

FELINE TOTAL HEALTH CARE PROGRAM

At the Animal Medical and Surgical Center we recommend the highest quality of health care for your pet. The information below is designed to inform you of the specific recommendations and protocols that we believe will provide the best medical care for your pet.

Examinations:

We recommend having your pet examined at every visit when they are receiving their kitten vaccines, and at least once a year thereafter throughout your pet's life. An examination will provide an overall evaluation of your pet's condition and health. Since cats age five to ten times faster than humans do, changes in their health can change faster as well. An annual examination for your cat is comparable to you having a routine physical by your doctor every five to ten years!

Feline Leukemia/ Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV) Testing:

We recommend you initially have your new kitten or cat tested twice for feline leukemia and FIV – once, when you first get your new pet, and then again in six months to insure that your pet is negative. Thereafter, we recommend annual feline leukemia and FIV testing for cats that go outside.

Intestinal Parasite Exams:

We recommend having an intestinal parasite exam done every six months on a stool sample from your cat. The infective stages of several intestinal parasites, including roundworm and hookworms, are frequently found in the soil in Georgia. Cats can often become infected with these parasites from merely walking in contaminated areas. Although cats may not initially show symptoms of parasite infection, over time these parasites will harm your pet's health. Additionally, many of these parasites are zoonotic and can pose a threat to humans as well. For these reasons, we believe bi-annual intestinal parasite exams are very important for you and your pet.

Heartworm Prevention:

Just like dogs, cats can be infected with heartworms through the bite of a mosquito. Unlike dogs, however, there is currently no safe or effective treatment for cats with heartworms, and once they are infected, cats are unlikely to live for long. With mosquitoes being so prevalent in Georgia, we recommend that all cats be on monthly heartworm prevention throughout their lives.

Routine Blood Health Screens:

Blood Health Screens are tests run on a blood sample that will evaluate your cat's organ functions, such as kidney function and liver function. By running a blood panel annually, we may pick up subtle changes in organ function, which may allow us to make changes in your pet's healthcare (such as diet changes and/or medications) which will improve the quality and longevity of your cat's life. For cats seven years and older, or if your cat is on certain types of medications, we recommend doing this blood panel every six months.

Dental Care:

As part of our physical examinations, our doctors will be examining your pet's gums and teeth. Periodontal disease and gingivitis can lead to bacteria seeding into the blood stream of your pet and causing heart, liver and kidney infections. Your pet may also be painful from these infections, yet may not

show you any signs at home. Routine dental care and health care are very important to not only your pet's quality of life, but also the longevity of your pet's life.

Vaccinations:

In the past, feline vaccinations have typically been given annually. Recently, evidence has become available which indicates that certain vaccines provide immunity for longer than one year. For that reason, as well as reducing your cat's risk of developing a fibrosarcoma*, we are now recommending that certain vaccines be given every three years, rather than annually. We believe that this is the best protocol for your pet's health and protection against diseases:

Rabies Vaccine- We recommend the three-year rabies vaccine, although the one-year vaccine is still available if an owner prefers.

Feline Viral Rhinotracheitis, Calicivirus and Panleukopenia Vaccine- We recommend giving this vaccine every three years.

Feline Leukemia Vaccine- For cats who will go outside, or who could be exposed to other cats through screen doors and windows, we recommend having this vaccination annually.

We strongly believe that fine-tuning this new protocol for your pet's specific circumstances will provide the best overall health care for your pet. Please feel free to ask us specific questions about our health care plan for your pet. Together we can help your pet live a longer, healthier life.

*There is a tumor called a fibrosarcoma that can occur in cats at any injection site, including the site of a vaccine injection. Although the chances of this occurring are low, by reducing the number of injections, including vaccines, that we give your cat, we can further reduce the chance of this tumor occurring.