!

## (AND OTHER HELPFUL TIPS FOR NEW CAT OWNERS)

- **Cats are not small dogs! They need CAT food, not dog food.** Cats have higher protein requirements than dogs and they also require the essential amino acid **taurine**, which dog food may be deficient in. If your cat steals the odd kibble of food from Fido, it won't hurt him, but a steady diet of dog food could leave him or her with serious nutritional deficiencies.
- **Never give a cat Tylenol!** Cats lack an enzyme necessary to metabolize acetaminophen (Tylenol). In fact a single extra strength Tylenol can be fatal to an average sized cat.
- **Never use any flea or insecticide product on a cat that is not specifically labeled for use in cats.** Cats are extremely sensitive to certain pyrethrins - a broad class of insecticide used in many canine flea/insecticide products. In fact, some cats can experience severe reactions just by being in contact with a dog who has been treated with one of these products.
- **Never let a cat come in contact with antifreeze (ethylene glycol).** Given the opportunity, cats will drink it and as little as a teaspoonful can be fatal to an average sized cat.
- **Cats do not like a dirty litter box!** Many "litter box issues" can be avoided by keeping the litter box scooped out regularly and providing a litter box per cat in the household.
- **Keeping a cat indoors is an easy and effective way to avoid many serious problems such as bite wounds, being hit by a car, parasites and "disappearing".**



Cats are masters of disguise when it comes to being ill. Their natural defense mechanism is to hide all signs of illness or weakness until a disease or condition becomes so advanced that they can't hide it any more.

**Yearly physical exams are particularly important for your cat's long term health, comfort and quality of life.**

Subtle signs your cat might not be feeling well:

- **Cats are naturally clean, fastidious animals.** Cat saliva contains a natural deodorizer so a healthy cat should have very little "body odour". If a cat stops grooming themselves or develops an "unkempt" appearance, it should be a red flag that they might not be feeling well.
- **Never ignore a cat who is urinating outside of the litter box or appears to be having difficulty urinating.** Cats can develop crystals in their urine (often related to diet) and these crystals can lead to a complete blockage of the urinary tract. Male cats in particular are prone to becoming "blocked" and this is a true veterinary emergency....cats can die with in a matter of hours if not treated. Cats who are straining to urinate, passing only small amounts of urine, spending extra time in the litter box, or urinating in unusual places such as the bath tub or on the floor need to be seen ASAP!
- **Cats are very much creatures of habit.** Sudden changes in a cat's behaviour or daily patterns such as "hiding under the bed" can be an indication something is wrong.
- **Cats can develop arthritis just like dogs and people!** Unlike people and dogs however, the signs can be a lot more subtle - such as hesitating or not jumping up on furniture or counters Arthritis can be effectively treated with a combination of things including diet and medication.

**If you notice, or even think you notice, a change in your cat's weight, thirst, or the amount they urinate it is probably significant and should be discussed with us!**

# EMERGENCY CARE:

The veterinarians of the seven Sault Ste. Marie Ontario Veterinary Hospitals have partnered with **VetWise - a veterinary telemedicine service** - to provide twenty-four hours, seven days a week, rotating emergency service for clients.

**If you require emergency service for your pet please:**

- **DO NOT COME DIRECTLY TO THE CLINIC - CALL (705)-759-8888 FIRST!!**
- **Have a pen and paper handy to write down phone numbers, name and address of veterinarian seeing emergencies if out of hours and other important information**
- If our clinic is not open, your call will be forwarded to **VetWise** and answered by a Registered Veterinary Technician (RVT)
- The **VetWise RVT** will 'Triage' your call and if it is of an urgent or critical nature, they will coordinate your pet being seen by the local On-Call veterinarian
- If your call is regarding a less urgent issue, you may be offered a virtual consult (i.e. video over your phone or computer) by a **VetWise Veterinarian**. Depending on the problem, the VetWise Veterinarian may be able manage the issue with advice and/or a prescription called in to a local pharmacy. If the VetWise Veterinarian feels your pet should be seen in person, they will help coordinate this for you.
- Both VetWise and the "On-Call" veterinarian will provide us with a summary of the treatment your pet received and the follow-up care required.



## **Payment is due at the time of service.**

For pets admitted to the hospital, payment is required at the time of discharge. A deposit may be required at the time of admission.

For your convenience, we accept Visa, Mastercard, Debit and Cash. We will accept personal cheques from regular clients with appropriate identification.

**Pet Health Insurance may be a good investment if you are worried about being able to manage unexpected expenses with your pet.**



## Appointment Booking

- **We try very hard to schedule appointments according to the urgency of the problem, at your convenience and according to availability.**
- Please call at least two to three weeks in advance to schedule routine preventative care appointments such as vaccinations and one to two months in advance for elective surgeries such as spaying and dental cleanings. Office appointments for examinations and routine vaccinations are scheduled weekday mornings and afternoons.
- Appointments for surgery or diagnostic procedures such as taking x-rays and some blood tests will require that your pet be dropped off at the hospital between 8:00 and 9:00 in the morning (usually fasted) and some surgical procedures require an overnight stay in the hospital.
- Given the busy nature of our practice, **we are unable to accommodate walk-ins**. If your pet requires medical care please call and we will try our best to accommodate you. **If you are unable to keep a scheduled appointment, please give us twenty-four hours notice.**

**Clients who miss more than one appointment without notification will be charged.**

# TAKE HOME TIPS

SAULT STE. MARIE ANIMAL CLINIC, 884 THIRD LINE EAST, SAULT STE. MARIE, ONTARIO P6A 6J8, (705)-759-8888 WWW.SSMANIMALCLINIC.COM

**You are the most important member of your pet's health care team!** We rely on you to both bring your pet to us when you feel something is out of the ordinary and to follow through with our recommendations.

