



Groupe Vétérinaire MONVET Inc.

## KITTEN GUIDE



# MEDICAL CARE

## The vaccination

### The basic vaccine

This vaccine protects against the following diseases:

#### Panleukopenia

- Transmission of feline parvovirus when contaminated stool comes into contact with the mouth.
- Affects the digestive and the immune systems.
- Often fatal.
- Usually requires hospitalization.
- The virus can survive up to a year in the environment.

#### Infectious rhinotracheitis

- Airborne transmission.
- Affects the upper respiratory system (eg sneezing, runny nose, coughing) and the eyes (eg redness, swelling, secretions, corneal ulcers).
- The cat remains a carrier for life.
- Symptoms may reappear during stressful situations.

#### Calicivirus

- Airborne transmission.
- Affects the upper respiratory system (eg sneezing, runny nose, coughing), eyes (eg redness, swelling, secretions), mouth and/or nose (ulcers) and joints (acute arthritis).
- Some forms are more severe and possibly fatal.
- The cat continues to shed the virus for a long time after he has recovered.
- The virus survives in the environment and is resistant to many disinfectants.

This vaccine is necessary for all cats.

First vaccination at 8, 12 and 16 weeks.

Only two doses of vaccine are needed when kittens are 12 weeks of age and older the first time they are vaccinated.

Annual boosters thereafter.

### Feline leukemia (FeLV)

- Transmission by contact with any bodily secretion.
- Affects the immune system.
- Causes white blood cell cancer.
- Fatal if the virus enters the bone marrow.

This vaccine is recommended for cats who live with other cats or that go outside.

First vaccination at 12 and 16 weeks.

Annual boosters thereafter.



### Rabies

- Transmission mainly through bite wounds.
- Affects the nervous system.
- Symptoms may appear several months after infection.
- Fatal. No treatment available.
- Contagious to humans (zoonosis).

This vaccine is recommended for all cats, especially those that go outdoors or come into contact with dogs and cats that go outdoors.

First vaccination at 12 or 16 weeks.

Annual booster the first time, then every 3 years.

## MEDICAL CARE

### Feline Leukemia and FIV screening

This is an in-house screening blood test that detects 2 viruses that cause severe feline viral diseases: leukemia and feline immunodeficiency virus (FIV), the equivalent of AIDS in humans.

Like leukemia, FIV affects the immune system. It is easily transmitted from one cat to another, especially through bite wounds and during matings. However, it is not contagious to dogs and humans.

Cats can live for several years normally before symptoms of FIV appear. Unfortunately, when they start to get sick, they inevitably die. No vaccine is available to prevent them from catching this virus. Therefore, the best way to protect them is to keep them indoors. If this is not possible, then they should be sterilized to reduce the risk of them getting infected.

We recommend performing the test on all newly adopted cats, especially if they are guaranteed, before allowing them to come into contact with other cats, indoors or out.



### Deworming

Kittens should be given antiparasitic medication, because:

- many are born with worms they have caught from their mother;
- the majority of them do not look sick;
- worms can weaken them and cause diarrhea or vomiting;
- several parasites are contagious to humans.

#### The deworming schedule

We recommend deworming kittens against intestinal worms at 4 weeks old, then monthly until they are 6 months old. Every year, cats that go outside should also be treated preventively against worms and skin parasites (eg ticks, fleas) every month, from March to November. Cats who hunt are at greater risk of catching worms.

Several safe and effective products are available to kill your kitten's parasites. Your veterinarian will be able to prescribe the antiparasitic drug(s) that best suits him.





## MEDICAL CARE

### Ticks

Ticks are often carriers of several diseases, including Lyme disease. Although cats cannot catch it, they can still be infected with ticks and give them to humans and dogs, who can become ill.

In recent years, cases of Lyme disease in humans have been increasingly reported. For one thing, there are a lot of ticks in our area, especially in Montérégie, where they live permanently. Also, these bugs no longer just hang out in the woods as they used to. They are now found everywhere, in tall grass and dead leaves.



### How can you protect yourself from Lyme disease?

To avoid catching Lyme disease, you need to protect yourself from ticks.

