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Kitten Packet

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Welcome to Fircrest Veterinary Hospital

Thank you for choosing our hospital to care for your pet! Whether you are new to us, new to our beautiful area, or new to pet ownership, our goal is to provide outstanding veterinary care for your pet. We hope the following pages in this packet provides useful information about preventative care and help answer any questions you may have regarding your pet. We'd be happy to answer any additional questions during our regular business hours.

Office Hours:

Monday-Friday (Excluding Wednesday): 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Closed 12:30-2:00pm for lunch.

Wednesday: 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Closed 12:30-2:00pm for lunch.

Closed on weekends

Appointment Hours:

Monday-Friday: 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. & 2:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Closed all weekends

Important note regarding appointments:

Clients more than 10 minutes late will be required to reschedule. One or two late patients can cause the entire daily schedule to fall behind. This is an inconvenience for everyone. We strive to see every patient as close to their appointment time while maintaining the best possible care

For emergencies, we suggest:

[BluePearl Specialty & Emergency Pet Hospital](#)

2510 84th St S Ste, 30D

Lakewood, WA 98499

(253) 474-0791

[Summit Veterinary Referral Center](#)

2050 South 80th Street

Tacoma, WA 98409

(253) 983-1114

Vaccination Schedule

Please be aware that depending upon your pet's situation, the ages in which the vaccine is given could be different than the schedule indicated below. Reminders are sent as a courtesy to our clients, so it is always a good idea to keep a record of what and when your pet was vaccinated.

Vaccines:

FVRCP

Feline Viral Rhinotracheitis-Herpes Virus-Calicivirus-Feline Distemper-Panleukopenia

Rabies

Rabies is a deadly virus that can be transmitted by the bite of any infected mammal.

Bats are the most common carriers in Washington State

Recommended:

FelV

Feline Leukemia Virus

A retrovirus transmitted between infected cats via saliva, nasal secretions, or bite wounds. This is highly recommended for cats that are outdoors.

Note: We recommend that strictly indoor cats get the initial FeLV vaccine series to provide some protection in the event they get out of the house and then 1 year later. If they continue an indoor lifestyle future FeLV vaccines are not needed, but is recommended for indoor/outdoor cats, or cats exposed to cats that are outside.

Schedule:

8 weeks: FVRCP (1st)

11 weeks: FVRCP (2nd)

14 weeks: FVRCP (3rd), FeLV (1st)

17 weeks: FVRCP (1yr), FeLV (2nd), Rabies (1yr)

We will tailor a vaccine schedule for your cat at their wellness exam. We will go over their recommendations with you.

The FVRCP, Rabies, and FeLV need to be boosted at one year of age, then yearly for FeLV and Rabies and every 3 years for the FVRCP.



Important Reasons to Spay or Neuter Your Pet:

More than 4 million pets are euthanized in the U.S. animal shelters each year simply because they have no home. Many puppies and kittens are less than 6 months old. Help stop this needless loss of life. SPAY or NEUTER your pet.

Spaying your female pet
(*Ovariohysterectomy*):

**Removal of the ovaries and the uterus.
Ideal age is 4-6 months before the first heat cycle.**

- *Eliminates the risk of ovarian & uterine cancer.
- *Eliminates unwanted pregnancies.
- *Eliminates the chance of a Pyometra. Pyometra is an infection in the uterus and are much more difficult to manage than a routine infection and in some cases can be fatal.
- *If spayed before the first heat cycle, your pet has a 0.5% chance of developing breast cancer. If spayed after one heat cycle, your pet has an 8% chance and if spayed after two heat cycles, the risk increases to 26%. After two years, no protective benefit exists. No decrease in mammary gland cancer is seen compared to non-spayed, however there is still a lower risk of uterine infection and uterine/ovarian cancer.
- *If your cat does develop mammary cancer in 99% of cases the cancer is malignant & aggressive. Action has to be taken quickly, a mastectomy of all teets is the required treatment.

Neutering your male pet
(Castration):

- Ideal age is 4- 6 months.**
- *Eliminates the risk of testicular cancer, the second most common tumor in dogs.
 - *Greatly reduces the risk of prostate cancer and prostatitis.
 - *Reduces the risk of perianal tumors.
 - *Reduces roaming and fighting.
 - *Eliminates or reduces spraying or urine marking in neutered males before 6 months of age or before the onset of these behaviors.
 - *Eliminated the risk and spread of sexually transmitted diseases.
 - *Eliminates unwanted litters.

Common myths

Spaying or neutering your pet does not:

- *Cause laziness or hyperactivity
- *Reduce its instinct to protect your family and home
- *Cause immature behaviors
- *Postpone or delay normal behavioral maturity
- *Alter its personality in any manner.

Our staff members can answer your questions about spaying or neutering your pet or any other procedure your pet may undergo at our hospital. Please don't hesitate to ask.

