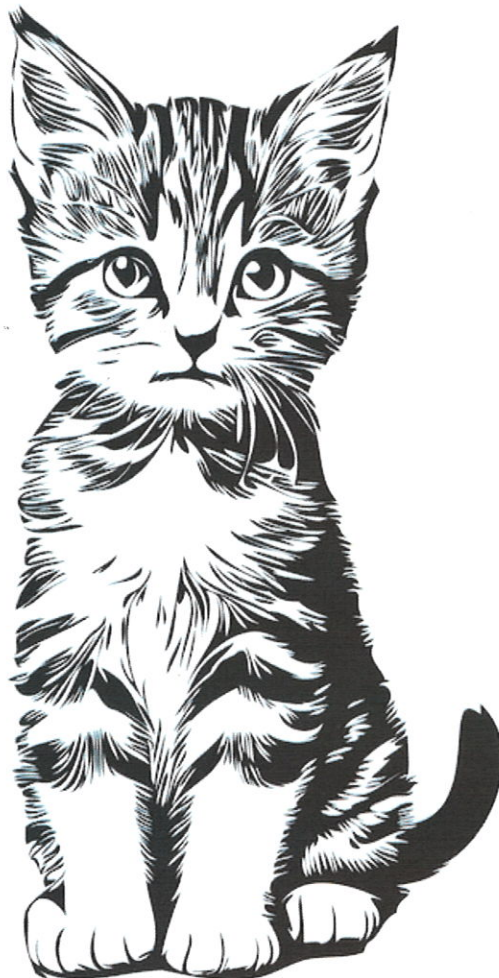




Kitten Kit





Lake Minnetonka Pet Wellness Center

Wayzata

Phone: 952 471-0911 www.tonka.vet

Westonka Animal Hospital & Laser Surgery Center

Mound

Phone: 952 472-4900 www.westonka.vet

Vaccine Schedule for Kittens

This is just a guideline; each patient's vaccine and deworming schedule will be specific to their needs

6-7 week visit:

(note: we recommend that pets are adopted at 8-9 weeks of age)

- Wellness exam with doctor
- Feline Distemper combination (Panleukopenia/Rhinotracheitis/Calicivirus)
- Intestinal Parasite exam
- Nematode Deworming (1 of 2)



Active Outdoor

- Feline Leukemia/FIV test
- Feline Leukemia vaccine after test has been performed-for at risk cats

8-11 week visit: (any procedure not done previously)

- Feline Distemper combination started or boosted
- Nematode Deworming (2 of 2)



Active Outdoor

- Heartworm Prevention (start at 8 wks of age, monthly Mar-Nov. for at risk cats)
- Feline Leukemia vaccine started or booster, good for 1 year
- Flea/Tick Prevention (apply monthly Mar-Nov.)

12-15 week visit: (any procedure not done previously)

- Feline Distemper booster - 12 weeks of age is when they start building their own immunity.

16 week+ visit: (any procedure not done previously)

- Feline Distemper booster
- Rabies vaccine, 1 year

NOTES:

- ❖ A minimum of 2 Distemper combination vaccines are recommended on/after 12 weeks of age.
- ❖ A minimum of 2 Nematode Dewormings are recommended for kittens 6 weeks of age and older.
- ❖ After their schedule is completed these vaccines will then be good for 1 year.
- ❖ We recommend 2 wellness exams with a doctor. One at the first visit then the second after 20 weeks of age or at the time of spay/neuter.
- ❖ This is a wellness schedule; if your pet becomes ill/injured there will be an ill/injured exam with possible additional diagnostics necessary.



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"Where Smart Pets Bring Their People"
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AGGRESSION (CATS) – DIAGNOSING AND TREATING

Aggression is a serious and dangerous behavior problem for cat owners. There are many different types of aggression. Making a diagnosis, determining the prognosis (the chances of safe and effective correction) and developing an appropriate treatment plan are usually best handled by a veterinary behaviorist. In some cases medical conditions can contribute to aggression. Before a behavior consultation your cat must have a thorough physical examination and blood tests to rule out organ dysfunction. To treat aggression, it is necessary to determine which type of aggression your cat displays; fear, territorial, parental, play, redirected, predatory, petting-induced, pain-induced, social status, medical or learned. Also determine in what circumstances the pet is aggressive and whether the aggression is toward family members, strangers,



other pets in the household, or strange pets. Keeping a diary can be particularly useful. More than one form of aggression may be exhibited. Behavior modification techniques and/or changes to the pet's environment will be necessary to correct most aggressive problems. Drug therapy can be a useful part of treatment for some forms of aggression.

Fear aggression: what is it and how is it diagnosed?

