

# NEW PUPPY/KITTEN

## Caring for your new puppy or kitten

Congratulations on the new addition to your family! Even if you've had a puppy or a kitten before, it's a good idea to remind yourself of the basic health care that will keep your pet in tip-top condition. If you haven't had a pet before, in this leaflet you'll find some general information on taking the best care of your new pet. Once your kitten or puppy have received their first vaccination, you will be invited to a FREE consultation with a Fully Qualified Veterinary Nurse, where the general information contained in this leaflet will be discussed with you and any further questions you may have.

Of course, we're always here to help with any questions or advice, so please just ask at reception or check our website [HYPERLINK "http://www.cheshirepet.co.uk" www.cheshirepet.co.uk](http://www.cheshirepet.co.uk)

The main areas to consider are:

- Vaccinations
- Flea treatments
- Worming
- Diets
- Insurance

### Vaccinations

There are a number of highly infectious (and potentially fatal) diseases that can affect your pet. Many of these diseases have no effective treatment and young puppies and kittens that catch them can die. However, for many of these conditions there is a simple protection in the form of a vaccination and regular annual booster, so always ensure that your pet is up to date with the recommended protection.

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## Puppies

Primary vaccinations are given in two doses a few weeks apart. Vaccination protects against Parvovirus, Distemper, Hepatitis and Leptospirosis. Until this first course of injections has been completed, you should keep your pet away from other animals where possible. If you are planning to use kennels, you will need to provide the vaccination certificate, so keep it in a safe place!



## Kittens

Primary vaccinations are given in two doses a few weeks apart. Vaccination protects against Feline Infectious Enteritis, Cat Flu and Leukaemia. Until this first course of injections has been completed, you should keep your pet away from other animals where possible. If you are planning to use catteries, you will need to provide the vaccination certificate, so keep it in a safe place!

Keeping your pet up to date with its booster jabs is vital if you want to keep your pet in good shape. We will send you a reminder when your pet is due for a booster to help remind you.

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## Flea treatments

Fleas are a sad fact of every pet's life at some time or other, no matter how clean your pet or your home is. At Cheshire Pet we firmly believe that prevention is better than cure when it comes to fleas and so our advice is geared towards that aim. Fortunately, the treatments available today are highly effective and can be applied in a range of different methods, so you're sure to find one that works for you and your pet. You can buy flea treatments in pet shops, but you may find that those we are able to offer under prescription are more effective.

If you see your pet scratching excessively, or find small brown specks in their fur, then you may have a flea problem. Fleas live and feed on pets – females lay eggs on the animal which then drop off into your pet's bed or favourite resting spot, so it's equally important to treat your home as well as your pet.

It's not advisable to treat puppies and kittens under 8 weeks with anything except a special water-based spray. We can provide this for you. Your pet may be treated for free at your Free Nurse Clinic. Once your pet reaches 8 weeks, there are more options e.g sprays or spot-on products that are applied at the base of the neck and injections that provide effective, longer-lasting treatment.

We can advise on the right products for you and your pet, please ask at reception for more details of the correct products for your pet.

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## Worming

Cats and dogs, as predatory and naturally inquisitive animals, can pick up all kinds of parasites on their travels. The most common worms are roundworms and tapeworms.

## Roundworms

These look like strings of spaghetti or elastic bands and may be picked up from the environment, as well as being passed from animal to animal. They can also be passed onto humans, where serious infestation can cause blindness in young children.

## Tapeworms

You may find segments of these worms excreted in the animal's faeces (they look like flattened grains of rice). Tapeworms cannot be passed directly from one animal to another, they rely on an intermediate host such as a passing flea. Therefore if you see tapeworm segments from your pet, you must treat for fleas also.



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It's especially important to treat puppies and kittens regularly during the first 6 months as they may have been exposed to worms from their mother during pregnancy and suckling.