Source: *firstline*

Q&A: All about Microchipping

<p>Q: What is a microchip? A: The microchip is a tiny computer chip, about the size of a grain of rice, programmed with an identification number. The chip is enclosed in a biocompatible glass and is small enough to fit into a hypodermic needle. Once an animal is injected with a chip; it can be identified throughout its life with this one-of-a-kind number.</p>	<p>Q: Does my pet have to be sedated? A: No. Injecting a microchip is just like any other injection or vaccination. Anesthesia is not required or recommended just to implant a microchip.</p>
<p>Q: What is the benefit of microchipping? A: Microchips are permanent and can't be lost, altered, or destroyed. Pet owners have been reunited with chipped pets that have been missing for years or that have traveled thousands of miles.</p>	<p>Q: Could my pet be allergic to the microchip? A: The microchip is inert, smooth, nontoxic, and non-allergenic. Microchip companies say there is virtually no chance of the body developing an allergy or trying to reject the microchip.</p>
<p>Q: How does it work? A: A special scanner is used to send a radio signal to the chip to read the identification number. The pet feels nothing when the scanner is placed over it. The number is displayed on the scanner, and the person reading the scanner can contact a national registry to find out who the pet belongs to.</p>	<p>Q: If a veterinary clinic or animal shelter finds a microchip, how will they know who to call? A: Animal shelters and veterinarians are finding microchips in more and more pets. They are aware of the national registry and routinely contact them to obtain owner information regarding the pet. They then contact owners to advise them their pet has been found.</p>
<p>Q: How is the microchip implanted? A: Microchips are implanted with a needle behind the skin between the shoulder blades. They can't be felt or seen.</p>	<p>Q: I have tiny toy breeds—can I still have them implanted? A: Absolutely. The same size microchip and needle is used in pets even smaller than puppies and toy breeds, including mice, baby birds and even fish.</p>
<p>Q: At what age can I microchip my pet? A: Young pets can be microchipped as early as 6 to 8 weeks of age. Some clients prefer to wait until their pet is spayed or neutered.</p>	<p>Q: How do I update my information if it changes? A: After your pet is microchipped, you will be given information about how to contact the national registry to update your information. Remember to do this whenever you change your address or telephone number.</p>
<p>Q: How long does the microchip last? A: The microchip has no power supply, battery, or moving parts, and is designed to last the life of the pet. Once injected, the microchip is anchored in place as a thin layer of connective tissue forms around it. It requires no care and will not pass through or out of the body.</p>	<p>Q: Do shelters scan animals for microchips? A: Yes, scanning pets for microchips has become standard practice in animal shelters. Some municipalities, such as Los Angeles County in California, are even requiring pets to be microchipped, so local governments can cooperate with shelters and reunite pets and owners.</p>
<p>Q: Does implanting the chip hurt my pet? A: The microchip is a larger needle than a normal vaccine so it is a bigger pinch. That is why we always recommend microchipping when they are under anesthesia for a routine surgery (Spay, neuter, dental cleaning, etc.). The microchip contains nothing that will burn or irritate the tissue; it's completely biocompatible.</p>	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center;">  <div style="margin-left: 20px;"> <p>Source: Los Angeles County Dept of Animal Care and Control</p> </div> </div>

How to Clean Your Cats' Ears

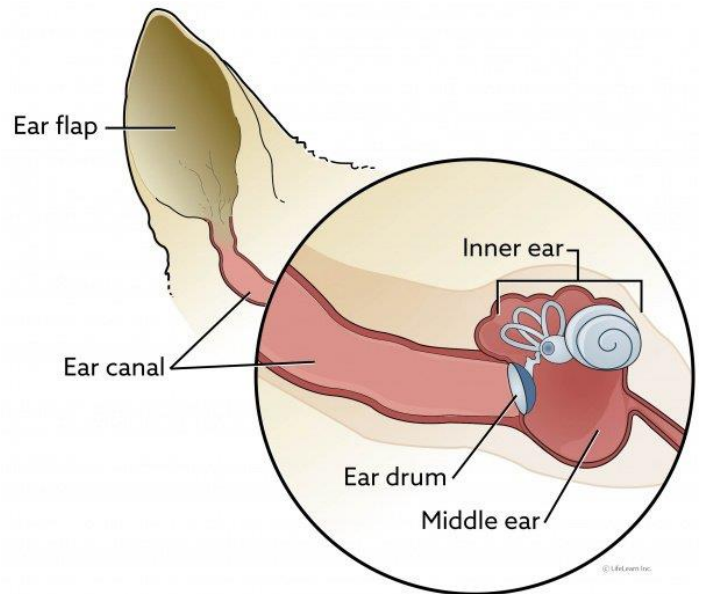
Ear cleaning is not usually necessary in cats. Most cats are fine without it, but for those who are prone to wax build-up and/or ear infections, ear cleaning is a very important part of your cat's hygiene needs.

Why is it important?

The structure of the cat's ear canal makes it very difficult for material trapped deep within the horizontal canal to be expelled without the assistance of cleanings. This material can lead to itchiness and ear infections if not removed.

Do I need to use an ear cleaner?

It is highly recommended to use a good quality ear cleaner. Cleaners with hydrogen peroxide or alcohol can cause irritation within the ear canal, especially if the canal is inflamed or ulcerated. Some ear cleaners have antibacterial or antifungal ingredients to help prevent ear infections. Certain cleaners are better at removing wax build-up. Your veterinarian can help you decide which ear cleaning solution is best for your pet.



What do I need to clean my cat's ears?

Cleaning your cat's ears does not require any special equipment. A good quality ear cleaning solution, some cotton balls or gauze, and some treats to reward your cat are all that is needed.

DO NOT use cotton tip applicators (Q-tips) due to the risk of perforating the ear drum or causing trauma to the ear canal. In addition, the use of cotton tip applicators can push debris further into the canal.

Do all cats need to have their ears cleaned?

No. While it is important to clean your cat's ears when needed, over-cleaning may cause irritation in the ear canal and this can lead to infection. Most cats have healthy, clean ears and never need to have their ears cleaned.