Fear aggression arises when a cat is exposed to people, other animals, places or stimuli (e.g. noises) that the cat is unfamiliar with, or to situations previously associated with an unpleasant experience. Although many cats may retreat when fearful, those that are on their own territory or are prevented from retreating because they are cornered are more likely to fight. If the stimulus (person or animal) retreats or the pet is harmed or further frightened in any way (e.g. a fight, punishment), the fear is likely to be further aggravated and the fearful behavior is reinforced. In addition people or animals that do not approach in a calm, confident or friendly manner are more likely to be met with a fearful response. Fear aggression toward family members might arise out of punishment or other unpleasant experiences associated with them. Many cases of fear aggression are seen as combinations or complicating factors of other forms of aggression (territorial, maternal, redirected, etc.). Fearful body postures in conjunction with aggression are diagnostic of fear aggression. Behavior therapy perhaps in combination with drug therapy can be used to treat most cases of fear aggression. (See our handout on 'Fear in cats').

Play aggression: what is it and how is it diagnosed?

Play aggression is commonly shown by young cats toward people or other pets in the family. Overly rambunctious play along with grabbing, stalking, pouncing, nipping or biting of people or their clothing are common signs of play aggression. Although it is a normal behavior it can lead to injuries. If handled incorrectly it could lead to more serious forms of aggression as your cat matures. Play aggression in cats is covered in a separate handout.

Territorial aggression: what is it and how can it be treated?

Territorial aggression can be exhibited toward people or other animals (usually other cats) that approach or reside on the pet's property. Territorial aggression can occur towards cats outside of the home, but also towards cats that live in the household. This may be with the addition of another cat, or when resident cats reach social maturity at 1-2 years of age. Since the person or other animal entering the property may also be causing fear or anxiety, territorial aggression often occurs in conjunction with fear aggression. Treatment is covered in a separate handout entitled 'Aggression territorial'.

Predatory behavior: what is it and how can it be treated?

Predation is the instinctive desire to chase and hunt prey. Predatory behaviors include stalking, chasing, attacking, and ingestion of prey animals, but may occasionally be directed at people or other pets. Although the desire to chase can be reduced by using desensitization and counter-conditioning in the presence of the stimuli (see our handout 'Behavior modification desensitization, counter-conditioning and flooding'), this can be dangerous behavior, which is best prevented. If the behavior is directed toward small pets in the home, confining those pets to a room where the cat does not have access is best. If the behavior is directed to animals outside, then keeping the cat indoors is a solution. Predatory behavior toward family members may be a form of play aggression for some cats.



Pain-induced and irritable aggression: what is it and how can it be treated?

Pain-induced aggression is usually elicited by handling or contact that elicits pain or discomfort. However, even if your cat is not exhibiting pain, certain medical conditions (endocrine imbalances, organ disease, etc.) may make the pet more irritable and prone to aggression. Fear and anxiety further compound many of these cases. Once your cat learns that aggression is successful at removing the stimulus, aggression may recur when similar situations arise in the future, whether or not the pain is still present. Treatment requires first that the medical or painful condition be resolved. Next, identify the types of handling and situations that have led to aggression in the past. With desensitization and counter-conditioning (see our handout on 'Behavior modification desensitization, counter-conditioning and flooding'), your cat can slowly and gradually be accustomed to accept and enjoy these situations. Once the cat learns that there is no further discomfort associated with the handling, and that there may be rewards, the problem should resolve.

Maternal aggression: what is it and how can it be treated?

Maternal aggression is directed toward people or other animals that approach the queen with her kittens. With desensitization, counter-conditioning, good control and highly motivating rewards, it may be possible to train your cat to accept handling of the kittens. Once the kittens are weaned, spaying should be considered to prevent recurrence.

Redirected aggression: what is it and how can it be treated?

Aggression that is directed toward a person or pet that did not initially evoke the aggression is classified as redirected. This is likely to occur when the cat is aroused and a person or other pet intervenes or approaches. Cats that are highly aroused must be avoided. Since redirected aggression arises out of other

forms of aggression, it is important to identify and treat the initial cause of aggression (e.g. fear, territorial, other animals outside), or to prevent the problem by avoiding exposure. See our handout 'Redirected aggression'.

Petting induced aggression: what is it and how can it be treated?