Here's how:

- If your cat goes outside, give him an effective tick killer every month from spring to fall.
- Look for ticks in his coat every time he comes back from outside and remove them manually. Do not touch ticks with your bare hands.
- Mow the lawn often.
- Avoid attracting migrating birds with bird feeders.
- Wear bright clothes, long sleeves and pants when you walk in the woods.
- Wear gloves when gardening or working in the backyard.
- Look for ticks on your skin after doing these activities.

### Neutering

We recommend performing this procedure between 3 and 6 months old, that is, before puberty.

#### The advantages of sterilization:

- It helps to control the feline population.
- It reduces the risk that certain undesirable behaviors appear (eg marking, fighting, wandering).
- It prevents some diseases such as pyometra (infection of the uterus). And mammary cancer if the surgery is performed before the first heat.

### Surgical options

#### The surgical laser

We prefer using a surgical laser, rather than a scalpel blade, to perform many surgeries. The laser causes less bleeding, pain and swelling. It also reduces the risk of surgical wounds getting infected.

#### Anesthetic safety

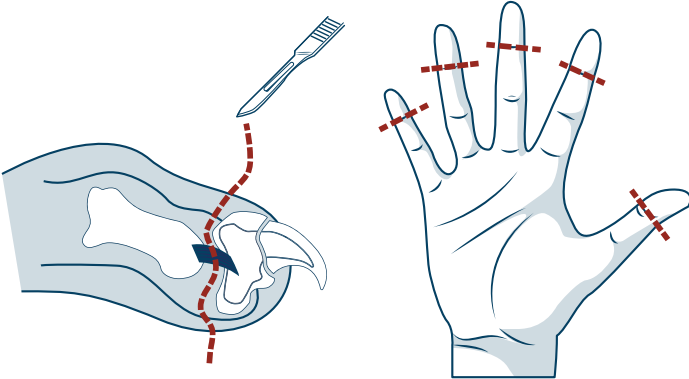
We have several ways to safely anesthetize your cat. Here are 3:

- **Preoperative blood test.** It allows us to check the condition of the organs that eliminate anesthetic drugs. It also helps identify the presence of diseases that may increase the risk of complications during anesthesia.
- **Intravenous catheter.** It gives us a venous access at all times, allowing us to act quickly in an emergency.
- **Intravenous fluids.** In addition to keeping the animal well hydrated throughout the procedure, fluids are also very useful in an emergency situation: they help to restore blood pressure in the event of a pressure drop, and to eliminate anesthetic drugs more quickly.

## MEDICAL CARE

### Declawing

Did you know that when a cat is declawed, the claw AND the bone to which it is attached are removed? It is therefore an amputation.



Like with any surgery, there are risks of complications associated with declawing:

- Bleeding
- Infection
- Behavior change
- Finger deformity
- Aggressiveness



You don't want to have your cat declawed, but you are worried that he might hurt somebody or that he might sharpen his claws on your furniture or on your curtains? Fortunately, there are ways to help prevent this:

- Cut his nails regularly, once or twice a month.
- Cover them with plastic nail caps to prevent them from getting caught in the fabrics.
- Discourage him from scratching inappropriate objects by covering them with plastic, aluminum foil or double-sided tape.
- Spray the objects with soothing pheromones (eg Feliway Classic®) to reduce your cat's need to mark his territory.
- Place a scratching post near the objects and apply Feliscratch® on it to encourage your cat to sharpen his nails there.
- Reward him with treats, hugs, and sweet talk immediately after he has used it.
- Enrich his environment to keep him busy and happy (eg toys, interactive feeders, cat tree, wall shelves, etc.).



Whether you decide to have your kitten declawed now or try the alternatives first, remember this: because they are not heavy, kittens tolerate declawing much better than adults.



# MEDICAL CARE

## Pain control

Any surgery causes pain, and controlling it is very important to us. Our anesthetic and analgesic protocols place as much emphasis on its prevention, before the cat even feels it, than they do on its control during and after the surgery.

We also give pain killers using a multimodal approach. This means that the drugs we use target different pain perception channels, thus inhibiting it on several fronts (eg anti-inflammatory drugs, morphine derivatives, regional anesthesia of the fingers).

### If your cat were in pain, would you notice it?

Contrary to popular belief, cats don't complain when they are in pain. Instead, they tend to be quieter and eat less. Their body language is also very revealing.