However, it is recommended to clean your cat's ears if you notice discharge or an odor when examining the ear. Your veterinarian can help you decide how often your cat's ears should be cleaned.

If your cat's ears are red, inflamed, and painful, consult with your veterinarian prior to cleaning. Your cat may have an ear infection or a ruptured ear drum.

Step-by-Step Guide for Ear Cleaning

1. Sitting in a comfortable position, hold your cat in your lap. Wrapping or swaddling your cat in a towel may help keep them calm if they are resistant to having their ears cleaned.

2. Grasp the tip of the ear flap (pinna) pulling back slightly to expose the ear canal and to help straighten the ear canal out.
3. While holding your cat's ear flap, gently but firmly with one hand, hold the ear cleaning solution in your other hand.

4. Squeeze some ear cleaning solution into your cat's ear. Use enough cleaner to completely fill the ear canal. It is fine if some of the cleaner spills out of the canal. If the tip of the bottle touches your cat's ear, wipe the tip of the bottle off with a clean cotton ball soaked in alcohol to prevent the spread of bacteria or yeast between each ear cleaning.



5. Continue to hold the ear flap with one hand and gently massage the base of the ear below the ear opening for about 30 seconds with the other hand. This allows the cleaning solution to break up the debris that is in the ear canal. You should hear a 'squishing' sound as the cleaning solution moves around in the horizontal part of the canal.

6. While still holding the ear flap, wipe away debris from the inner part of the ear flap and the upper ear canal using a cotton ball or gauze.

7. Allow your cat to shake her head. This allows the remaining ear cleaning solution and debris from the ear canal to move out of the canal to the outer opening of the ear.

8. Once again, hold the ear flap, and remove the loosened debris and cleaning solution from the outer opening of the ear canal using a cotton ball or gauze.



9. Remove any debris and remaining cleaning solution from the ear canal with a cotton ball or gauze – only go into the canal as far as your finger will reach.

10. **NEVER** use a cotton-tipped applicator (Q-tip) to remove the solution from the ear canal. Doing so can damage the ear canal and/or ear drum or push debris further into the canal.

11. Provide treats to your cat.

12. Repeat the same process with the other ear.

13. If your cat appears to be in pain during the cleaning process, stop and consult your veterinarian.

14. Repeat the cleaning procedure as often as is recommended by your veterinarian.

If your cat has an ear infection and requires medication to be applied to the ears, clean the ears first and then apply the medication.

Step-by-Step Guide for Medication Application

1. Medication can be applied immediately after cleaning your cat's ears. Your veterinarian will provide further information about how often the medication is to be applied and how many drops are needed.
2. Grasp the tip of the ear flap pulling back slightly to expose the ear canal and help straighten the ear canal out.
3. Administer the number of drops of medication that your veterinarian has prescribed.
4. **DO NOT** put the tip of the bottle into the ear. If the tip of the bottle touches your cat's ear, wipe the tip off with a clean cotton ball soaked in alcohol to prevent the spread of bacteria or yeast.
5. Continue to hold the ear flap, and gently massage the base of the ear below the ear opening for about 30 seconds. This allows the medication to coat the entire ear canal. You should again hear a 'squishing' sound in the ear as the medication coats the horizontal part of the canal.
6. If the inner part of the ear flap is involved with the infection, place the prescribed amount of medication on the infected part of the ear flap. Spread the medication around with your finger (preferably covered with a glove).
7. Repeat this process with the other ear, as needed.
8. If debris or medication accumulates on the flap part of the ear, it can be wiped away with a cotton ball soaked in ear cleaning solution.



Source: <https://vcahospitals.com/know-your-pet/instructions-for-ear-cleaning-in-cats>

Dental Care



The importance of routine dental care cannot be stressed enough. Proper dental care actually helps prevent many health problems as your pet ages. Our wellness exams include an examination of the mouth.

Preventative Care:

When early tartar buildup is diagnosed, we can offer some preventive care. This might include one or more of the following:

1. Toothbrush/toothpaste kits or dental wipes
2. Oral rinse to slow tartar buildup, for example, Healthy Mouth.
3. A liquid added to drinking water and has an enzymatic action to slow tartar buildup.
4. A dental diet designed to prevent tartar buildup.
5. Other products that help keep the teeth clean. Check VOHC.org for products endorsed by veterinary dentists.

Dental Cleanings:

Once tartar has noticeably accumulated on the surface of the teeth, the next step is a professional dental cleaning. Even the most obedient pets won't lie back and keep their mouths open, so this procedure needs to be done under general anesthesia. This means your pet will get to spend the day with us and go home late that afternoon with sweet-smelling breath and clean, healthy teeth and gums.

Delaying or abstaining from dental cleanings can have drastic implications on your pet's overall health. As tartar builds up, abscesses may form along the gum line causing infections. Left unattended, the infection can enter the blood stream, leading to health problems (heart & kidney disease) and potentially prove fatal.

Please purchase a toothbrush kit and our technician will gladly show you how to properly brush your pet's teeth.

Source: The Veterinary Hospital in Eugene, Ore.

Brushing Your Cat's Teeth

Why should I brush my cat's teeth?

More than half of all cats over the age of three have **periodontal disease** (infection of the tissues surrounding the teeth). Periodontal disease starts as **gingivitis**, resulting from **plaque** coming into contact with the **gingiva** (gums). If not removed through regular brushing, plaque thickens and mineralizes resulting in **tartar**. Left untreated, gingivitis may progress to destructive periodontal disease which may be painful and ultimately lead to tooth loss.