Some cats bite while being petted. Some cats are intolerant of all handling, but most cats with petting aggression accept a certain amount of petting but then become highly agitated and attack when they have had enough. This can be difficult to understand since many of these cats seek attention and at the outset seem to enjoy physical contact from the owner. It seems that these cats have a certain threshold for the amount of physical interaction that they can tolerate. Although the aggression may be a specific form that arises from arousal related to petting, fear and social status may also play a role. First, identify and avoid responses that might increase your cat's fear or anxiety (e.g. punishment, uninvited approaches and handling) and make all handling experiences positive. When handling, physical restraint must be avoided as cats that are placed in a position where they feel constrained or unable to escape might become aggressive. The cat that assumes a leadership role in relationship to a family member may bite or attack that person, while avoiding aggression to a person who is more "dominant" in the relationship. (For diagnosis and treatment of social status aggression see below).



In order to resolve petting induced aggression, make sure that the initiation and termination of petting is under your control. In addition, your cat needs to learn that petting is not associated with excessive restraint or anything unpleasant but rather with rewards. Do not approach, confront, or lift your cat, unless it approaches for affection. At this point call the cat onto your lap (perhaps with a command, or bell), and begin light stroking without any physical restraint. After a brief session put the cat on the floor and give a reward such as food, play, or a catnip toy. At each subsequent session, when the cat is ready for affection, call the cat onto your lap, and pat or stroke a little longer before putting the cat down and providing the reward. Be aware that as you approach the limit of your cat's tolerance of petting, anxiety and aggression will recur.

This limit can often be evidenced by a change in the cat's demeanor. Usually the cat will begin to rapidly move the tail back and forth, the pupils may dilate and the ears go back, or the cat may begin to lick or act agitated. Try and stay below this threshold and cease petting before the cat becomes anxious. Although shaping may greatly increase the number and length of petting sessions your cat will accept and enjoy, you will need to learn and accept your cat's limitations.

Social status aggression: what is it and how is it treated?

Information on the social structure and relationship between cats is continually being updated with new research. Cats do maintain social relationships when living in groups leading to the speculation that some form of social structure also exists. Social structures in groups are often maintained with aggressive displays and actions. Some cats may display aggression toward their owners or other cats when displaying assertiveness. This type of aggression is infrequently described in the veterinary literature but is a consideration in those cats that bite or attack their owners or other cats in order to control a situation. Since cats are now known to be a social species, it is not surprising that some cats will assert themselves when challenged by a subordinate cat or family member in the home. Social status aggression in most cases is a complicating factor of other forms of aggression. Assertive displays, soliciting attention through attacks or biting, aggression during petting, attempts to control the environment by blocking access to doorways or refusing to be moved from sleeping areas, stalking family members, and threats or

aggression to owners when walking or passing by the cat, may be displays of social status. A diagnosis of social status aggression is also a strong consideration when the cat attacks family members that have not assumed a position of control and leadership but does not threaten those that have good control.

Attaining leadership over assertive cats must be accomplished without physical force and confrontation, as this would lead to fear and retaliation. Take control of all rewards, and teach the cat that obedient and compliant behavior is the only way to earn them. A few basic training commands using food reward training techniques can go a long way in gaining control over some cats. By teaching a cat that each play session, treat, or piece of food must be earned from its "owners", the cat will learn that the owner is in control of all resources and all that is positive. Conversely, the cat must learn that its demands or attempts to control resources (attention getting behavior, play or food soliciting behavior) must never be rewarded. An observant owner should be able to determine when a cat is ready and desiring food, treats, affection or play. This is usually a cat that looks relaxed, tail up and pupils normal size. Using a command or audible signal such as a bell, the cat can be trained to come to the owner and receive these rewards. Once the cat learns to come or approach on command or signal, the desired behavior (e.g. petting) can then be shaped by gradually making the task more difficult at each training session. (See petting aggression above for details). Demanding, assertive, or any other forms of undesirable behavior should never be physically punished. Inattention or walking out of the room often works best, but if this is not possible an immediate disruption with a can of compressed air, water pistol, or air horn, should quickly deter the behavior without causing fear of the owner. Another way to ensure immediate control without the need for direct contact is to fit your cat with a harness, and attach a long leash when you are at home and supervising.

Learned aggression: what is it and how can it be treated?

Learning is an important component of most types of aggression. Whenever a cat learns that aggression is successful at removing the stimulus, the behavior is further reinforced. Some forms of aggression are inadvertently rewarded by owners who, in an attempt to calm the pet and reduce aggression, actually encourage the behavior with patting or verbal reassurances. Pets that are threatened or punished for aggressive displays may become even more aggressive each time the situation recurs especially if that stops the threatening behavior.

Treatment with flooding is intended to teach the pet that the stimulus is not associated with any harm and that aggression will not successfully remove the stimulus. With desensitization and counter-conditioning, the cat is not only taught that the stimulus is safe, but that it is associated with a reward. (See handout on 'Behavior Modification desensitization, counter-conditioning and flooding').

What are some of the other causes of aggression?