#### Cat possibly in pain

His back is hunched, his ears are droopy, his legs are straight and his eyes are slanted and half closed.



#### Pain-free cat

- His ears are upright and facing forward.
- His eyes are wide open.
- He is wide awake and vigilant.
- His legs are folded under him.
- A horizontal line can be drawn through the centre of each eye.



#### Cat possibly in pain

He is lying on his side, his eyes are squinting and his ears are droopy.



#### Cat possibly in pain

His ears are droopy and his head is down. He keeps his eyes half closed and a line drawn through the centre of his eyes makes a V shape.



#### Cat possibly in pain

He growls and hisses when touched: he is aggressive whereas before he was docile.

## MEDICAL CARE

### How to give kittens medication

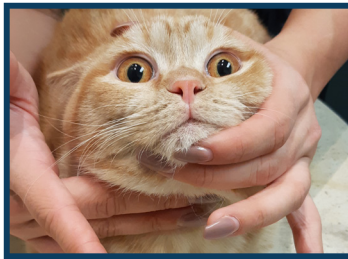
One day or another, your cat will need to take oral medication. Whether it is a dewormer if he has worms, a painkiller if he is in pain, an antibiotic if he has an infection, etc.

It is sometimes difficult to give pills to cats. To make it easier, you can use Pill Assist®. These are soft treats with a hole in their center into which the pill is hidden. Their tasty flavour covers the medication's.

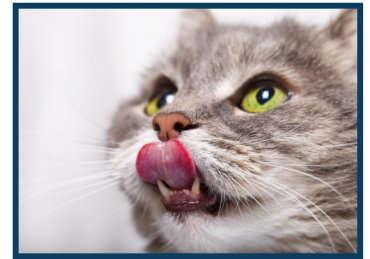
If your cat refuses to eat Pill Assist®, you will need to place the tablet directly into his mouth. Here's how to proceed:



Hold his head and pull it back a little to make him open his mouth. With your other hand, place the pill at the bottom of it.



Massage his throat to make him swallow.



You know he has swallowed the pill when he licks his lips.

### Health insurance

Did you know that health insurance exists for cats? We recommend that you subscribe to such a plan for your kitten, to ensure his health and your peace of mind. Indeed, when he is sick, you will not have to worry about veterinary expenses, which can sometimes be quite high.

Several companies offer health insurance plans, tailored to individual needs. By surfing the Internet, you will easily find their contact details.



## BASIC CARE

### The mouth

Good dental hygiene is part of your healthy lifestyle, isn't it? The same should be true for your kitten.

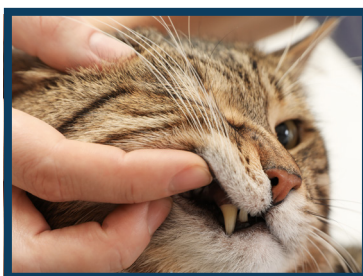
To optimize his dental health, you should:

- **brush his teeth** daily with toothpaste designed for animals. This type of toothpaste is not toxic when swallowed. Plus, it contains enzymes that continue to break down dental plaque between brushings;
- **feed him dental food** that cleans the teeth with each bite. Wait until all his adult teeth have come out before starting it;
- **use ancillary products** that help freshen breath and soften tartar. These products include treats, liquid water additives, dental gels, enzymatic products and chewing strips.

Here's how to brush his teeth:



- Gently handle his nose and his lips with your fingers.



- Put a little bit of toothpaste on your fingertip and spread it on his teeth and his gums.



- Repeat step 2, but with a toothbrush this time. At the beginning, put just light pressure on the teeth and then, gradually increase it. Increase also the amount of time you spend on each tooth.

### The claws

It is important to trim your kitten's claws regularly, at least once a month. By doing so, not only will you protect your furniture, but you will also prevent them from growing into his footpads.

To get him used to it, start as early as possible. First, cut just one claw per day. Praise him and reward him with a treat immediately after. Then, gradually increase the number of claws you cut at a time.





## BASIC CARE

### The ears

Look inside your kitten's ears often and clean them as needed. Here's how to clean them properly:



Hold the ear with one hand, then pour the liquid with the other hand.



Massage the ear.



Remove the secretions with a cotton ball or a tissue.