When should I brush my cat's teeth?

Like us, cats need daily dental care to help decrease plaque and prevent tartar accumulation. Teaching your cat to accept the brushing of their teeth will take some training, but it will be relatively easy once they become accustomed to the process. Daily brushing is most beneficial and will help to establish a routine. Brushing a minimum of 3 times a week is helpful if your schedule cannot accommodate daily brushing.

"It is best to teach your cat to accept brushing while they are still a kitten."

It is best to teach your cat to accept brushing while they are still a kitten. If you have an older cat, the process may take a little longer, but it is still worth the effort.

What steps do I need to follow to teach my cat to accept tooth brushing?

In order to be successful brushing your cat's teeth, it is important to make it a positive experience for both of you. For the best results, follow these steps:

- Choose a quiet time and place to begin. Select a small room where you can place your cat on a surface such as a counter or tabletop (on a blanket or towel) or sit with them in your lap. Ensure the location is one where you can close the door to seal off escape avenues.
- Dip a cotton swab (Q-tip) into tuna water drained from a can of tuna fish. The tuna water does not have any beneficial dental or cleaning effects, but most cats like the taste of it which will provide a positive connection between the tuna juice and the tooth brushing experience.
- Place your cat's head at a 45-degree angle and gently pull back her lips, the mouth can remain closed.
- Gently rub the applicator tip along the area where the gum tissue touches the tooth surface (the gingival margin). This is the region where plaque accumulates and gingivitis is initiated. Only the outside surfaces of the teeth need to be rubbed.



- For the first few lessons, it is a good idea to rub the cotton swab along only a few teeth rather than the whole mouth, especially if your cat is unsure or nervous about the process.
- Once your cat is completely used to you rubbing their teeth with a cotton swab, it's time to start using a toothbrush.



What type of toothbrush should I use?

Commercial toothbrushes are available that are specifically designed for use in cats. These include:

- brushes with angled handles,
- small brushes that fit comfortably in your hand, and
- finger toothbrushes (designed to fit over the tip of your finger).

For some cats, it is acceptable to use a very soft toothbrush designed for use in human babies. The toothbrush should be very soft. You can also use a finger toothbrush, gauze wrapped around a finger, or continue using a cotton swab.



Check with your veterinarian if you are uncertain of which brush to use. Ultimately, it is preferable to use a brush where the bristles can reach just below the gum line at the tooth/gum interface.

Regardless of the type of toothbrush you use, it is important to be gentle and go slowly as it is easy to accidentally poke the tip of the toothbrush against the gums and cause some irritation.

Is it okay to use human toothpaste?

No. Human toothpastes contain ingredients that should not be swallowed. If it is swallowed, it can cause an upset stomach or digestive disturbances. Some human toothpastes contain high levels of sodium which may even make your pet ill.

My friend recommended that I use baking soda. Is this okay?

No. Baking soda has a high alkaline content and, if swallowed, it can upset the acid balance in the stomach and digestive tract. In addition, baking soda does not taste good which may cause your cat to be uncooperative when you try to brush their teeth.

Why is pet toothpaste recommended?

Pet toothpaste is available in a number of different flavors that are appetizing to cats. By using a product that tastes good, your cat will be more likely to enjoy the whole experience.

Exactly how should I brush my cat's teeth?

Following the procedure described above to get your cat used to have her teeth brushed follow these steps for a successful teeth brushing session.

- Apply a small amount of toothpaste to the toothbrush. Place your cat's head at a 45 degree angle and gently pull back her lips, the mouth can remain closed.
- At first, concentrate on brushing the large cheek teeth and the canine teeth, the teeth where plaque and tartar accumulate most quickly.
- Do not worry about brushing the tips or insides of the teeth unless your cat is very cooperative. Most periodontal damage occurs on the outer surfaces of the teeth and around the roots and this is where you should direct your efforts. The cat's abrasive tongue tends to remove plaque from the inner surfaces of the teeth, reducing the need for brushing these surfaces.
- Gradually work up to brushing all of the teeth (this will probably take several days or weeks). Make sure you reach the big teeth at the back of the mouth.



How much time should I spend brushing my cat's teeth?

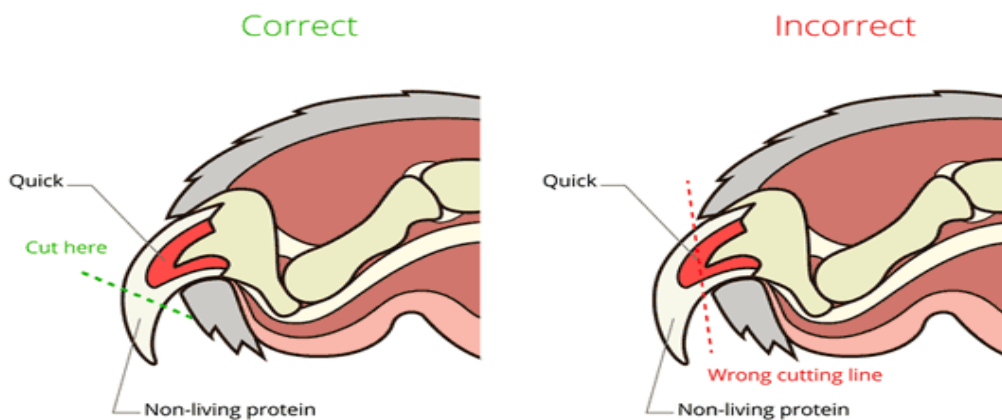
Try to brush for approximately 30 seconds per side.