Aggression associated with medical disorders may arise at any age, may have a relatively sudden onset and may not fit any feline species typical behavior. Some medical conditions can, on their own, cause aggression, but in many cases a combination of behavioral factors and medical problems cause the pet to pass a certain threshold at which aggression is displayed. Infectious agents such as rabies, hormonal imbalances such as hyperthyroidism, psychomotor epilepsy, neoplasia, and a variety of genetic and metabolic disorders can cause or predispose a cat to aggression. Painful conditions such as dental disease, or arthritis, and medical conditions causing fever, fatigue or sensory loss might increase the pet's irritability.

In rare circumstances, aggression has no identifiable etiology (idiopathic) and no particular stimuli that initiate the aggressive displays. There may be a genetic propensity to aggression.

High Protein / Low Carbohydrate Cat Foods

Used: - as part of a weight loss program for cats

- as alternative foods to diabetes therapeutic diets when the patient refuses to eat the recommended diets

By Dr. Craig Piepkorn

High Protein / Low Carbohydrate Diets

Cats are obligate or true carnivores, unlike dogs and humans, who are omnivores. Cats have higher metabolic needs for protein in their diets than do omnivores.

There are exceptions, but as a general rule, dry or kibbled cat foods, tend to be higher in carbohydrates and lower in protein. Also, as a general rule, canned cat foods, tend to be higher in protein and lower in carbohydrates when compared to dry foods.

For cats that need to lose weight, we know they feel more satisfied for longer periods, when they are on high protein diets.

"All Cats – All Canned Food – Always"

Dr. Craig is a believer that all cats should eat a canned food all the time. He believes that canned food simulates better what the ancestral cat used to eat (rodents and birds) in that a canned food is approximately 80% water. This water consumption forces a cat to produce a more dilute urine, than if he/she were eating a dry, or kibbled diet (which is about 0% water). A more dilute urine goes a long way in establishing good urinary tract health, because microscopic crystals and precipitates are more likely to simply get urinated out. A more concentrated urine would encourage the crystals and precipitates to come into contact with each other more often, having the coalesce together, forming larger and larger crystals, until eventually they are large enough to be called bladder "stones".

Some canned high protein / low carbohydrates foods that we recommend. The Fancy Feast Diets should be available in most grocery stores. To find a retailer for the Nature's Variety foods, please visit their respective web sites.

Diets listed in red ink, can be eaten by any cat, including diabetic cats, but are the new protein diets that cats with 'Inflammatory Bowel Disease' are limited to.

Canned Fancy Feast Diets: (% carbs, lower the better)

Classic Chicken Feast (7%)	Flaked Fish and Shrimp Feast (0%)
Classic Chopped Grill Feast (5%)	Flaked Salmon and Ocean Whitefish Feast (0%)
Classic Salmon and Shrimp Feast (9%)	Flaked Trout Feast (0%)
Classic Savory Salmon Feast (9%)	Flaked Tuna & Mackerel Feast (0%)
Classic Seafood Feast (9%)	Flaked Tuna Feast (0%)
Classic Tender Beef and Chicken Feast (5%)	Chunky Chicken Feast (9%)
Classic Tender Beef and Liver Feast (7%)	Chunky Turkey Feast (9%)
Classic Tender Beef Feast (9%)	Whiskas Purrfectly Fish 3x w/ Snapper (0%)
Classic Tender Liver and Chicken Feast (7%)	Whiskas Purrfectly Fish 4x w/ Salmon (8%)
Classic Turkey and Giblets Feast (7%)	Whiskas Purrfectly Fish 3x w/ Shrimp (0%)
Flaked Chicken and Tuna Feast (0%)	

Canned Kitten Fancy Feast Diets: (% carbs, lower the better)

Kitten Tender Turkey Feast (0%)
Kitten Tender Ocean Whitefish Feast (5%)

Canned Friskies Diets: (% carbs, lower the better)

Classic Seafood Entrée (6%)
Country Style Dinner (7%)
Fine Cuts with Chicken and Gravy (9%)
Flaked with Tuna in Sauce (9%)
Mariner's Catch (7%)
Mixed Grill (8%)
Poultry Platter (7%)
Senior Savory Salmon Dinner in Sauce (9%)
Senior Savory Beef Dinner in Gravy (9%)
Special Diet Beef and Chicken Entrée (4%)
Special Diet Ocean Whitefish Dinner (3%)

Nature's Variety canned cat foods

www.naturesvariety.com

Instinct Chicken Formula

Instinct Beef Formula

Instinct Lamb Formula (3%)

Instinct Duck Formula

Instinct Rabbit Formula

Instinct Venison Formula



For additional potential diets to feed your diabetic cat there are websites that have many of the foods nutritional analysis present.