Never insert a cotton swab (Q-tip®) into the ear canal. You risk pushing the secretions even further down and damage the eardrum.

See a vet if your kitten is scratching his ears a lot and if there is redness, swelling and a foul odor in addition to the secretions.

### The eyes

Some cats have clear or rusty discharge from their eyes. These are normal. Just remove them with a cleaning solution or a wipe designed specifically for this.

If you see that your kitten's eyes are red and swollen, the secretions are green or yellow, that he is rubbing his eyes or squinting, then you need to take him to a vet.



# BASIC CARE

## Nutrition

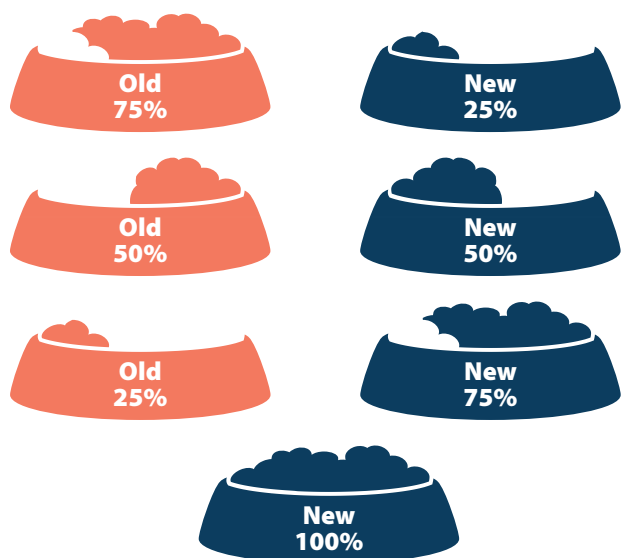
### Food

We recommend that kittens who will be of average size in adulthood eat kitten food until around 8-9 months old. Those that will become tall adults (eg Bengal, Highland Lynx) should eat kitten food until they are around 12-14 months old.

A member of our team can calculate how much food yours needs to eat each day. In the calculation, he will take into account his breed, his lifestyle and his daily activity level.

When introducing adult food, proceed gradually. To reduce the risk of gastrointestinal disturbances. For a few days, offer 75% of his usual food in one bowl and 25% of the new food in another bowl. During the next few days, offer 50% of one and 50% of the other, and so on.

Choose stainless steel, ceramic or glass bowls. Unlike plastic, these materials are hypoallergenic and do not trap bacteria.



### Interactive feeders

Interactive feeders are special "bowls" or toys in which food or treats are hidden. Cats have to "work" to get them out and eat them. In addition to entertaining cats, these feeders:

- make them "hunt", which arouses their predatory instincts;
- make them exercise;
- help them digest because they are forced to eat more slowly;
- stimulate their intellectual faculties: they have an enigma to solve;
- prevent too much sugar from building up in their blood all at once after a meal.



## BASIC CARE

### Water

In order for their organs to function properly, cats need to be well hydrated. Kittens become dehydrated more easily than adults because their water reserve is smaller. It is therefore important that they drink a lot and have access to fresh water at all times.

Many cats like to drink from a water fountain. For one thing, the water stays cool because it is always in motion. Also, it gets oxygenated and tastes better because it comes into contact with the surrounding air over a large area.

If you need to, try these other tricks to get yours to drink more water:

- Feed him canned food.
- Serve his water in a stainless steel, ceramic or glass bowl.
- Change the water and wash the dish daily.
- Place several bowls of water throughout the house.
- Offer spring water instead of tap water.
- Add ice cubes to the water.



### Canned food

The large amount of water in wet food not only helps keep cats hydrated, but it also reduces the risk of other health problems such as obesity, for example.

Indeed, water takes up space in the stomach, which promotes the feeling of fullness. Dry food, on the other hand, promotes weight gain because it is often very high in sugars. Obesity can in turn lead to other diseases (eg diabetes, constipation, osteoarthritis, cardiorespiratory and urinary diseases, etc.).

We recommend introducing canned food to cats when they are young because it is more difficult to do so later if they are not already used to it.

### Bathing

Cats usually do not need to be washed since they groom themselves. If you absolutely must wash yours, use a mild shampoo made for animals. Make sure to rinse his coat thoroughly afterwards.