Is there anything else I should know?

Yes. A cat's mouth contains lots of bacteria, if possible, wear gloves while brushing your cat's teeth. If this limits your ability to effectively brush her teeth, then be sure to thoroughly wash your hands with soap and water after you are finished. Also, rinse the toothbrush thoroughly before putting it away. Replace the toothbrush every three months, and if you have several cats, use a different toothbrush for each one.

Trimming Your Cat's Nails

1. Cats have retractile claws so you need to gently squeeze the toe between thumb and forefinger to expose the claw.
2. Most cats have light colored claws, making it easy to see the blood vessels and nerves that supply the claw as a pink stripe at the base of the nail, which is called a quick. You want to cut the claw to within approximately 2 millimeters of the quick.



3. Cut the nail at the angle shown in the picture.
4. We recommend that owners start this at any early age. Trimming the nails and playing with the paws early on can prevent problems when the kitten is full grown.

Note: If your cat is indoor/outdoor it is highly recommended that you **DO NOT** cut their nails. They need those for protection!

Here are some nice [nail clippers](#) & some [“Kwik Stop”](#) (in case you get a nail too short) from [Chewy.com](#)!

Please feel free to call us if you would like a free demonstration on how to properly trim your cat's nails.

Alternatives to declaws

- 1.) [Soft Claws](#) or [Purdy Paws](#) nail caps (Check for them on [Chewy.com](#) and [Amazon.com](#), too!)



- 2.) Provide a good [scratching post](#)

- **Height.** The post needs to be tall enough for your cat to stretch and extend in order to get a full and satisfying scratch. The picture to the right shows a good example of a cat getting a "full and satisfying" stretch.
- **Stability.** The post must be stable. If it wobbles, your cat won't like it, and if it topples over your cat won't want to go near it again. Watch a cat scratch — they hunker down and scratch and pull with such vigor that they need a stable surface to suit their scratching needs.
- **Material.** The best material for cat scratching posts is sisal fabric. Not sisal rope, but sisal fabric. This woven material provides great texture for shredding — which cats love to do when scratching, and it feels good on their paws. When a cat scratches the sisal material, they can drag their claws down this satisfying material over and over in a continuous motion. In contrast, sisal rope creates an interrupted scratch — scratch, bump, scratch, bump, scratch, bump. Not very satisfying.



- 3.) Double-sided tape, such as [Pioneer Pet Sticky Paws on a Roll Cat Deterrent](#) is sticky on both sides. Simply apply it to the objects you would prefer your cat not to scratch on, and their natural aversion to stickiness will put an end to the offending behavior. The tape works as an aversion tool, but you still need to provide a place for kitty to scratch — such as a scratching post.



- 4.) [Feliway](#) is a synthetic analogue of the feline facial pheromone — sounds confusing, but it is really quite simple. Have you seen cats rubbing their cheeks on objects? What they are doing is depositing some of this facial pheromone on the object and marking it as theirs. This feline facial pheromone can also be thought of as a feel good pheromone. Meaning cats sense this pheromone and it has a calming effect.

Cats are territorial by nature, and like to delineate their territorial boundaries. Scratching is one of the ways cats mark their territory. Not only does scratching provide a visual marking of the territory (the shredded material) but also, cats have scent glands on the bottom of their paw pads which deposit a scent discernible only by other cats. Spraying Feliway on objects you do not want your cat to scratch effectively deposits this feel good pheromone so your cat doesn't feel the need to scratch the object. You will still need to provide a scratching post so there is a place for your cat to scratch. Feliway also has [Feliway Feliscratch Scratching Attractant](#), a product specifically made to help redirect your cats scratching.



- 5.) [Sentry HC Good Behavior Pheromone Cat Calming Collar](#) has the same pheromone technology as Feliway, listed above.



Poison Proof Your Home

Living Room

- Check out all plants-both inside and outside your home. Lilies (*Lilium and Hemerocallis sp.*) can be especially poisonous to cats, so eliminate them from bouquets.
- Keep home fragrance products out of reach. This includes open dishes of liquid potpourri and simmer pots.
- Don't spray aerosols or any heavily fragranced products around caged birds or other cages or crated pets.
- Keep ashtrays and nicotine replacement products out of reach.
- Marijuana-Be very careful of exposure to legal recreational products like marijuana. Pets may be much more sensitive to these products, so toxication is common.

Kitchen

- Know what foods are poisonous to pets. Watch out for sugar-free chewing gum with Xylitol, raisins, grapes, macadamia nuts, onions, garlic, tomatoes, unbaked yeast bread dough, fatty foods (especially cheese) and chocolate. Avocado's are very toxic to birds.
- Keep garbage cans behind closed doors. Trash and compost bins can contain many pet toxins, such as cigarette butts, coffee grounds, moldy dairy products, and chicken bones.
- Keep alcoholic beverages out of reach.
- Cooking with nonstick Teflon pans: fumes can kill birds and be toxic to other pets.