<http://binkyspage.tripod.com/CanFoodNew.html>

As you view this web site, the parameters to remember are: high protein % and low carbohydrate % (prefer to be 10% or less carbohydrates). Also, if some fiber is present, that is beneficial.

I prefer to use fish, tuna, salmon-based foods as a treat, to use once or twice per week. The chicken, beef, liver, or turkey based diets that meet or exceed my recommended parameters are

preferred for daily nutritional needs.

To Calculate The Approximate Weight Of The Carbohydrate In A Food

Our goal is to keep the approximate weight of the carbohydrates in a cat's food to be 10% or less. For any canned feline cat food, which gives you the guaranteed analysis, here is how to calculate the value.

To calculate the approximate weight of the carbohydrate in a food, add up the values for moisture, protein, fat, fiber, and ash and subtract this value from 100%. Here is an example from the PetGuard website for their Organic Chicken and Vegetable Entree:

GUARANTEED ANALYSIS:

Crude Protein 9.0% Min

Crude Fat 7.0% Min

Crude Fiber 1.0% Max

Moisture 78.0% Max

Ash 2.3% Max

If we add up the above percentages, and then subtract this value from 100%, we come up with a rough idea of the carbohydrate content of this food: 3%.

But we are not finished yet. The value of 3% needs to be converted to a 'dry matter basis' (DMB) for accuracy. This calculation takes the water component out of the equation and then allows values for canned and dry foods to be comparable.

For the DMB value, we see that there is 78% water in this food. Subtract 100% from 78% and that leaves 22% as dry matter. If we take our 3% and divide it by 22% we come up with 14% carbohydrates (by weight) on a dry matter basis.

Sincerely,

Dr. Craig Piepkorn, DVM



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The Standard of
Veterinary Excellence

Your Pets Are Counting On You To Learn About Laser Surgery



Westonka Animal Hospital/ Lake Minnetonka Pet Wellness Center are some of the first private practices in the country to use a laser surgical unit. This breakthrough technology, which was only available before to research institutions is now available to your pet.

Rather than a scalpel blade, a laser uses a highly focused beam of light about the size of this

period, → . ← to vaporize cells and nerve endings.

Why use laser surgery?

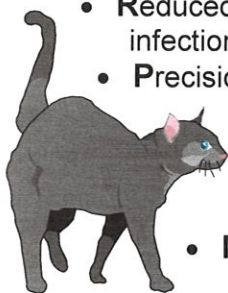
- Less pain – the laser seals nerve endings as it “cuts”, so your pet may require less anesthesia during the operation, reducing the risk of complications. Pain and swelling after surgery is also significantly reduced.
- Less bleeding – The laser seals small blood vessels during surgery, making the routine procedures virtually “bloodless”.
- Less swelling – Laser surgery does not crush, tear, or bruise because there is no physical contact with the tissue.

What does this mean for my pet?

- **Reduced risk of infection** – the laser sterilizes as it removes diseased tissue, killing bacteria that cause infection.
- **Precision** – the laser can remove unhealthy tissue without affecting or removing surrounding healthy tissue. For example, the laser will vaporize any cancer cells and will not potentially allow cancer cells to break off or “seed” adjacent tissue such as might happen with a scalpel blade. Also, it allows the surgeon to remove as little as one skin layer at a time for extreme precision.
- **More Effective Cancer Surgeries** - the laser will vaporize any cancer cells and will not allow cancer cells to break off or “seed” adjacent tissue such as might happen with a scalpel blade. Broken off cancer cells, which may occur with a scalpel blade, may travel through lymphatic ducts to other distant parts of the body while the surgery site is healing. That is why ethically, we feel we must mandate that all cancer surgeries be performed with the laser.
- We do not want the surgery to be the cause for a cancer to spread to other parts of the body.
- **Quick Return to Normal Activities** – Healing is rapid and there is less post-operative discomfort.

Laser procedures reduce the trauma to your pet, improve healing, and may shorten time spent in the veterinary hospital.

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Litter Box Problems

One of the most common complaints that cat owners make is that a cat will not use its litter box properly. Usually it is a problem with the cat urinating outside the box, but occasionally a cat will be defecating outside the box, or a cat may not want to use his litter box at all!

First the cat should be examined by a veterinarian to check for a medical problem, such as a urinary tract infection. Sometimes there are behavior problems, especially in multiple cat households, that can lead to the frustrating scenario of cleaning pee and poop off your carpet! But, there are things that cat owners may do unwittingly that lead to or exacerbate this problem. You don't want to give them a reason not to use the box!

