

On behalf of the doctors and staff at Pet Care Center at Luna Park, we are so excited about the wonderful journey that you are about to embark on with your new cat. Having a new furry friend can be a lot of fun, but we also recognize that you may have some questions about the best way to care for your companion. Don't worry, we will be here for you every step of the way with expert advice.

This packet will have some information to get you started with your new cat and to inform you of things to look for and avoid in the upcoming months and even years. As always, if you have additional questions, you are welcome to call our office at any time.

How to Choose a Proper Diet

With so many diets available these days it is important to know the basic dos and don'ts to look out for. Many terms used on pet food labels are not regulated by the FDA as they would be in human foods. Terms to look out for that may be marketing tools for these companies include but are not limited to the following:

- Holistic
- Human Grade
- Premium

Knowing who your pet food is produced by and having the contact information for these companies is a great start. Make sure that your food has an AAFCO label indicating that it has passed feeding trials and has the minimum nutrients required for healthy food.

Some of the questions that you can ask to ensure that your pet is getting a balanced, nutritional diet are included below.

Questions to ask your pet food company:

1. Who formulates your food and what are their credentials?
2. Where are your foods produced and manufactured?
3. What specific control measures do you use to ensure consistency and quality of the ingredients of your product?

4. Is the food complete and balanced? If so, what life stage/age is intended for?
5. Will you provide a complete nutrient analysis for the dog or cat food in question?

We do not recommend feeding raw food. While this is advertised as “the natural way” to feed your pet, the GI systems in today’s companion animals have evolved and some raw diets may cause diarrhea and other gastrointestinal upset. A raw diet also increases the risk of exposure to infectious diseases such as salmonella, E.coli, and Influenza H5N1. This can be spread to humans.

Vaccines

There are two classifications for vaccines in the veterinary community, these are the core and non-core vaccines.

Core vaccines are vaccines which are strongly recommended and sometimes even required, regardless of pet’s lifestyle.

Non-core vaccines are vaccines that only some cats need depending on factors such as geographic location and lifestyle.

Rabies Vaccine (Legally Required Core Vaccine)	The rabies vaccine is required by law to protect people and pets from this deadly virus. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Initial vaccine at 16 weeks of age• Booster annually
FVRCP (Core Vaccine)	Feline Rhinotracheitis Virus (Herpes Virus) —an upper respiratory virus that can lead to lifelong infection. Signs include fever, sneezing, discharge from the nose and eyes, respiratory distress, coughing, and loss of appetite. Calicivirus —an upper respiratory virus that can cause sneezing, runny eyes, fever, ulcers, and blisters on the tongue. Panleukopenia —an often-fatal virus that causes fever, depression, anorexia, vomiting, diarrhea.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial vaccine is administered as a series at 8, 12, and 16 weeks of age
FeLV* (Non-core Vaccine)	Feline Leukemia Virus is only recommended for those cats that will be going outside and have exposure to other cats OR who have a housemate that goes outside and is exposed to other cats. FeLV can cause immunosuppression, susceptibility to infection, and death.

*If your cat is an indoor/outdoor cat that has exposure to other cats, we recommend an annual Feline Leukemia Virus and Feline Immunodeficiency Virus test. This test is quick and inexpensive.

Heartworm and Intestinal Parasites

There are numerous parasites that can infect your pet year-round in our area. Some of these include roundworm, hookworm, tapeworm, and giardia. These are zoonotic, which means they can be spread to humans.

It is important to test your pet's fecal material 2-4 times during the first year of life then at least once a year to ensure that you and your pet stay healthy and happy. We also suggest deworming puppies and kittens 2-4 times between fecal testing with a broad-spectrum dewormer and then maintaining them on monthly preventatives.

Heartworms are one of the most damaging parasites for cats and dogs. Heartworms are spread by mosquito bites. When a mosquito that is carrying the parasite bites your pet, the larva enters the bloodstream and takes residence in the heart and lungs. This footlong parasite can seriously debilitate and potentially kill cats and dogs. Luckily, in cats heartworm can easily be prevented with a once a month topical called **Revolution Plus**.

Fleas and Ticks

Fleas are an external parasite that live outside of the body and can be a challenge to manage. To better prevent and eliminate fleas, it is important to not only target the fleas that you can see but also the environment. The average adult female flea lays 50 eggs a day which fall off your pet and live in the environment. These eggs take anywhere from 2-14 days to hatch depending on how warm the environment is. Once hatched, the new flea takes only 48 hours before she starts to lay eggs of her own.

Treating your cat with monthly preventatives will kill off any live fleas that are on your pet but in order to completely eradicate the infestation you will need to treat the household such as carpets and fabrics, as well as vacuum often.

We have also seen a rise in ticks in our area. Ticks are parasites that feed on the blood of their host. They can transmit disease to your cat and you. Both flea and tick infestations can be prevented with monthly Revolution Plus.

****For more information on parasites and how to prevent them while reducing risk to your family please visit: www.petsandparasites.org**

Dental Care

Brushing teeth regularly will help to ensure your pet's oral health. Just like in humans, cats need daily brushing and regular dental cleanings with radiographs to ensure that they are well cared for. The first step to heart health is positive oral health.

For more information on how to care for your pet's teeth please ask one of our doctors or trained technicians.

Identification

All pets should wear a collar and ID tag at all times. There are special collars for cats that are safe and labelled as "break away" collars. These

collars will come off if they were to get caught on something to prevent potential strangulation. In addition to a collar, it is a wise idea to have your pet microchipped.

Microchips are placed via an injection and stay under the skin between the shoulder blades in what is known as the subcutaneous layer. These chips contain a series of numbers that are registered by universal scanners. Those numbers can be entered into a national database and will pull up your information. All lost pets that are brought into the humane society and most veterinary clinics are scanned for microchips as soon as they arrive.

Spay/Neuter

Spaying or neutering your cat can be performed around 6 months unless you plan to use your pet for breeding purposes.