

Ask the Vet

Elizabeth Brumback Eilers, DVM



Dr. Elizabeth Eilers is a Greensboro native and a graduate of NC State University. Joining the Cat Clinic in 2003, she recently became owner of the practice. Dr. Eilers has practiced veterinary medicine for 11 years, and previously practiced in small animal and emergency medicine in Wilmington, NC and Southern California. She enjoys getting to know her patients and their owners, and loves the challenge and fun of feline medicine. She has one cat and one dog at home.

Q I recently adopted a cat from the shelter. What does he need to have done at his first visit to the vet?

A 1) A thorough physical exam is the first and most important reason to visit your vet after adopting a new pet, regardless of their age. Cats living in multi-cat facilities, such as shelters and catteries have a higher chance of being exposed to certain contagious diseases, such as upper respiratory viruses and ringworm. They can also be carrying intestinal parasites and fleas as well.

2) Most animals adopted from the shelter have already been neutered but if they have not, scheduling these procedures should be done as soon as your cat is old enough.

3) Your cat should be tested for Feline Leukemia virus (FELV), especially if you have other cats at home. It is also recommended that any cat over 6 months of age be tested for Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV).

4) A routine fecal exam to test for intestinal parasites is recommended. Bringing a fresh fecal sample with you to the vet is helpful and makes the exam less stressful for your cat.

5) If your cat has not already been microchipped, you may want to consider having that done. We are seeing more cases of lost pets being reunited with their families because they had a microchip.

6) Vaccines are an important part of keeping your cat healthy but not all vaccines are created equal and not all cats need every kind of vaccine available. Your veterinarian can make the best recommendations for your cat based on his or her age, history and exposure risk.

Q How do I introduce my new cat to my current cat or dog?

A Bringing a new cat into your home can be stressful to them and to your current pets. Younger cats tend to accept change pretty readily but older cats can be a little resistant to a new cat in the house. It is natural for there to be some "politics" in the first few days as each cat establishes their place in the house. Gradually introducing your pets can help ease the anxiety they may be feeling. Allowing your new pet to become familiar with one room in your home may help them. Introduce them slowly to the rest of the house. Have your new and current pets eat on blankets or towels that have the scent of the other animal on them.

Q What do I need to know about bringing a kitten home?

A Kittens are exuberant explorers and kitten-proofing your home is recommended to help keep them as safe as possible. Watch for electric cords, a favorite for some cats to chew on. String, yarn, rubber bands, floss and other items may seem like good play toys but if ingested can lead to serious, even life threatening problems. Some medications like Tylenol and Ibuprofen can be deadly for your cat. Most household plants

Caring for your cats for over 21 years

CAT CLINIC
of Greensboro

Elizabeth Brumback Eilers, DVM
Angela Bentley, DVM

- Medicine, laser surgery & dentistry
- Complete health care facilities
- Behavioral consultations
- Boarding in kitty condos
- Preventive health programs

545-3390 | 2449 Battleground Avenue
www.catclinicofgreensboro.com

have some level of toxicity and can be tempting for cats to chew on. Make sure there aren't things lying around the house that can harm your pet. Preventing health problems by limiting risks can go a long way towards keeping your new cat healthy.

Q What do I need to do to make sure I keep my cat healthy?

A Routine exams, at least yearly for younger cats and every 6 months for older cats is recommended. Cats are not small dogs – they are really good at hiding how they feel and may not ever let on that they are sick. Blood work can be an important tool in helping your vet determine if your cat is healthy, or if he may be hiding a serious illness. Learning to watch for the signs that may indicate something is wrong with your cat is important also – changes in behavior, eating and grooming habits, as well as an increase in thirst and urination are just some of the things you should take note of.

Most of us are aware of the importance of heartworm prevention for dogs but it is very important for your cat as well. It is estimated that over 26% of all cats have been exposed to heartworm disease and 10-15% of cats may have adult heartworms. That is higher than the risk of FELV and FIV infection in your cat! Heartworm disease affects cats differently than dogs and there is no effective or safe treatment once your cat is infected. In the Southeast United States, where mosquitos are a problem year-round, keeping your cat on monthly heartworm preventative is strongly recommended.