Things you can do to help ensure your cat uses the litter box:

1. Have one more litter box than you have cats. If you have one cat, you should have two litter boxes. If you have three cats, you should have four litter boxes.
2. Do not place all the litter boxes in one area. Put them in different rooms. One cat may dominate one room and not allow the other cats to use the boxes.
3. Don't put food and water bowls close to the litter boxes. Do you want to eat next to your toilet? Cats are very sensitive to smells.
4. Don't place the litter boxes next to the washer and dryer where the "boogeyman" may live, or any other areas where loud sounds may emanate. Hearing a scary noise once may make them reluctant to use that area for months.
5. Do not use liners under the litter. Many cats do not like them.
6. Do not use covers over the box. It keeps odors in, just like a portable toilet (PortaPotty). Think what that smells like; you wouldn't want to use it either!
7. Use a litter without deodorizers or scents. Again, cats are sensitive to odors and don't like scented litter. The majority of cats like a clumping litter, but this is a very individual preference.
8. Clean the litter boxes by scooping them at least once, preferably twice, daily. At least once weekly dump the litter, clean the boxes, and refill with new litter. Do not clean the boxes using any cleanser with a strong odor. Cleaning with just hot water and a mild soap is fine.

If your kitty still doesn't want to use his litter box, talk to your veterinarian about behavior modification, and even behavior drugs, that can be used.

Smorgasbord of Cat Litter

Cats' preferences for the type of litter vary greatly from cat to cat. Some are not picky and will use anything you put in the box. Some are so particular they won't use the box at all if it is the wrong litter. Depth of the litter is also a factor in pleasing your cat.

To determine what your cat likes best, you can perform the smorgasbord test. Get several litter boxes, at least six to eight boxes, and put them side to side. Add a different type and depth of litter to each box. For example, put a clumping litter in one box at a depth of one inch, and in the next litter box at a depth of three inches. Put a plain clay litter in another set of boxes, one at one inch and one at three inches. Choose

another one to three types of litter and repeat. Don't be afraid to experiment with shredded newspaper, towels, dirt, etc.

Let your cat use these boxes over a period of a week. Scoop each box daily so cleanliness is not a factor. Your cat will tell you which type and depth of litter he likes.



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General Neutering and Spaying Information For Pet Owners

When can I have this procedure done?

Both procedures can be performed as early as six weeks of age. Most pets are done close to six months of age though.

Why should I have my pet neutered?

Animal shelters, both public and private, unfortunately are faced with an incredible burden: What to do with the overpopulation of dogs and cats that they cannot find homes for. Estimates across the country indicate that over 10 million animals will be humanely euthanized at shelters each year, due to the sheer fact that there are not enough homes. Having your pet neutered or spayed ensures that you will not be adding to this tremendous burden.



What are some of the health benefits?

Through neutering or spaying, you can help your dog and cat live a happier, healthier, and longer life.

Spaying eliminates the constant crying and nervous pacing that is a sign that a cat is in heat. Spaying also prevents uterine infections (common in pets not spayed and not bred) and uterine and ovarian cancers. Early spaying also prevents breast cancer.

Neutering stops the mating drive in males, reducing the urge to roam, which in turn, reduces the risk of fights, injury, poisoning, accidents, and

contracting diseases. If you have more than one pet in your household, all the pets will get along better if they are neutered. It also prevents testicular cancer and helps to prevent other tumors of the anal area. Neutering also prevents the bladder from herniating through the pelvic canal.

Isn't it true that you only need to "fix" female dogs or cats?

Absolutely not! A male animal can father thousands of offspring in his lifetime. Roaming tomcats fighting other cats are a neighborhood nuisance and are prone to develop infections and abscesses from their fighting. An intact male may also develop the bad habit of marking its territory by urine marking.

Neutering just costs too much!

The cost of caring for a pet, including providing veterinary care, should be considered before acquiring an animal. If you would like to provide a good home for a pet, but cannot pay for the neuter, call your local animal shelter. They will be happy to provide information on low-cost neutering. The costs of having a litter are often more than the cost of neutering. There could be complications requiring hospitalization or surgery. You will be faced with finding homes or keeping the offspring yourself or placing more animals into your local shelter. The cost of the well-being of not just your companion animal but of future generations should be considered.

Can't I allow my purebred dog to have just one litter?

Mixed breed or purebred -- there just aren't enough homes. Animal shelters receive purebred animals everyday. *Responsible purebred breeders have homes for their pets before they are born.*

I don't even own a pet! Why is this my problem?

All of us are affected by animal overpopulation. Millions of tax dollars are spent annually to round up lost, abandoned, and unwanted pets. Much of that money is spent to destroy these animals when homes cannot be found. Health is threatened by the danger of transmittable diseases, including rabies, animal bites, and attacks. Property may be damaged and livestock killed when pets roam in search of food. Animal waste, proving a serious environment hazard, foul yards and parks. It is only when all of us assume the responsibility for pet overpopulation that we will see any decrease in the problem.