Bathroom

- Keep medications safely locked up in secure cupboards-don't leave them on countertops or tables or stored in plastic zipper baggies, which are easily chewed through. This includes inhalers, dietary aides and nutraceuticals. Acetaminophen (Tylenol) and Ibuprofen are toxic to pets. Aspirin can cause clotting problems in dogs and have fatal consequences in cats.
- Never medicate your pets with human products without first contacting your veterinarian.
- Always check the container before giving medication to your pet to make sure it's the correct medications, and store your own medications separate from your pets.
- Keep cats away from cleaning products. Shut them out of the room/area while spraying cleansers or other products.
- Close toilet lids to keep pets from drinking the water, especially if you use automatic chemical tank or bowl treatments.

Utility Room

- Keep rodenticides FAR AWAY FROM PETS. Keep in mind that rodents can transfer the toxins to accessible locations. Certain rodenticide products DO NOT have treatment antidotes. Always check warning labels and possible toxicity to pets.
- Never use dog flea and tick products on cats.
- Don't leave batteries lying around. Dogs enjoy chewing them, and they can cause serious harm if ingested.
- Keep glues out of reach-they can be tasty but some may cause serious harm. In fact, some glues expand greatly in the stomach leading to bowel obstructions.

Garage

- Ethylene glycol (antifreeze) products are extremely toxic to pets. Choose propylene glycol products as a safer alternative or keep pets FAR AWAY. Gasoline and motor oil are toxic as well.
- Keep all automotive products-like windshield cleaner fluid-away from pets and clean any spills immediately.

Outside

- Dogs like certain fertilizers such as bone meal or blood meal. Keep bags tightly sealed.
- Slug or snail killers-especially those that include metaldehyde-can be harmful to pets.
- Yard insecticides that contain organophosphates or carbonates can be very dangerous.
- Keep pets off lawns until commercially sprayed herbicides are dry.
- Ant bait/rat bait can be quickly fatal.
- Wild mushrooms that grow in our yards can be toxic.

ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center (888) 426-4435 (\$85 per call) – Free if your pets microchip is registered with Home Again (homeagain.com)



What To Do If Your Pet Gets Poisoned



Your pet has ingested something toxic. *What do you do?* First, take a deep breath. The more calm, cool, and collected you are, the sooner you can seek the correct medical attention. Then get a handle on the situation by taking the following steps:

1. Remove your pet from the area. Make sure no other pets or children are exposed to the area, and safely remove any poisonous material.
2. Check to make sure your pet is breathing normally and acting fine otherwise.
3. Collect a sample of the material, along with the packaging, vial, or container. You'll need that information to help your veterinarian or a pet poison expert assess situation.
4. Don't give your dog any milk, food, salt, oil, or any other home remedies. Doing so will likely complicate the poisoning.
5. Never induce vomiting without talking to your veterinarian or a pet poison expert-doing so may be detrimental or contraindicated.
6. Get Help. Program your veterinarian's phone number into your phone, as well as the emergency veterinarian's number and a pet poison helpline number.

Remember that a pet's prognosis is always better when a toxicity is reported immediately, so don't wait to see if your pet becomes symptomatic before calling for help. Calling right away is safer for your pet and could help you save on treatment costs in the long run. Remember that there's a narrow window of time to decontaminate in cases of poisoning.

Important to numbers to have:

Summit Veterinary Referral Center

(253)983-1114 (Open 24 hours a day)

Blue Pearl Tacoma

(253)474-0791 (Open 24 hours a day)

[ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center](#)

(888)426-4435 (Available 24/7, \$85 per call)

Free if your pets' microchip is registered with Home Again ([homeagain.com](#))

Litter Box Care and Maintenance

Urinating and defecating outside of the litter box, also known as “inappropriate elimination,” is a very common problem and a frequent reason for cats to be relinquished to a shelter. In most cases, this is due to the pet parent not maintaining the litter box in the same way they flush their own toilets. Due to cats’ instinctive desire to be clean, it’s understandable that a litter box not up to their preferences would be unattractive to them.

Top reasons for a cat to stop using the litter box:

- Dirty litter box(es)
- Poor choice of litter
- Poor location of litter box(es)
- Box size is too small
- Too few boxes
- Blocked from the box by a dominant feline housemate
- Unable to relax and get to the box, or use it, due to stressors in the house environment
- Medical problem(s) - **This should always be a serious consideration.**

These are things that you should do for your feline family members’ litter box:

- Scoop the litter box twice daily - at a minimum (2-3 item rule).
 - The ‘2-3 item’ rule means that the litter box is considered dirty by cats when there are 2 or 3 “items” in it, and it should be scooped. If your work schedule does not allow this, then you should add more litter boxes.
- Use clumping litter – for cats 8 weeks of age or older.
 - The purpose of clumping litter is to be able to remove the urine clumps and feces intact and completely. Therefore the litter needs to be **deep** enough so that you can get the scooper **under** the waste so that it does not stick to the bottom of the litter box.
 - Clumping litter comes in several forms such as clay, corn, wheat, and pine. There are pros and cons to all of them, but cats’ first choice is basic **clumping clay** litter. It is the closest to sand, which is most preferred by cats.
 - Examples of recommended clumping clay litters (in no particular order):
 - [Dr Elsey’s Precious Cat Ultra Unscented Clumping Clay](#)
 - [Premium Choice Carefree Kitty unscented Solid Scoop](#)
 - The loose litter in the big bin at Petco. For the Petco brand you need to purchase an original container of the product and then return with that empty container for (cheaper) re-fills.
- Keep the litter deep enough.
 - Litter should be 3 1/2-4 inches deep. Using strong clumping litter and scooping carefully will keep your litter cleaner longer. But because clay absorbs odors, regardless of being in a clump, it is recommended to completely change the litter (and clean the litter box itself) every 30-60 days.
- Use large litter boxes. (See last page for examples)
 - Many commercial litter boxes are too small, and lead to cats having to step in their own waste. This can result in a litter box aversion. The bigger the box, the more inviting it will be to your cat, and

therefore, the more s/he will be willing to use it. Large plastic storage containers can be converted into appropriately sized litter boxes.

