

Welcome to Heartland Animal Hospital

Congratulations on your decision to add a new kitten to your family! Whether you're a first-time owner or have been down this road many times, it is always exciting to share your love and happiness with a fuzzy ball of fur that will return the favor ten-fold.

This new addition comes with great responsibility. This informational packet has been designed to help you navigate the first year of your kitty's life. The first few weeks that he or she is in your home are critical for proper bonding, establishing your household hierarchy, and getting your kitten on track with optimal emotional and physical care.

Included in this packet you will find the hospital's protocol and procedures on vaccination schedules, preventative care, litter training, socialization and much more. Please refer to this packet as often as needed and always feel free to call us with any questions you may have.

It is our goal to make every visit to Heartland Animal Hospital as comfortable, compassionate and pleasing as possible. There is nothing we enjoy more than being greeted by a purr!

We hope your pet's life will be a very long and happy one. We thank you for entrusting their medical care to us. We look forward to helping you have the time of your life with your new best friend!

Feline Vaccination Schedule

It is crucial that your kitten receive vaccinations during the first months of his/her life to safeguard against many serious and potentially fatal diseases. At Heartland Animal Hospital, we vaccinate on a three-week schedule, as recommended by The American Animal Hospital Association, until kittens are about five to six months of age. After the kitten vaccinations have been given, all cats **must** continue to be vaccinated yearly, even if they are kept indoors.

6 weeks	FVRCP, intestinal parasite exam, Feline Triple Test (retest at 6 months if positive)
9 weeks	FVRCP and FeLV*
12 weeks	FVRCP and FeLV*
15 weeks	FVRCP, Rabies, and intestinal parasite exam

* Optional vaccine, but we recommend it for cats who may go outside or those that are in contact with cats with Feline Leukemia Virus.

6 months	Spay/neuter and Feline Triple Test (if never tested or had an FIV or FeLV positive test as kitten)
Annually	FeLV**, FVRCP**, Rabies, and intestinal parasite exam*** **After the first annual vaccination, these vaccines are given every 3 years. *** We recommend Intestinal parasite exams every 6 months for outdoor cats.

<u>Feline Viral Rhinotrachietis</u>	An upper respiratory virus that causes sneezing, eye discharge, loss of appetite and fever.
<u>Calicivirus</u>	An upper respiratory virus that can cause blisters on the mouth, tongue, and lips.
<u>Panleukopenia</u>	A virus that can cause fever, gastrointestinal upset, and dehydration. It usually kills susceptible cats, even with treatment.
<u>Rabies</u>	A virus that causes a fatal neurological disease that can be transmitted to humans. This vaccine is required by state and city law.
<u>Feline Triple Test*</u>	A simple blood test that detects the presence of female heartworms, Feline Leukemia Virus, and/or antibodies to Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV). *Young kittens that test positive should be tested again at six months of age as occasionally kittens will receive antibodies, but not the disease, from their mother's milk (these antibodies will be cleared by 6 months).

Feline Leukemia and Feline Immunodeficiency Virus

Your cat's biggest health concern isn't dodging an oncoming car or the dog up the street; it is two viruses that kill more cats than any other disease. For your cat's sake, learn the facts about these viruses and keep your cat happy and healthy for years to come.

Feline Leukemia Virus (FeLV) and Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV) affect your cat in similar ways. Both viruses attack the immune system, both can go unnoticed for a long time, and BOTH can be fatal. Fortunately, both viruses can also be detected with a single blood test. In just minutes, your veterinarian can determine if your cat is infected. For cats who test negative for these illnesses, vaccines can help protect your cat from getting FeLV later. There is no effective vaccine for FIV at this time.

Spread of Disease

Typically, FeLV is spread when a susceptible cat encounters the saliva of an infected cat. This can occur from licking and grooming, or shared food and water bowls. The virus can also be spread through the urine and feces.

FIV lives in the blood and is transmitted when one cat bites or scratches another. Therefore, outdoor cats, who are more likely to fight with other cats, are at higher risk for this disease.