Isn't it wrong to deprive an animal of the natural right to reproduce?

No, it's wrong to allow these animals to reproduce millions of unwanted offspring that are eventually killed because there aren't enough responsible homes.

If I find homes for my pets' litters then I won't contribute to the problem, right?

Wrong. Only a certain number of people want pets. So every home you find for your pet's offspring takes away a home from a loving animal already at a shelter.

Shouldn't every female pet have at least one litter before being spayed?

No. In fact, your pet will be healthier if she never sexually matures. Her personality will not improve if she has a litter.

Shouldn't children experience the miracle of birth?

Yes, they can experience this. But to have a pet bred for that reason is irresponsible. There are other venues to have children experience this. A more important lesson to teach your child would be responsible pet ownership and concern for life by explaining why their pet should not have babies.

Doesn't neutering or spaying alter an animal's personality?

No. Personality changes that may result from neutering or spaying are for the better. Not being distracted by the instinctual need to find a mate helps your pet stop roaming and become calmer; though not less protective of their territory.

Won't animal shelters take care of the surplus animals?

No. Shelters do their best to place animals in loving homes, but the number of homeless animals far exceeds the number of available homes. This leaves many loving and healthy animals in our community that must be euthanized as the only humane solution to this tragic dilemma. Only spaying and neutering can end the overpopulation problem.





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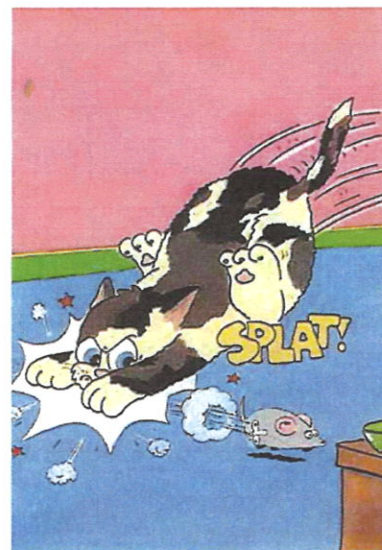
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PLAY AGGRESSION IN CATS

My cat's play is starting to lead to injuries. What can be done?

Understimulation, an excess of unused energy, and lack of appropriate opportunities for play can lead to play aggression. This may be exhibited as overly rambunctious or aggressive play, which inadvertently leads to injuries to people. In some cases, the play can include a number of components of the cat's predatory nature including the stalk, pounce, and bite, which can be extremely intense. Although play is usually more common in kittens, it may persist through adulthood especially in cats under two years of age that are only cats.

As mentioned, cat play is best stimulated by moving objects that can be stalked, chased, swatted, or pounced upon. (See our handout on 'Feline play and investigative behaviors'). Providing ample opportunities for self-play aids in reducing inappropriate play with owners. In addition, before you consider using one of the interruptions (water sprayer, alarm, and compressed air), the cat should first receive a sufficient number of play alternatives. Anticipate your cats need to play and initiate interactive play sessions. Play directed toward the owners, which is initiated by the cat, should not be tolerated. Owners that allow the cat to initiate affection and attention-getting behaviors run the risk of these behaviors escalating into more aggressive sessions, should the owner refuse the cat's demands. Successful interactive toys include wiggling ropes, wands, dangling toys, and those that are thrown or rolled for the cat to chase. Exercise care and choose toys that cannot be ingested or swallowed.



For self-play the cat can be provided with toys that roll such as ping pong balls or walnuts, toys that dangle, battery-operated and spring-mounted toys, scratching posts, and toys within containers that deliver food when scratched or manipulated. For cats that enjoy exploration, climbing and perching give opportunity for these. Hiding treats in various locations stimulates searching behavior that cats enjoy. Bird feeders outside of windows occupy some cats, while others might be interested in videos for cats. Catnip toys and toys with food or treats that can be obtained by scratching or manipulation, help to stimulate play and exploration. Cats with a strong desire for social play benefit from the addition of a second kitten to act as a playmate, provided both cats have been adequately socialized to cats.

How can I tell if play is about to become aggressive?

Often it is possible to see a change in your kitten's behavior that will signal to you that the play session is getting out of control. The first sign may be intense movement of the tail from side to side. The ears may go back and the pupils, the dark part of the eye, may become larger. At this point it is best to end the play session before the kitten becomes too agitated.

What should I do if the cat begins to exhibit play aggression?

Wherever possible ignoring the cat, or perhaps even walking out of the room, will teach the cat that there will be no interaction or reward when he or she initiates play. Play with you should be initiated by you, and not by the cat.