There are also dry shampoos available that are very useful to clean soiled areas without having to wash the cat entirely.



## BASIC CARE

### The litter

Cats instinctively know how to use a litter box. They don't need to be trained to do so. However, it must be kept clean to avoid bothering their highly developed sense of smell. Otherwise, they may refuse to use the litter box and find another place to urinate and defecate. Here are some tips to try to prevent this:

- Have one more box than the number of cats in the house.
- Place the boxes in various and quiet rooms, away from the feeding area.
- Remove urine and stool from the boxes every day. Clean them at least once a month with mild soap, then disinfect them with bleach.
- Do not put roofs over the boxes.
- Use unscented and dustless litter.

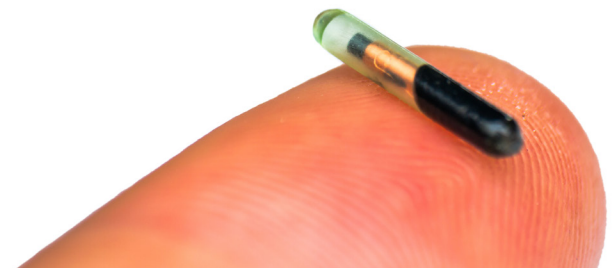


### Microchipping

A microchip is an electronic device that is inserted under the skin of cats, between their shoulder blades. The owners must then register them with the company that manufactured the chip. Linking the microchip number with the cats' owners' contact information makes it possible to identify the animals and return them home, in case they get lost.

We recommend that all cats be microchipped, even those who do not usually go outside. Indeed, it is not uncommon for cats to take advantage of an open door to slip between our legs.

Since January 2020, it is no longer just a recommendation, but an obligation for all cats living in Montreal.





# BEHAVIOUR

## Well-being

For cats to be physically and mentally well, their needs for food, space, locomotion, predation, stimulation and interactions with other animals and with humans must be met.

Sources of stress must also be limited as much as possible: lack of exercises and of stimulations, cohabitation with other animals, loud noises, routine changes (eg moving, new spouse, birth of a baby), presence of a stray cat on the other side of the window, sickness, etc.



## Undesirable behaviors

We, humans, consider many normal ways that cats behave as undesirable. This is especially true for urine marking and destructive scratching. By behaving like that, cats communicate with those around them. It is how they comfort themselves and adapt to their environment.

They are not seeking revenge for something. There is no point in yelling at them or punishing them, it will only increase their stress. Which can, when sustained, cause them to stop eating. If this hunger strike persists beyond a few days, they risk becoming ill.

## Aggressiveness

Sometimes cats become aggressive towards humans. The physical injuries resulting from such assaults can be severe, as can the damage to the emotional bond between the two species.

There are several reasons that can make cats become aggressive. The most common ones are associated with play, fear, petting intolerance and dominance. Generally, cats behave in a certain way and adopt a particular posture just before attacking. Their body language and the context in which the attack is occurring can help determine the type of aggression involved. It is important to pay attention to these warning signs so that the escalating aggressiveness can be defused.



# BEHAVIOUR

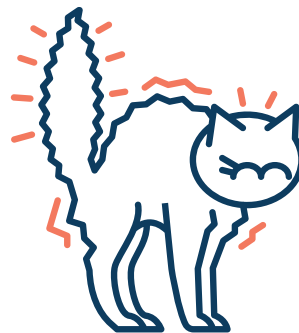
## Play aggression

This is the most common type of aggression in kittens. Typically, the kitten stalks his owner or hides behind a door or cabinet, stares at him and wiggles his tail. After a while, he runs towards the person and attacks him or her. For the cat, it's a game. He shows no threatening posture or signs of aggression such as growling and piloerection (spiky hairs).



## Fear aggression

A cat who is afraid of someone normally tries to avoid them. When he perceives that interacting with this person is inevitable, he may become aggressive. He adopts a defensive posture: he crouches down, turns his ears back and puts his tail along his thigh. His pupils dilate and he might hiss and growl before attacking. In extreme displays of fear aggression, the cat arches his back, his hairs stand on end and he sticks his tail up in the air: the classic Halloween cat.