Signs to Watch For

While some FeLV and FIV infected cats show no signs of disease at all, most have one or more of the following symptoms:

- Fever
- Poor coat condition
- Loss of appetite
- Swollen lymph nodes
- Weight loss
- Diarrhea
- Sores in or around the mouth
- Dehydration

Fleas

Fleas are insects (parasites) that feed on your pet's blood and can cause other serious health problems. A flea bite may go unnoticed with some pets, cause slight irritation in others, or cause a severe allergic reaction. Signs of a reaction can include intense itching, red lesions, hair loss, and skin ulceration. Anemia is a critical concern in cases of severe infestations at all ages, but especially in puppies and kittens. Prolonged anemia will eventually result in death. Fleas can also transmit tapeworms and other diseases to your pets.

There are four stages in a flea lifecycle: egg, pupae, larvae, and adult. They will only be found on your pet during the adult stage. The other three stages will reside in the pet's environment. The flea lifecycle can span 12-180 days. Female fleas can lay 30-50 eggs a day and consume up to 15 times their body weight in blood daily.

Preventing fleas is exponentially easier than treating an infestation. The safest prevention can be found at veterinary clinics. Over the counter flea products such as Biospot® and Hartz® are tempting due to their low cost, but their production is not as closely regulated as the preventatives provided by veterinary clinics. They have been shown to be more toxic and are known to cause severe reactions in cats, ferrets, children, and some dogs. At the same time, they are known to be a less reliable solution to prevent or control fleas. Over the counter flea collars and flea shampoos are also not typically as effective for their intended purpose.

The following steps should be taken when fleas are found:

1. Flea prevention should be applied to ALL pets in the household for a minimum of six consecutive months to ensure that the protection extends past the lifecycle of the last flea.
2. Home treatment is essential to eradicating a flea infestation. Remember, three of the four flea life stages are found in the environment. This means if one pet has fleas, they are in the house and the yard as well. Fleas lay eggs while on your pet, but they do not stick to the fur and instead roll off into the environment.

- A. Home treatment should begin by washing all bedding and washable rugs in hot water.

- B. Vacuum all floors (including the basement), making sure to reach the less trafficked areas, such as under furniture, as this is where eggs tend to settle until they hatch.

- C. Spray all floors with a home treatment product, such as Knockout Area Treatment® and vacuum again.

*** Immediately throw away the bag from the vacuum in an exterior trash can to prevent fleas from escaping from the bag and getting back into the house.

- D. Repeat this process in four weeks.

Flea Preventative Options

There are many options available to protect your cat from fleas, ticks and heartworms. Whatever your preferences may be, we are sure to be able to find a good fit for you and your cat!

Topical options:

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| Frontline Gold® | A topical monthly preventative that kills fleas and ticks. It can be used in kittens as young as eight weeks old, weighing 1.5 pounds or more. |
| Seresto® | A collar that kills and repels fleas and ticks for 8 months of continuous protection in cats and kittens ten weeks and older. |
| Bravecto® | A topical preventative that kills fleas and ticks. It can be used in cats six months and older, weighing 2.6 pounds or more. |
| Advantage Multi® | A topical preventative that kills fleas, ear mites, immature heartworms, and intestinal parasites in cats nine weeks and older, weighing two pounds or more. DOES NOT KILL TICKS. |

Intestinal Parasite Exam

Intestinal parasites and protozoa are easily transmitted from infected animals to people and their pets. Intestinal parasites have adapted to use multiple tactics to infect a potential host to improve their chances of success. The most common method of parasite transmission is through direct contact with infected fecal material. Intestinal parasite eggs are passed in the stool of the infected animal. These eggs can drop from the stool into the soil or litter, where they can live for several weeks to years, thus making it more likely that they will be able to take on a new host. Direct contact is an extremely common method of transmission, but kittens and puppies are especially prone to infection because intestinal parasites can also be transmitted via the placenta and/or through the mother's milk. Because of this, all puppies and kittens should submit a stool sample for examination as soon as possible (preferably before coming home).

People and their pets can become infected with these parasites just by participating in normal, daily activities. It is a common myth that indoor cats cannot have intestinal parasites; however, there are many ways they can be inadvertently brought into the house. For example, potting soil is often contaminated with roundworm eggs. If you keep potted plants in your home, and your cat walks over the soil where even one egg is present, the egg may stick to their paw. The next time the cat grooms themselves, they unknowingly ingest the egg and continue the lifecycle.