- **Feel free to ask questions** at any point in time and ask for clarification when needed. There is no such thing as a stupid question!!
- **We want both you and your pet to enjoy coming to see us** so please let us know if there is anything we can do to make visits more comfortable for you and your pet. Feel free to stop by any time to weigh your pet or just pop in for a treat - the treat jar is always full!
- **Regular check-ups are an important part of your pet's overall healthcare.** We give every pet a complete physical exam every visit - this is particularly important since pets can't talk!
- **We must rely on both our observations and the owners observations to identify changes and potential problems.** Vaccine schedules will be tailored to your pet's lifestyles and risk factors.

**"An ounce of prevention..." At Sault Ste. Marie Animal Clinic, we emphasize preventive medicine and care.** Routine vaccination and parasite prevention for your pet are an important part of keeping you, your human family members and your pets healthy. Investing in proper nutrition can prevent a multitude of health problems and save you significant amounts of money in the long run. Keeping a cat indoors and a simple \$5.00 leash for your dog can prevent future expense and heartache.

**Spending time training and/or socializing in your new puppy or kitten will pay off in the long run.** Obedience classes for puppies/dogs are time and money well spent.. Teaching your puppy basic manners will help him or her grow into more secure and confident adult, will strengthen your bond with them and will make him or her much more welcome in a variety of situations.

## JOIN OUR ONLINE COMMUNITY!



(you can find us as 'SSMAnimalClinic')



The BIGGEST decision you, as a pet owner, make for your pet EVERY day is 'WHAT you put in the bowl'.

Feeding the **appropriate** diet for your pet can prevent a multitude of problems and health issues. The diets we sell are made with premium ingredients and backed by extensive research - they are also cost competitive with many pet store/grocery brands that that may not have the same degree of research and quality control behind them.

The second part of this statement is 'HOW MUCH you put in the bowl'. **Keeping your pet at a lean, healthy weight is probably the single biggest thing you can do to help them enjoy a long and healthy life.**

For more information about us, the services we provide and other useful information, please go to our website:

[www.ssmanimalclinic.com](http://www.ssmanimalclinic.com)





SAULT STE. MARIE ANIMAL CLINIC, 884 THIRD LINE EAST, SAULT STE. MARIE, ONTARIO P6A 6J8, (705)-759-8888 WWW.SSMANIMALCLINIC.COM

# MyVetStore.ca

Shop for and purchase **premium** and **veterinary exclusive pet foods** (foods available only through your veterinarian) as well as **treats** and **toys** from the convenience and privacy of your own home - and have them **delivered to your door!**

## VISIT OUR ONLINE STORE



**Save Time and money, Order Online!**

Instead of picking up the phone, go online! Ordering online allows you to:

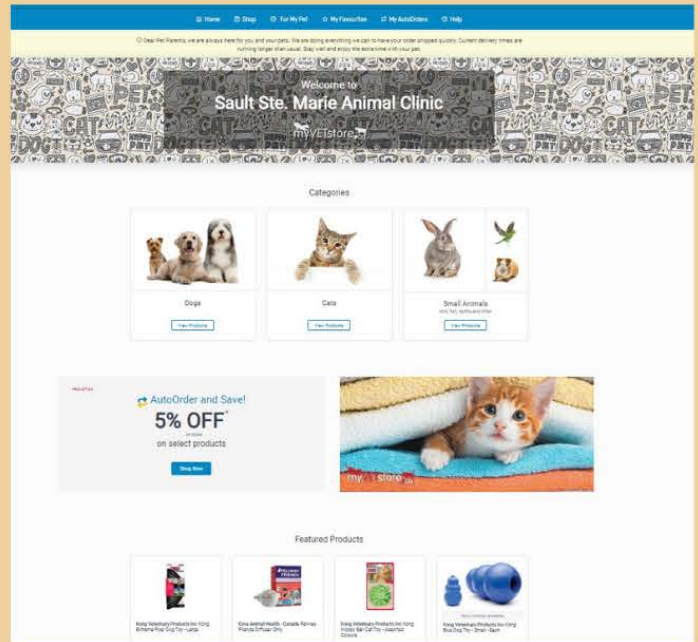
- Order 24/7 – from anywhere
- Express Pickup: guarantee your order will be ready and waiting for you when you come in to pick it up
- SAVE with AutoOrder: up to 5% rebate directly from the manufacturers!
- Home Delivery available (or to the address of your choice) - FREE on orders over \$100.00
- Shop from our selection of over 3,000 products including: diets, toys, treats, supplements and much more!

## CLICK HERE TO SHOP NOW



**Signing up is easy:**

1. Go to MyVetStore.ca
2. Follow the prompts to find us
3. Create account



## Free home delivery on orders over \$100.00

**The ultimate in convenience,  
consistency, and value when it  
comes to purchasing top quality  
products for your pet!**