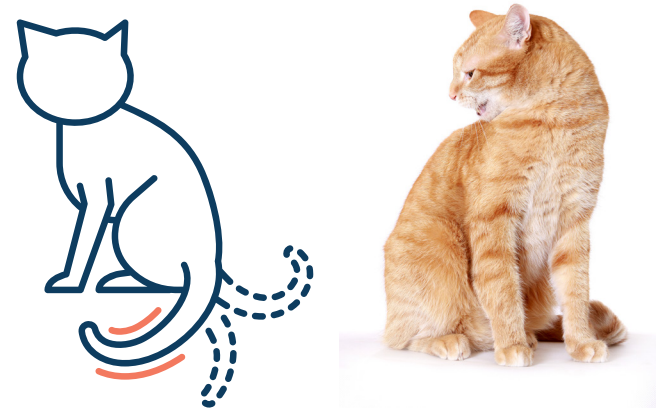


# BEHAVIOUR

## Petting intolerance

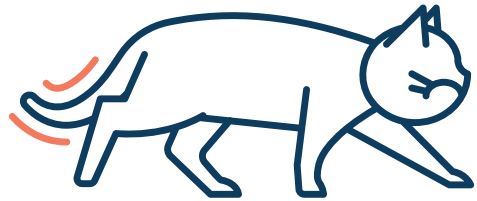
Some cats become uncomfortable when they are petted for too long. Some like to be stroked in certain places, but not in others (eg on the head, but not on the stomach). These cats can become aggressive, even when they are the ones who asked for attention in the first place.

When they have had enough, they begin to whip the air from side to side with their tail, their ears flatten out, and their pupils dilate. If the petting does not stop, they can bite. It is important for the person to respect his or her cat's tolerance threshold.



## Dominance aggression

Typically, a cat exercising dominance over someone stares at the person while slowly approaching him or her with his head down. His ears are upright and turned to the side. His tail is stiff and whips the air from right to left. His gait is rigid and his legs stretch out with each step. Fortunately, this type of aggression is rare.



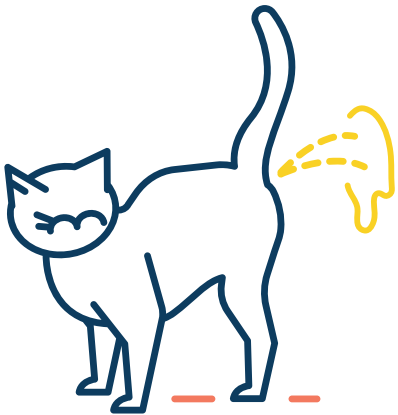


# BEHAVIOUR

## Pheromones

Cats secrete pheromones, substances that act as markers of communication. There are 2 types. Each increases cats' wellbeing in different ways.

One is secreted when they mark the territory, meaning taking ownership of it. For example, when they pee on furniture or on walls, when they scratch things or when they empty their anal glands.



The other type of pheromone is the one that females secrete at the birth of their kittens and while nursing. Reassuring, they help to strengthen the attachment bond between the mother and her litter.



## Synthetic pheromones

Synthetic pheromones were created to mimic the effect of natural pheromones.

### Feliway Classic®

Feliway Classic® soothes cats stressed out by a change in their environment (eg moving, new partner, newborn baby, car trip, visit to the vet, etc.). It is especially indicated when cats mark or hide in fear.



### Feliscratch® by Feliway®

The pheromones in Feliscratch by Feliway® are territorial markers that direct cats to claw where they are applied. For example, on a scratching post.





## BEHAVIOUR

### Feliway Friends®

Feliway Friends® soothes cats stressed out by the presence of other cats. It is indicated when there is tension and conflict between cats living under the same roof. It can also be used to facilitate the introduction of a new cat into the house.



Inside, cats are safe. However, they often lack stimulation, which can cause them to become bored and stressed out, and which can promote the development of the unwanted behaviors mentioned above. Plus, indoor cats usually get little exercise. Lack of exercise, combined with excessive food intake, leads to weight gain and obesity.



So, if you decide to keep your kitten indoors, it will be important for you to enrich his environment to improve his physical and mental well-being.

### Outside or not?

You would like to let your cat go outside, but you are not sure if this is a good idea?