With intestinal parasite exams, we scan a sample of your pet's feces under the microscope, looking for parasite eggs. Parasites do not always shed eggs into the stool continuously, and if they are not shedding at the time of sample collection, we may not be able to detect their presence. Therefore, it is important that a sample of your pet's stool at six weeks of age and again at fifteen weeks, and then yearly (or every six months if your cat goes outside).

If your pet is diagnosed with parasites, it is crucial that all medications be given as directed. Keep your litter box free of fecal material while treating your pet or reinfection may occur. Following treatment for intestinal parasites, make sure you bring in a stool sample as directed by your veterinarian to confirm that the prescribed treatment was successful.

Always wash your (and your children's) hands thoroughly after discarding fecal material or interacting with your pet.

Toxoplasmosis

What is Toxoplasmosis? Toxoplasmosis is an infection caused by the single-celled parasite *Toxoplasma gondii*.

Who gets it? All species of animals can become infected, including humans.

Why are cats blamed? Cats are the only animal species that shed the *infectious* stage in their feces. All animals, however, can spread Toxoplasmosis if their infected meat is eaten.

How do cats get it? Cats commonly contract toxoplasmosis by eating rodents, raw meat, cockroaches, or flies. They can also get it through contact with infected cats, infected cat feces, or contaminated soil.

What are the chances my cat will contract Toxoplasmosis? The odds that your cat will get it are higher if your cat hunts or is fed raw meat.

How will I know if my cat has Toxoplasmosis? You probably won't know since most infected cats show no symptoms, although sometimes there is transient diarrhea, or more rarely, other symptoms such as pneumonia, hepatitis, or neurologic disease.

Should I test my cat for Toxoplasmosis? Test results for Toxoplasmosis are questionable and interpretation is controversial. In fact, a positive, healthy cat is probably safer than a negative cat since it has already been exposed and is immune. A negative, healthy cat is more susceptible to infection and thus, prevention is most important.

How do I prevent my cat from getting it? Don't feed your cat raw meat, prevent your cat from hunting, and keep your cat indoors.

Should I worry about getting Toxoplasmosis from my cat? The probability that you will acquire the infection from your cat is low, but if you are pregnant or part of a high-risk group, do not change your cat's litter without wearing gloves and washing your hands immediately.

How do I get it? It is rare for humans to get Toxoplasmosis from an infected cat. People are more likely to contract it through ingestion of undercooked meats, unwashed fruits and vegetables, or by not washing your hands after gardening or handling soil.

What happens if I get Toxoplasmosis? It depends: If you are healthy you could potentially experience flu-like symptoms or lymph node enlargement. If you are pregnant (and only if it's your first exposure) you may see birth defects and possible fetal loss. If you are immunocompromised, you may experience life threatening central nervous system disorders.

If you are ever concerned that you may have contracted Toxoplasmosis, contact your physician immediately.

Litter Box Training Your Kitten/ Urinary Health

Training most kittens to use the litterbox is easy. The key to successful litter box training is understanding cat behavior and the hierarchy of a multiple cat household.

Accidents will happen, but do not punish the kitten. Even the smartest kitten is bound to have an occasional accident. Give the kitten praise when he/she uses the litter box and maybe offer a small reward, like a kibble of kitten food and you'll soon be back on track.

As a general guideline, have one litter box per cat, plus at least one additional box. For example, a two-cat household should have three litter boxes for ease of accessibility. Kittens should be kept in a room by themselves at night and while you are not home until they are used to their new home and you feel comfortable leaving the kitten unsupervised. Usually, it will take about a week for kittens to acclimate. A confined living area also makes it easier for the kitten to find and use the litter box in an unfamiliar place. Since kittens are often quite small, you may need to fashion a makeshift litter box out of a cardboard box and a garbage bag. This way, the sides can be shortened so the kitten can get in and out of the box without help. Most cats do not like to use a dirty litter box, so we encourage you to scoop the litter box daily. You should also completely change the litter every 5-7 days.