We recommend treating your puppy or kitten every 2 weeks for the first 12 weeks and then every month until your pet is 6 months old, reducing to once every 3 months in adulthood unless you have small children in the house then monthly treatments are advised. Routinely we use Milbemax tablets which effectively treat all the common intestinal worms. Spot-on treatments can also be used, some are effective against roundworms and also control fleas and mites but remember to also use something to kill tapeworms every 3 months if you are using this spot-on. There is also a spot-on available for cats which is effective against tapeworms. However, no worming treatment will prevent re-infestation, which is why it is so important to treat your pet regularly, especially if they hunt or scavenge.

## Microchipping

We strongly recommend having your new pet microchipped to ensure that should it become lost, there is a strong chance of it being returned safely to you.

This is a quick procedure and the chip lasts for the lifetime of your pet for one initial fee (around £25). Please ask at the surgery for more details and to make an appointment.

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## Diet

Feeding your kitten or puppy the right food is one of the most important things you can do to help keep him happy and healthy. Commercial pet foods have been specially formulated to take into account the specific needs of growing cats and dogs, so we recommend that you choose a brand and a food type (dry or wet, cans or pouches) that meets your requirements, and stick to it. We can help with specific recommendations for your pet if you need advice – please ask at reception.

## Kittens

Growing kittens have twice the energy requirements of adult cats, so the kitten food you choose is packed with all the extra calories and nutrients her body needs. Even when your kitten appears to be fully grown on the outside, she is still developing internally, so it's best to keep on the kitten food for her first year. When they are very small, try feeding smaller quantities three or four times a day, as their stomachs and mouths are still so small.

Cats are obligate carnivores – they do not thrive on a meat-free diet as their bodies need the amino acids found in animal protein to develop and promote healthy tissue growth. Kittens and cats also need the taurine found naturally in chicken and fish for healthy hearts, eyes and reproductive systems. A high quality pet food contains all the essential elements for your kitten's growth, which you can supplement with occasional treats and fresh meat and fish as appropriate. Always remember to keep a bowl of fresh water available for your kitten.

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## Puppies

From weaning to 6 months, your puppy should be fed 2-3 times a day, and after 6 months you can drop this down to twice a day. Always remember to have plenty of fresh water available. Unlike kittens, not all puppies have the same nutritional needs, so we recommend choosing a food that's specially formulated according to his breed size. This will ensure that your puppy receives the ideal balance of nutrients and fibre in the correct ratio to calories. Once your puppy approaches his first birthday, you can then start to transition on to adult food.

A high quality pet food contains all the essential elements for your puppy's growth, which you can supplement with occasional treats and fresh meat as appropriate.

## Treats to avoid:

### Bones

These can become stuck in your puppy's throat or can splinter and result in internal bleeding. Choose rawhide chews or puppy treats instead.

### Chocolate

This can be toxic to animals, choose dog treats instead

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## Insurance

The idea of insuring your pet seems ridiculous until you are faced with a vet's bill for an operation or a series of operations. As one-in-three pets will need to have veterinary treatment this year we strongly recommend you insure your pet's. 4 weeks FREE insurance will be provided to you when your puppy or kitten is vaccinated with us.

Pet insurance can cover you against a range of eventualities including accidents, sickness, loss or theft of your pet, the cost of cancelling your holiday because your dog runs away, or against your liability for any injury your dog causes to a third-party. The exact level of cover you get varies from policy to policy but will often include the following:

- Veterinary Fees
- Theft and straying
- Third party liability
- Accidental damage
- Death Benefit
- Holiday cancellation
- Boarding fees
- Advertising/reward for lost pet



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You should consider getting a policy that offers at least £4,000-worth of cover for each accident or illness. As always, it is well worth checking the exclusions and small print before committing to any policy. Some pet insurance policies stop paying out after 12 months or when you reach a maximum cost. To avoid this look for a “For Life Policy”. Some dogs may not be eligible for cover; this mainly applies to working dogs, racing dogs and dogs registered under the Dangerous Dogs Act.

Our staff are always here for you if you have any questions or concerns about your kitten or puppy, so please do not hesitate to drop into our surgery, give us a call on 01477 544554 or e-mail. [enquiries@cheshirepet.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@cheshirepet.co.uk), and we’ll always do our best to help.

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