Outside, cats are free to explore their territory and hunt. They easily meet their needs for space, locomotion, predation and stimulation. They also exercise more than when they are indoors, which is good for their mental and physical health. On the other hand, outside, they run the risk of injuring themselves, or worse, and of catching infectious diseases, some of which are contagious to humans (eg rabies, worms, ticks).



### Enriching the environment of indoor cats

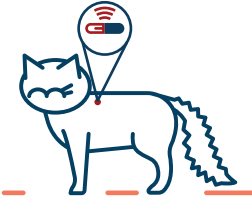
Enriching the environment of an indoor cat means “recreating” inside the natural conditions he would have access to outside. Here are some specific ways to enrich your kitten’s environment:

- Provide him with a cat tree to climb on and to play in.
- Offer him toys, with or without catnip.
- Have plants that he can hide behind. Beware though: some are toxic!
- Fix shelves to the wall for him to climb on.
- Respect his need for solitude.
- Play with him when he wants to.
- Avoid strong smelling substances (eg household products, perfumes) which can make him lose his olfactory landmarks.
- Allow him to claw on designated objects.
- Use interactive feeders to feed him.

## HEALTH RECORD

# How old is my cat?

	Cat's age	Human age
<b>Teenager</b> < 1 year 15 years	1	15
	2	24
	3	28
	4	31
	5	35
<b>Adult</b> 1 to 8 years 15 to 45 years	6	38
	7	42
	8	45
	9	49
	10	52
<b>Senior</b> 9 to 14 years 49 to 66 years	11	56
	12	59
	13	63
	14	66
	15	70
	16	74
	17	78
	18	82
	19	86
	20	90



Microchip
Implantation date (DD-MM-YYYY)
Microchip number

Implantation date (DD-MM-YYYY)

Microchip number

[illegible]

Date (DD-MM-YYYY)	Weight (Kg)	Treatment
-------------------	-------------	-----------

Date (DD-MM-YYYY)	Weight (Kg)	Treatment
-------------------	-------------	-----------

Date (DD-MM-YYYY)	Weight (Kg)	Treatment
-------------------	-------------	-----------

[illegible]

Date (DD-MM-YYYY)	Test's name	Results
-------------------	-------------	---------

Date (DD-MM-YYYY)	Test's name	Results
-------------------	-------------	---------

Date (DD-MM-YYYY)	Test's name	Results
-------------------	-------------	---------

[illegible]

Date (DD-MM-YYYY)	Food	Comments
-------------------	------	----------

Date (DD-MM-YYYY)	Food	Comments
-------------------	------	----------

Date (DD-MM-YYYY)	Food	Comments
-------------------	------	----------

# HEALTH RECORD

Vaccination record																			
Vaccine's name	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15+
	weeks	weeks	weeks	weeks	yr	yrs	yrs	yrs	yrs	yrs	yrs	yrs	yrs	yrs	yrs	yrs	yrs	yrs	yrs
Rhinotracheitis																			
Calicivirus																			
Panleukopenia																			
Leukemia																			
Rabies																			

## In a word

Adopting a kitten is an amazing experience, but it comes with its share of responsibilities. It is important to do what is necessary to ensure that yours is not only in good physical health, but in good mental health as well. We hope this guide helps you develop a healthy long term relationship with your new companion.

Do you want to learn more about the different topics presented? Consult the *Informative files* on our website at [www.monvet.com](http://www.monvet.com). You can also watch our videos on **Monvet Veterinary Group Inc's YouTube Channel**.

Prefer to talk in person? Do not hesitate to come see us or give us a call. It will be our pleasure to help you.



# MONVET

Groupe Vétérinaire MONVET Inc.

**Medecine | Hospitalization | Standard or laser surgery  
Dentistry | Digital Radiology | Ultrasound | On Site Laboratory  
Physiotherapy | Osteopathy | Acupuncture | Nutrition | Boarding**

*Certain services are not available for all animal species nor in all our locations.*

*Working together for animal health and wellbeing.*



Montreal  
(Anjou)



Boucherville



Beloeil



Ste-Julie



Montreal  
(Rivière-des-Prairies)



Montreal  
(Pointe-aux-Trembles)



Montreal  
(Saint-Michel)



Longueuil



Saint-Amable

[WWW.MONVET.COM](http://WWW.MONVET.COM)