If you have an established cat in your home, it is important to decrease the stress on your older cat as much as possible while introducing the kitten. Confining your kitten to the laundry room, bathroom, or bedroom for a week will give the adult cat(s) a chance to smell the kitten under the door and get used to their presence. Cats are very territorial, and having a new cat using an older cat's litter box may feel very threatening or aggressive. To eliminate some of the tension, every floor of the house should have at least one litter box for each cat.

We recommend that you start your kitten on litter that is odor free and scoopable. If you purchase a litter that has a strong odor, it may be irritating to the kitten causing them to not use the litter box. A dust free litter will lessen the chance of nasal irritation. Cats are creatures of habit, so once you find a litter that your cat likes, do not experiment with new brands or varieties. This can cause litterbox avoidance, and lead to accidents in your home*.

* Urinating outside of the litter box can also be a sign of urinary tract inflammation in cats. Cats frequently develop inflammation in response to stress, poor hygiene, diet, or unusual anatomy. If you see your cat attempting to urinate, but not excreting or excreting very small amounts of urine, your cat's urethra may be blocked. This is a very serious, **LIFE THREATENING** condition. Call a veterinarian or take your cat to an emergency clinic **IMMEDIATELY**.

Microchipping

Each year, millions of lost or stolen pets never return home because they cannot be identified.

Heartland Animal Hospital is proud to offer HomeAgain® Pet Microchip Identification System as part of a three-part program for responsible pet care. This program is simple: we believe that the best way to ensure your pet remains happy, healthy, and safe is to have your pet spayed or neutered, vaccinated, and microchipped. By practicing these simple steps with your pet, you can avoid unwanted litters, help prevent disease, and keep your pet from being one of the 10 million pets that are lost each year.

HomeAgain® Pet Microchip Identification System is the most complete nationwide system for recovering lost or stolen pets. Microchipping involves implanting a microchip the size of a grain of rice between your pet's shoulder blades. Each chip encodes a distinct serial number, which is recorded in a national database. When an animal arrives at an animal shelter or veterinary clinic as a stray/lost pet, a scanner is used to identify the unique number on the implanted microchip and the owner is identified and contacted immediately. We strongly recommend that all companion animals of all species, breeds, and ages have the benefit of being microchipped.

One in three pets is lost during their lifetime and only one in ten is found.

Spaying and Neutering Your Cat

What Every Owner Should Know

- ❖ Sexual activity will not help your kitten mature mentally or physically. A cat will grow to its full potential with regards to size, weight and personality with proper diet, care, and love.
- ❖ Spaying or neutering cats will not make them obese. Cats become obese from too little exercise and too much food (or too many treats!)
- ❖ Personality and temperament are products of heredity and environment, **NOT HORMONES**. Altered pets may be less aggressive with other animals, but their basic reaction(s) to humans will remain the same.
- ❖ A cat that has never been allowed to be sexually active does not know any differently. Cats do not have 'feelings' about sexual activity like humans do. Such actions are only a means of reproduction.
- ❖ Spaying/neutering your cat will drastically reduce the chances they will develop cancer.
- ❖ Spaying your cat is cost effective, and breeding is not an easy way to make money. If you take proper care of a female and her litter, you will lose money. Also remember, for every kitten you place, you have taken away the chance of a stray kitten or cat being adopted from an animal shelter. Thousands of animals are euthanized annually due to lack of space.
- ❖ Neutering your male cat will eliminate the rancid smell of tomcat urine. Neutering or spaying will also reduce the likelihood of spraying/marking in the house.

Unsupervised mating can often cause physical damage to both male and female.

Proper Diet

Ensuring that your kitten lives and grows healthily starts with a proper diet. At Heartland Animal Hospital, we carry several brands and types of food designed to meet the changing needs of your cat. Any problem, from gastrointestinal upset to liver or kidney failure can be substantially benefited with a specialized diet.

It may be overwhelming to pick a diet when there are so many options to choose from. Whether you need help selecting a quality manufacturer to purchase from, or you can't decide whether your cat would benefit from a specialized diet, the staff at Heartland Animal Hospital would be happy to help you navigate your way through the decision-making process.