- Have enough litter boxes available.
 - The rule of thumb is 1 litter box per cat in the household, plus 1. If you have large litter boxes that are scooped regularly and kept clean, then you can be fine with using fewer litter boxes.
 - Some cats prefer to urinate in one box and defecate in another. However, they don't usually exclusively use one box for urination and one for defecation; they switch off.
 - A common cause of inappropriate elimination stems from a more dominant cat blocking the pathway to the litter box. In this situation it is critical to have enough boxes in 'safe' areas to minimize the potential for problems.
- Have litter boxes placed in a quiet area.
 - The laundry room is often **not** a suitable place due to the noise from the washer and dryer and has led to many litter box aversion cases. An area near the water heater or furnace is also inappropriate.
 - It is best to not place litter boxes near the cat's eating area.
- Replace cat boxes every 6 months to a year. The plastic degrades and cats don't like the smell.

VERY IMPORTANT: If your cat is getting in and out of the litter box and is unable to pass any urine, or is looking like he is distressed and wanting to urinate outside the box, this is a MEDICAL EMERGENCY! A cat with a blockage of the urinary tract can rupture his bladder within 24 hours resulting in death. You may also notice a blocked cat or one with cystitis licking the genital area frequently.

These are things that you should not do regarding litter box care:

- DO NOT use litters that do not clump - except for kittens younger than 7 - 8 weeks of age or following a surgery as directed by your veterinarian.
- DO NOT use scented litters or any deodorizers.
 - Always use **unscented** litters and do not add any deodorizers to the litter or around the litter box. Scented litters often put off cats, because of their extremely keen sense of smell.
 - **There is absolutely NO need for special perfumes or additives if a cat box is maintained correctly. The best way to keep the box odor free is to clean it!**
- DO NOT use hooded litter boxes if your intent is to prevent odors from reaching your nose.
- DO NOT use plastic liners, which can bother the cat when they get their claws stuck in them. If you maintain a clean box, they are unnecessary.
- DO NOT use plastic 'grass' mats.
- DO NOT punish your cat for not using the litter box.
- DO NOT put a child in charge of litter box maintenance.

Conclusion

It is much easier to **prevent** an inappropriate elimination problem with low carbohydrate canned or homemade diet and sound litter box practices than it is to fix it once it starts. Not all of the issues that cause cats to stop using the litter box are within our control, but there are many steps you can take to make their litter box clean and appealing.

Information from: Adele Hustis, www.CatInfo.org, and The Indoor Pet Initiative from tOSU

Thinking outside the (cat) box!

Examples of storage bins that can be converted into litter boxes:

Sterilite 120 Qt./30 gallon storage bin. (see picture below)

Dimensions: 30.5”L x 20.25”W x 16.6”H

Search [Target.com for “Sterilite 30 gallon”](#) for more product information

Sterilite 72 Qt./18 gallon storage bin (for if space is an issue)

Dimensions: 23.6”L x 18.4”W x 14.8”H

Search [Target.com for “Sterilite 18 gallon”](#) for more product information



Above is Alice’s litter box and litter mat for her cat Jack.

Possible tools to use to cut the bin:

Box cutter (Recommended)

Hand saw



*****BE VERY CAREFUL WHEN CUTTING STORAGE BINS*****

- ✓ The plastic can crack if you are too fast or forceful!
- ✓ The lip around the top is the hardest part to cut through.
- ✓ Trace your opening before you begin cutting.
- ✓ Make opening at least 6-8 in. from the bottom to allow appropriate litter depth.
- ✓ Smooth the cut plastic edges with sand paper, a file or a quick pass of a lighter.

Seasonal Safety Tips

1. **Cover the basics.** Secure an up-to-date tag on your pet's collar and make sure to use a leash or a pet crate when headed outdoors. It is important to have your pet microchipped. Be sure that your information is current with the National Registry.
2. **Molten lava cars.** Taking your pet for a ride? Never leave them inside the car, windows up or down, on hot days.
3. **Too hot to handle.** Know the symptoms of overheating in pets, which include excessive panting or difficulty breathing, increased heart and respiratory rate, drooling, mild weakness, stupor or even collapse. Symptoms can also include seizures, bloody diarrhea and vomit along with an elevated body temperature of over 104 degrees.
4. **The more susceptible.** Animals with flat faces, like Persian cats, are more susceptible to heat stroke since they cannot pant as effectively. These pets, along with the elderly, the overweight, and those with heart or lung diseases, should be kept cool in air-conditioned rooms as much as possible.
5. **Hidden away.** During the colder months, always make sure to slam your car door and honk your horn before starting your car. Stray/outdoor cats often seek warmth underneath car hoods.
6. **Protect against parasites.** Fleas, ticks, mosquitoes, ear mites (outdoor cats) and more are everywhere in the summer. Consult with your veterinarian on the best preventatives.
7. **When the temperature falls.** Keep cats indoors. Safe outdoor temps vary for pets by size and breed. Provide adequate shelter if your pet must be outside.



