

# Feline Preventive Care to Keep Your Cat Healthy and Happy!

## Physical Examination

A comprehensive physical examination is suggested on an annual or semi-annual basis. Just as with people, a physical examination is the most important component of an office visit, allowing the veterinarian to completely examine your pet and discuss any medical problems found. All systems are checked including teeth, heart, lungs, ears, eyes, and skin.

## Vaccinations-- Vaccinations are recommended based on prior vaccine history, age, health, and risk factors.

- **Rabies Vaccination:** A vaccination that is required by the state government annually or triennially for both dogs and cats. Approximately 30,000 people die from rabies worldwide, but only about 3 are in the U.S. because of strict rabies vaccination requirements. Continued vaccination is the only way to protect the human population. The safest vaccine available for cats is currently labeled for 1 year. A county tag is required by law to be purchased annually.
- **Feline Distemper Combination Vaccination (FVRCP):** A vaccination for cats that protects against respiratory diseases (Rhinothracheitis and Calici virus) and Panleukopenia (distemper). All are highly contagious viruses and can be fatal. Contact with other cats is not necessary to become infected. We recommend the FVRCP every 3 years after their initial series and first year booster.
- **Feline Leukemia (FeLV) Vaccination:** FeLV virus severely depresses the immune system so the cat's body can't fight off diseases. The feline leukemia virus is a major cause of death in cats. Outdoor cats are at the greatest risk. There is no successful treatment, but there is a vaccine. Testing for feline leukemia should be done prior to vaccination as this disease can be transmitted from mother to newborn or can lay dormant in the cat for years before symptoms are present. We recommend vaccinating all kittens and then annually based on risk factors.

## Parasite Control-- Monthly application of Revolution is recommended for all cats for basic parasite control

- **Intestinal Parasite Analysis and Deworming Medication:** Regular microscopic examination of your pet's stool should be done every 6-12 months for early detection and treatment. People can get roundworm and hookworm infections from their pets. The Centers for Disease Control estimate that 10,000 children annually become infected from worms from animals. If your pet screens negative for intestinal parasites, a broad-spectrum deworming medication is recommended because adult worms may not be shedding eggs in the stool and would be undetectable. If your pet tests positive, additional deworming medication will be prescribed. Kittens should be dewormed at 2,4,6,8, and 10 weeks of age for roundworms and hookworms.
- **Heartworm Prevention:** Heartworm disease occurs in approximately 20% of cats. Both indoor and outdoor cats are at risk. Unlike dogs, there is no cure for heartworm disease in cats. Heartworm disease is rapidly fatal in cats. Prevention is best.
- **Flea and Tick Control:** Fleas can also cause a number of severe problems, including allergic dermatitis caused by the saliva of the flea bite. Fleas can also spread other diseases, such as tapeworms and hemobartonella.

## Wellness Screenings

- **Leukemia/AIDS Blood Test:** Early detection of infection with these deadly viruses can help maintain the health of your pet as well as allow you to prevent spreading infection to other cats. Testing is recommended if your pet has never been tested before, if your cat is sick, if your cat is newly adopted, if your cat has recently been exposed to an infected cat, if your cat is ever outdoors unsupervised, and prior to receiving an FeLV vaccine.
- **Adult (1-6) Wellness Screening:** Recommended annually to screen your pet for anemia, infection, liver disease, kidney disease, and diabetes. Many diseases can be treated successfully if caught early. Once symptoms occur many diseases require much more intensive care, have a lower chance of success, and cost much more to treat.
- **Senior (7+) Wellness Screening:** Blood and urine screening recommended yearly on pets seven years or older which helps detect many of the problems caused by aging (kidney, liver, heart, heartworm disease, thyroid, diabetes, bladder infections, etc.). Many diseases can be treated successfully or controlled if caught early.

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Suggested websites for information on behavior, training, and medical problems: [www.amc-la.com](http://www.amc-la.com),  
[www.healthypet.com](http://www.healthypet.com), [www.petplace.com](http://www.petplace.com), and [www.petsforlife.com](http://www.petsforlife.com)

**Animal Medical Center of Lehigh Acres**