It is strongly recommended that you do not feed your cat human food. We know you may feel that as a "treat" once in a while, it will do no harm, but it could. Cats are creatures of habit and do not get bored with eating the same thing every day. It is also important to remember that feline digestive tracts are not designed to handle foods that are high in carbohydrates, fat, or sodium or those containing artificial sweeteners. Many popular snack foods fall under one of these categories, and while they are not so good for us, they are even worse for our pets. Even small amounts of these foods could cause a variety of issues, from mild to severe vomiting and diarrhea or even pancreatitis or death. If you would like to give a treat (in moderation), there are several good treats to choose from that are designed for cats. If you have questions about which treat is best for your cat, we would be happy to give suggestions!

Once we have helped you choose a high-quality food for your cat, it is important to make sure you don't over-feed your cat. All commercial pet diets include feeding guidelines on the bag, but these are only meant as a guide and may need to be adjusted (usually decreased) to keep your cat at an appropriate weight. Obesity is the most common nutritional disorder in pets. An obese pet may develop many health problems over time. This includes joint problems and a higher risk of cardiovascular disease and some cancers. An overweight pet can also have breathing difficulties and is at greater anesthetic and surgical risk.

There are several ways that you can prevent obesity or help a pet lose weight.

1. Designate one person in the household to feed the pet(s). Also make sure that they are feeding a measured amount of food that is appropriate for each pet's caloric needs.
2. Feed pets in the household separately so you know the exact amount each pet is eating.
3. Divide your pet's ration into 2-3 small meals daily. Digesting food takes calories, which means less food will be stored as fat with smaller, more frequent meals.
4. Reduce your pet's meal size by 25% to lower calorie intake.
5. Put pets in another room while you are eating to prevent begging for bites of your food.
6. Give affection instead of treats. Pats or throwing a favorite toy can be an appropriate alternative for giving treats.
7. Break treats into smaller pieces to make them last longer.
8. Most dogs and some cats enjoy fruits and vegetables in addition to their regular diet.

**Avoid grapes, raisins, garlic, and onions as those are extremely dangerous for cats and dogs. **

Grooming

The frequency and type of grooming needed for cats varies by owner preference, the breed, and the individual cat. Some owners prefer their longhaired cat to have short, trimmed fur, which requires shaving regularly. Other owners opt for natural, long fur, which requires careful attention to prevent matting. Some cats are avid groomers, while others may not be so attentive and may need assistance in keeping clean.

Due to their tendency to groom themselves regularly, most cats will not ever need to be bathed, unless otherwise directed by your veterinarian.

Brushing your cat provides health benefits and should not be limited to long-haired breeds. Regular brushing increases circulation in the skin, which keeps it healthy. It also helps remove hair that is ready to shed. A short-haired cat should be brushed at least 1-2 times weekly. A medium or long-haired cat should be brushed daily to prevent matting. Cats with long hair are especially prone to matting and hairballs if they are not brushed frequently enough. It is important to start brushing your kitten as young as possible to get them used to the routine.

It is important to keep your cat's nails trimmed as short as possible. You may be able to trim your cat's nails at home, or you may need the assistance of veterinary staff or a professional groomer. Clip your cat's nails every four weeks for optimal nail health. When nails are too long, they break easily and can damage your cat's feet.

Hairballs

Many cat owners overlook hairball prevention. Some cats chronically vomit food and owners don't realize it may be due to a hairball because they do not see hair in the vomit; however, it may still be hairball related. Even a small amount of hair in the cat's stomach can create enough irritation to cause vomiting. If the hair is not vomited up, it usually passes through the intestinal tract and into the stool. Symptoms of hairballs include vomiting, poor appetite, weight loss, and constipation. If the hairball gets too large, it may not be able to pass, and surgery will be required to remove it. If the hairball causes the cat to stop eating, the cat is at risk of developing a potentially fatal condition called hepatic lipidosis or fatty liver disease.

Regular use of Laxatone® can prevent hairballs. Starting cats on a hairball preventative early is ideal. Most cats, if started as kittens, think of the prevention as a treat and readily accept it. Most cats will lick Laxatone® off your finger or a dish. If your cat refuses to eat it, you may have to use a syringe and deliver it directly into the mouth. Ideally, you should give your cat 2-3cc of Laxatone® one to two times weekly as a preventative measure. Even if your cat enjoys Laxatone®, you may want to use a syringe, so you can measure the amount given. A diet that is high in fiber will also help with hairball control.