Source: <https://www.asPCA.org/pet-care/general-pet-care/hot-weather-safety-tips>

Pets in Vehicles



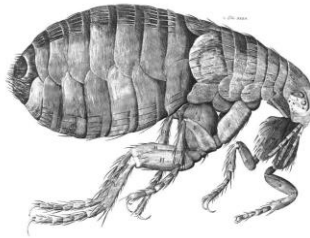
Every year, hundreds of pets die from heat exhaustion because they are left in parked vehicles. We've heard the excuses: "Oh, it will just be a few minutes while I go into the store," or "But I cracked the windows..." These excuses don't amount to much if your pet becomes seriously ill or dies from being left in a vehicle.

The temperature inside your vehicle can rise almost 20° F in just 10 minutes. In 20 minutes, it can rise almost 30° F...and the longer you wait, the higher it goes. At 60 minutes, the temperature in your vehicle can be more than 40 degrees higher than the outside temperature. Even on a 70-degree day, that's 110 degrees inside your vehicle!

Estimated Vehicle Interior Air Temperature v. Elapsed Time						
Elapsed time	Outside Air Temperature (F)					
	70	75	80	85	90	95
0 minutes	70	75	80	85	90	95
10 minutes	89	94	99	104	109	114
20 minutes	99	104	109	114	119	124
30 minutes	104	109	114	119	124	129
40 minutes	108	113	118	123	128	133
50 minutes	111	116	121	126	131	136
60 minutes	113	118	123	128	133	138
> 1 hour	115	120	125	130	135	140

Courtesy Jan Null, CCM; Department of Geosciences, San Francisco State University

Please leave your pets at home...they'll be safe and happily waiting for you to come home.



Flea Management:

1. Clean your environment. Treat carpets with an anti-flea product that penetrates deep down into the carpet fibers where the flea eggs are. Remove any filter from the vacuum cleaner prior to vacuuming as it can collect flea eggs which can hatch from vibrations the next time you use your vacuum cleaner then vacuum carpets very well. Be sure to wipe out or wash the canister because flea eggs are sticky! Put an over the counter flea collar in vacuum canister/ bag to kill any flea eggs that can remain inside. Empty out vacuum canister into outside trash or throw away vacuum bag outside immediately after vacuuming because flea eggs will hatch out of vacuum and re-infest home. Borax can be used in the washing machine with bedding or blankets.
2. We recommend topical or oral flea prevention medication once monthly, year round even if pet is strictly indoors. It doesn't get cold enough in this area to kill the fleas in the grass. If your pet is current on a flea prevention be sure that you are applying the topical correctly or giving the entire oral medication and that it is the correct weight range for your pet. If everything is correct try a new/different flea prevention, whether that be brand or type of administration. ****Never use topical dog flea treatment on a cat because it can kill them. Never use a larger dose and split it between pets (Ex. Using a 10-24lb chew for two 5lb dogs). We do not recommend using Hartz or Sergeant's brand topical flea prevention because we have seen strong negative skin reactions and because of its inefficacy, we do not recommend flea collars because they only treat for fleas locally around the neck and can cause irritation to the skin.****
3. If fleas persist, we recommend Capstar (oral flea medication), used once in conjunction with the above treatments. This product can be purchased at PetSmart. It will kill all fleas on pet but will only last 24 hours.

4. If fleas persist further, call in an exterminator to have your home and yard treated. Flea Busters is the only company that guarantees your home will be flea free for 1 year. For more information call **800-998-3532** or go to fleabusters.com

5. To check if your pet has fleas at home use a metal toothed flea/lice comb (plastic combs teeth can break and cause abrasions on the skin) and comb from the mid back down to the tail holding a piece of paper at the tail to catch any debris that may be combed out. Place any debris found onto a counter and use a wet paper towel to wipe it up. Wait 1-5 minutes and if debris begins to bleed or appear blood red, that is evidence of fleas. A fleas' diet consists of blood, so their feces is digested blood. When dehydrated blood is rehydrated, it bleeds. If the debris does not bleed then it is either dirt or dander.

Groomers



1. [University Place Best Pet Grooming](#)

Ask for Nicole!

(253)566-9286

6720 Regents Blvd W #111

University Place, WA 98466

2. [Bubbles & Bows Pet Grooming](#)

Ask for Stacey!

(253)471-7573

2405 N Pearl St Tacoma, WA 98407

3. [Tacoma Dog and Cat Grooming](#)

(253) 222-7503

8645 Pacific Ave Tacoma, WA 98444

4. [Aussie Pet Mobile South Sound](#)

(253) 292-0331

Mobile

5. [Tacoma's Best Pet Grooming](#)

(253) 756-7385

3411 6th Ave Tacoma, WA 98406



Cat Boarding



Tacoma Cat Hospital

1035 Regents Blvd, Fircrest, WA 98466

(253) 473-2287

tacomacat.com

Gillshire Kennels

2519 128th St E, Tacoma, WA 98445

(253) 531-5589

gillshirekennels.com



Canyon Pet Lodge

14720 58th Ave E Puyallup, WA 98375

(253) 531-2422

Canyonpetlodge.com

City Pet Care

P.O. Box 6884 Tacoma, WA 98417

(253) 431-3915

Citypetcaretacoma.com



CITY PET CARE

Dog Walking and Pet Sitting

Pet Insurance:

Here at FVH, there is not one insurance plan we recommend over the other. We suggest that owners do their own research. Here are two websites that may help:

Petinsurancereview.com

Pet-insurance-university.com