Physical punishment must be avoided! First, pain can cause aggression so if you hit your cat, you may increase the aggressive behavior. Second, painful punishment may cause fear and owner avoidance. Third, owners that attempt to correct the playful aggression with physical contact may actually serve to reward the behavior.

For a deterrent to be effective it must occur while the behavior is taking place and be timed correctly. Punishment also should be species appropriate. Noise deterrents are often effective in cats. For very



young kittens, a "hissing" noise may deter excessive play behavior. The noise can be made by you, but if not immediately successful a can of compressed air used for cleaning camera lenses may be more effective and is less likely to cause fear or retaliation.

Some cats need an even more intense deterrent. Spray cans with citronella spray, water sprayers and commercially available "rape" alarms or air horns should be sufficiently startling to most cats to interrupt the behavior. What is most important in

using these techniques is the timing. You must have the noise-maker with you so that you can immediately administer the correction. (Also see handout on 'Controlling undesirable behavior in cats'). However without providing ample appropriate play opportunities punishment and distraction techniques will not be successful on their own.

What should I do about my cat that hides, stalks or jumps out at family members and me?

Another component of aggressive play behavior is hiding and dashing out and attacking people as they walk by. Often the kitten or cat waits around corners or under furniture until someone approaches. This can be a difficult problem.

First, keep a journal of occurrences, time of day and location. This can help identify a pattern that can be avoided. Second, you need to be able to know where your cat is. An approved cat collar (one that has a quick release catch or is elastic) with a large bell on it is helpful. If the cat always attacks from the same location, you can be ready, anticipate the attack and become pre-emptive. As you prepare to walk by the area, toss a small toy to divert the cat to an appropriate play object. Another tactic is to use your noise deterrent to get the cat out of the area or block access to the location such as under the bed so that the cat is unable to hide there and pounce out at your feet. Again, these techniques are most successful when combined with plenty of opportunities for appropriate play.

Is there a way to prevent this behavior?

Treatment for this problem is much the same as for other forms of play aggression. You must provide ample outlets and opportunities for play on your terms. Perhaps schedule play sessions. These should be aerobic play sessions so that the cat gets plenty of exercise.

If your cat does not seem to be interested in these play sessions, try other toys. Some cats prefer small, light toys that are easy to manipulate. Others prefer balls or small stuffed toys. Make sure the toys are safe and not small enough to be swallowed. Provide play sessions when the cat seems interested and avoid sessions at all other times. For example, if the cat seems to be interested in nighttime play, try and

circumvent problems by offering play at approximately the same time that the cat would begin. Should the cat begin to initiate the play “session” before you are ready, remember that you must ignore the cat (or use one of the interruption devices) and restart the session after the cat has calmed down. Next evening begin a little earlier so you can “beat the cat to the punch”. It can also be helpful to try and keep up your cat’s interest in the toys. This can be accomplished by a daily rotation of toys so that the cat is presented with a few new items daily. Pick up all the toys and place them in a box or basket out of the cat’s reach. Every day take out a few toys, or a bag or box and set them out for the cat to play with. Set aside some time for interactive play with you as well.

Cats can also be trained to do a number of tricks. This is an excellent way to stimulate your cat, to interact with your cat in a positive way and to gain some verbal control over your cat. Using a few choice food tidbits as rewards, most cats can be taught to sit, come, fetch, or “give 5”.



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Socializing Puppies and Kittens

Socializing puppies and kittens is one of the most frequently overlooked yet important things a new owner can do. This can decrease the chances of unwanted behaviors later in adult pets. We at Westonka Animal Hospital encourage all dogs and cats to be socialized to as many people and situations as possible.

The **socialization period** for dogs and cats is between 4 and 16 weeks of age. During that time, the young pet is very impressionable to social influences. They're "imprinting" on humans. If your pet has positive experiences with men, women, children, and other animals, they're more likely to accept them throughout their life. If the experiences are absent or unpleasant, they may become apprehensive or fearful. Therefore, during the period of socialization, we encourage you to expose your pet to as many types of social events and influences as possible. Men tend to have naturally dominating, intimidating lower voices, and children can play rough (pulling tails, ears, fur, etc), so we recommend that you focus on exposing your puppy to as many different people as you are able to. For puppies, we recommend socializing with as many different well socialized dogs as possible.

We also recommend "playing doctor" by introducing touching and playing with your pet's feet, ears, and mouth. At some point in time, you will need to clean their ears, give medication, and trim their nails. This will make that process a great deal easier. Remember, it is ok for you to put your hand in your pets' mouth, but it isn't ok for your pet to put their mouth around your hands or arm.