Dental Care

With recent advances in medical care, we have learned a great deal about dental disease in the companion animal. Not having a regular oral care program can put your pet at risk for health issues as they grow older. Plaque and tartar are breeding grounds for bacteria. As tartar builds up on the tooth surface, it is pushed below the gumline, introducing the bacteria to the bloodstream. At that point, bacteria are free to travel to internal organs, such as the heart, kidneys, and liver, where it can cause considerable damage. The key to combating dental disease in your pet is to start prevention early.

As a caregiver, there are several things you can do for your pet to reduce the buildup of plaque and tartar that will eventually lead to periodontal disease. This includes tooth brushing, oral hygiene solutions, providing a dental diet or dental treats, and regular dental cleaning.

When starting a dental program with your pet, short intervals are the key to success. You want him or her to warm up to the idea of having their teeth and gums brushed. You will find more in-depth instructions for toothbrushing on the next page. It is very important that appropriate animal toothpaste be used. **DO NOT USE HUMAN TOOTHPASTE** as the fluoride content is too high and will cause GI upset. We carry C.E.T. dental products and have a variety of flavors. For optimal oral health it is recommended that you brush your pet's teeth daily. Realistically, brushing teeth several times weekly is better than nothing.

To supplement daily brushing, you can add Dog::Essential Healthy Mouth™ or Oxyfresh® Pet Oral Hygiene Solution to your cat's drinking water to help reduce plaque build-up. Cat:: Essential Healthy Mouth™ is the first and only dental water additive to receive the VOHC® Seal of Acceptance for plaque control in cats and is recommended by leading board certified veterinary dentists around the world.

Even with preventative care, most pets will need to have a professional dental cleaning at some point in their life, just like we go to the dentist to have our teeth scaled to remove the tartar missed during preventative cleaning.

Cats are prone to Feline Odontoclastic Resorptive Lesions (FORLs). FORLs are characterized by progressive erosion of tooth surfaces. These resorptive lesions are painful because the pulp (area housing the nerve and blood vessels) is exposed. Other common signs include weight loss, tooth fracture, dehydration, and anorexia. As many as two-thirds of cats develop at least one FORL during their lifetime, and surgical extraction is the only treatment.

Teach Your Pet to Accept Tooth-brushing

Your goal is to be able to brush the outside surfaces of your pet's teeth once a day, using a soft-bristled toothbrush and veterinary toothpaste. This will not happen overnight, but with patience and a lot of positive reinforcement, you can be successful. Behavior modification techniques are listed below. The process may take several weeks (there may be two steps forward and one step back) – just stick with it and **keep it a positive experience for you and your pet.**

Select your training time

- Pets respond to routine, so be consistent with your training time.
- Pick a time of day when your pet is likely to be hungry, and pick a quiet time - not the first thing after you get home from work.

Choose their reward

- Pick a reward that motivates your pet - a food they LOVE, or playtime with their favorite toy.
- If you are using food, have tiny bits of the food available.

Set the surroundings, keep it positive

- A small dog may work best on your lap; a cat probably would be best next to you on a large chair or couch; a large dog should be asked to sit on the floor.
- Use a calm, gentle tone of voice. Maintain a positive attitude and demeanor – your pet will sense and respond to any anxiety that you have. If they think that this is a fun game that involves rewards, they will be eager to play.
- Be persistent, but have reasonable expectations about how fast you will progress.

Begin by handling and manipulating their mouth

- Start with a brief period of affectionate touching and giving treats if they are staying calm.
- Begin trying to gently touch/manipulate their mouth. As long as they are quiet, responding to requests and allowing you to manipulate their mouths, they get IMMEDIATE rewards. If they resist in any fashion...take your treats away and end the session.
- Slowly progress from manipulating the lips to running your fingers along the teeth and gums. Once they are comfortable with your hands, try a moist, soft cloth wrapped around your finger.
- It will likely take several sessions to work up to this point. Give rewards throughout, and end the session when they resist. Try again tomorrow!

Add in toothpaste

- Once they are comfortable with the cloth along their teeth, add a veterinary toothpaste or gel to the cloth.
- Keep up the praise and rewards!

