



Congratulations On Your New Kitten

Vaccinating Your Cat

There are vaccines available to protect your cat against many diseases. In the case of the pet cat we recommend vaccination against flu, enteritis and leukaemia. The situation is different for colonies of breeding cats – we can easily arrange a programme if asked.

Cats can start the vaccine course at any age from 9 weeks of age. The vaccines must start with a course of 2 injections 3 weeks apart. To keep the immunity effective your cat needs a booster every year.

Cat Flu

Cat flu is a viral disease caused by 2 main viruses – Calicivirus and Herpesvirus. The main symptoms are sneezing, coughing, streaming inflamed eyes and mouth ulcers. It can develop into pneumonia and can occasionally be fatal.

Enteritis

Enteritis is a fatal viral disease that is now very uncommon. The protection against enteritis is combined in the flu vaccine.

Feline Leukaemia Virus (FeLV)

Feline Leukaemia Virus (FeLV) is the commonest cause of death in young cats in the UK. Infected cats show a myriad of problems ranging from diarrhoea, mouth ulcers and lethargy to cancerous tumours. It is spread mainly in the saliva of infected cats and is passed from cat to cat by grooming, sharing the same feeding areas or biting. The disease is fatal and life expectancy being 2 years after infection.

Feeding your Cat

Cats are carnivores and therefore cannot survive on a vegetarian diet as a dog can. This is due to a cat requiring an amino acid only found in meat called Taurine. To have a happy healthy cat a good quality balanced diet is essential. We stock and recommend Hills multi-benefit & dental range of foods are clinically proven dental kibble that reduces plaque and tartar build up to keep gums and teeth healthy. Please ask our nurses/vets for advice and current offers.

Worming your cat

You will need to worm your kitten every 2 weeks until they are 12 weeks old, then monthly.

From 6 months onwards worm every 3 months or monthly using a combination flea, tick and worming spot on treatment. If giving a tablet to your cat is difficult, then we have a spot-on worming only medication called Profender. All are prescription only and will need to have been seen by a vet to be prescribed. Hunting cats should ideally be wormed each month.

Neutering your cat

Cats can safely be spayed and castrated from 6 months of age and is recommended, unless breeding from your cat. Your cat will be admitted by our trained staff on the morning of your cat's surgery. They will check that your cat is fit for the surgery. Your cat will go home on the same day as the operation.

Parasites and your pet

Recent advances in drug technology and the understanding of the flea lifecycle have turned the flea control market into a huge area.

A brief summary of the flea lifecycle may help you understand the control mechanisms we recommend.

Fleas jump onto your pet and after they have had a blood meal, lay eggs which roll off your pet's coat onto the carpet and bedding. These eggs hatch within the environment into larvae, then mature into adult fleas which jump onto your pet's coat and the cycle continues. Under favourable conditions this cycle takes only 12 days and as a female flea can lay 2000 eggs in her lifetime it is easy to see how quickly an infestation can arise. The flea also helps the tapeworm along on its lifecycle by carrying the worm and your pet picks up the tapeworm when grooming. We advise when treating fleas that you also worm your pet at the same time.

Our recommendation aim is to break the cycle in the following ways:

- ❖ Treat the adult fleas by using a prescription spot-on, tablet or collar.
- ❖ Treat the environment by using a spray for the house called Indorex.

The method or combination you use is dependent on your individual circumstances and wishes. Please ask our Nurses or Vets for advice.

Ear Mites

These are common in young cats acting as a source of ear problems. Many infected kittens show no symptoms until a chronic ear infection has resulted often with irreversible damage. The mite lives and breeds mostly within the ear canal producing thick dark wax to protect itself. It emerges onto the skin around the ear occasionally and this is when it infects in-contact animals. The mite has a three-week lifecycle of hatching and maturing to egg laying adults. This 3-week cycle is important in treating the infestation as we need to use products over this period or long acting insecticide. In-contact animals are always best treated when an infestation is found to help break the cycle of the mite.

Harvest Mites

These tiny, orange-coloured mites appear towards harvest time at the end of summer. Many animals and people are allergic to their bites and they are a source of intense irritation, the allergic reaction lasting many weeks. They are picked up from grassy areas and live and feed on the surface of the skin, usually in crevices close to the contact with the grass.

Currently the most effective treatment we recommend a good flea prevention system. Ask the Vet or nurse for advice.

Ticks

Ticks are most active in Spring and Autumn when they climb stalks of grass heather or bracken to wait for a passing animal to attach to. Once attached, it buries its mouthparts into the skin and has a meal of blood. It engorges on its blood meal over a few days then falls off. The tick is a source of skin reactions and abscesses where it attaches but also carries infections such as Lyme disease.

We recommend a flea/tick combination treatment as a preventative treatment. We also recommend removing ticks with a tick remover. Ask our Vets or Nurses if you would like some advice on tick removal.

Caring for your cats' teeth

Approximately 85% of cats over 2 years of age have a degree of tooth or gum disease.

Diet – This is a major factor in the development of plaque, animals reared entirely on dry biscuits rather than moist food will in general have fewer dental problems. We recommend hills multi benefit and dental diet for your cat as a prevention and treatment.

We have a range of dental products that could help reduce the build up of plaque and tartar.

Toothbrushing – train your cat from an early age and it will happily allow you to brush its teeth. Special pet toothpaste is designed with enzymes to break down plaque and kill oral bacteria. Human toothpaste can cause stomach upsets in cats.

Non tooth brushing gels are also available for the reluctant cat or powders that can be added to food. Please ask a Vet/nurse for advice.

If you have any concerns about your cats' teeth make an appointment to discuss with a vet.

Microchipping your cat

- ❖ **All cat owners in England must have their cat microchipped by 10th June 2024.**
- ❖ **Owners could be fined if their cat is not chipped.**
- ❖ **Microchipping is not dissimilar to a vaccination and should cause very little discomfort.**
- ❖ **Your cats microchip details will be stored on a DEFRA compliant database such as identibase.**

Insurance for your cat

Veterinary medicine has advanced so much in recent years, we are now able to diagnose and treat many conditions which would have remained untreated often with fatal consequences some years ago.

At Longridge Vets we recommend insurance for all pets.

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Opening Hours

Monday- Friday 8.00 – 19.00

Saturday 08.30 -12.00