Introduce the toothbrush

- The next step is to bring the toothbrush out - touch it to their face, put it under their lips and gently work it around. Pick a toothbrush that is easy for you to use.
- If they like their toothpaste, have them start by licking toothpaste off the toothbrush. Don't forget the praise!

Start brushing!

- Use a circular motion and focus on the gumline. Concentrate on the outside surfaces of the teeth, under the lips.
- Eventually you can work up to spending about 2-3 minutes brushing the entire mouth, ideally once a day.

Hazardous Household Products

It's only natural for animals to be curious, but that curiosity can get them into trouble when they get into items that are dangerous for them. Many common household items that you use every day can be harmful, and sometimes lethal, to your pet.

Foods

Alcohol
Apricots
Avocados
Bones
Caffeine
Cherries
Chocolate
Chives
Coffee
Coconut
Garlic
Grapes/raisins
Macadamia nuts
Milk/dairy products
Nuts
Onions
Peaches
Raw/undercooked eggs and meat
Rhubarb
Tomato plants
Xylitol

Common Household Items

Prescription and non-prescription human medications
Antifreeze and other car fluids
Bleach and other cleaning products
Boric acid
Breath fresheners
Deodorants/deodorizers
De-icing salts
Essential oils
Furniture/shoe polish
Fabric softener sheets
Gasoline
Insecticides
Kerosene
Lilies/ lily pollen
Mothballs
Mosquito repellent
Paint
Rat poison
Tulips

Symptoms of possible poisoning include vomiting, diarrhea, difficulty breathing, salivation, and weakness. If your pet ingests harmful chemicals, contact us or a poison control center (888-426-4435) immediately.

The ASPCA Poison Control Center offers a free, downloadable app for Apple® and Android® phones to make it easier determine which plants, foods, and household items that are dangerous for your pet. For more information, visit the website at <https://www.asPCA.org/pet-care/animal-poison-control/apcc-mobile-app>.

Pet Insurance

Being a responsible pet owner includes taking care of your pet's emotional and physical wellbeing. In the event of an emergency, do you have the means to get your pet the care they would need? Some pet owners opt to set aside money each month in an "emergency savings account" for their pet's needs. For others, pet insurance is a good option to cover unexpected medical bills. There is no one "correct" option, and if you are unsure if pet insurance is for you, you may find the following website helpful:

Pet Insurance University

This website delves into the basics of pet insurance and helps you decide if pet insurance is the best option for you.

http://www.pet-insurance-university.com/guide_to_pet_insurance.html

Each insurance company has its own protocols and coverage options, so while we are providing a list of reputable companies for your convenience, we highly encourage you to do your own research and find the best fit for you and your pet. Below you will find a list of some reputable pet insurance companies. This is by no means a comprehensive list; there are many more options available, but these are among the more popular.

ASPCA

<https://www.aspcapetinsurance.com>

Trupanion

<http://trupanion.com/pet/insurance>

Petplan

<https://www.gopetplan.com>

Nationwide

<https://www.petinsurance.com>

Embrace

<https://www.embracepetinsurance.com/>

Pet Insurance Review

This website will help you compare the benefits offered by the various companies offering pet insurance, so you can be sure to choose the one that works for you!

<https://www.petinsurancereview.com/>

Important Phone numbers

Iowa Veterinary Referral Center (Emergencies)

Open 24 hours per day, seven days a week
4631 Merle Hay Road, Des Moines, IA 50322
(515) 727-4872

Iowa Veterinary Specialties (Emergencies)

Open 24 hours per day, seven days a week
6110 Creston Avenue, Des Moines, IA 50321
(515) 280-3051

Iowa State University-Hixson-Lied Small Animal Hospital (Emergencies)

1809 S. Riverside Drive, Ames, IA 50010
515-294-4900

Des Moines Animal Control

(515) 283-4811

Des Moines Animal Care and Control

(515) 284-6905

West Des Moines Animal Control

(515) 222-3321

Urbandale Animal Control

(515) 278-3911

Windsor Heights Animal Control

(515) 279-3662

Clive Animal Control

(515) 278-1312

Animal Recue League of Iowa (Main)

(515) 266-2005

Poison Control

(888) 426-4434