



# Minnetonka Animal Hospital

3318 Groveland School Road Minnetonka, MN 55391  
(952) 473-1239

## Useful Information for Cat Owners

**The single most important component of preventative health care for your animal companion is the comprehensive physical examination. The information we gather becomes part of the medical history and it is critical in case of illness or an emergency. Even the most observant of animal caretakers will miss signs of impending illness because they develop with subtlety, and there is no substitute for having them physically evaluated. Listed below is additional information about important components of maintaining a healthy kitten.**

### FELINE LEUKEMIA / FIV

Both of these viral diseases may be transmitted through saliva and close contact between infected cats. They can weaken the immune system & potentially lead to secondary infections and/or cancer. For outdoor cats, we recommend the leukemia vaccine after discussing its advantages and disadvantages. The vaccine, on rare occasions, has been associated with cancer given at the injection site. This occurs at a rate of 1 in 10,000 to 100,000 cats & treatment involves surgery & chemotherapy. Although we have a blood test that can detect FIV infection, we currently do not have an effective vaccine to help prevent the disease. *Since both viral diseases are life-threatening and contagious to other cats, a Feline Leukemia and FIV test should be performed for any new cat(s) in a household.*

### SPAY/CASTRATION

Many young animals are destroyed each year because there is an overpopulation of intact companion animals. Cats can be castrated or spayed between 5-6 months of age. It is NOT better for females to wait until their first heat because their risk of mammary cancer increases as they continue to cycle. Non-castrated males display a tendency to roam and they may exhibit urine spraying / marking, which can be a problem.

### DENTAL CARE

Dental disease is extremely common and can be prevented by brushing your companion's teeth. For those pets more prone to dental problems, or those intolerant of home care, we recommend an appointment for dental cleaning & polishing (this procedure is called a dental prophylaxis). A prophylaxis will prevent & reduce the permanent changes to surrounding tissue & bone, and therefore, prevent the need for teeth extractions. Severe dental disease can cause difficulty in chewing & pain. As dental disease has been linked to heart, liver and kidney disease we will emphasize dental care and prevention.

### DECLAWING

Cats derive enjoyment from scratching with their claws. It helps them to mark out their territory and it keeps them sharp in case of an emergency. We try our best to educate owners about the pros and cons of declawing and promote weekly trimming as a way of keeping claws from causing significant damage. Please see our handout about trimming your cat's claws.



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### Pet Sitters

Happy Tails *will take diabetic cats*	952-935-8244
Lake Minnetonka Pet Sitters	952-472-8877
Leashes & Litter boxes	952-412-4846
Pampered Paws	952-906-0303

### Boarding Facilities

Cat Nap Inn (Shorewood)	952-470-6339
Hound Dog Pet Hotel *will take diabetic cats* (Eden Prairie)	952-949-0077
Just Cats (Minnetonka)	952-470-9196
Kingdale Kennels (Eden Prairie)	952-941-2928
Paws, Claws & Hooves Pet Boarding-limited space (Chanhassen)	952-445-6403

### Grooming

Bone Adventure (Wayzata)	952-473-0227
Lulu & Luigi (Wayzata & St. Louis Park)	952-929-Lulu

### Pet Food/Supplies

Minnetonka Animal Hospital	952-473-1239
Bennis Feed (Minnetonka)	952-935-8890
Bone Adventure (Wayzata)	952-473-0227
Lakewinds (Minnetonka)	952-473-0292
Lulu & Luigi (Wayzata & St. Louis Park)	952-929-Lulu
Pet Stuff (Minnetonka)	952-930-9383
Pet Food Outlet (Minneapolis)	612-926-8161

### Useful Web Sites

- [www.mvma.org](http://www.mvma.org) Minnesota Veterinary Medical Association
- [www.peteducation.com](http://www.peteducation.com) general pet information
- [www.catsunited.com](http://www.catsunited.com) cool stuff, facts, and info.
- [www.i-love-cats.com](http://www.i-love-cats.com) interactive site with postcards, cat chat, comics, etc.
- [www.cats.about.com](http://www.cats.about.com) from adoption to literature to art, a wealth of good information
- [www.healthypet.com/](http://www.healthypet.com/) Information from the American Animal Hospital Association



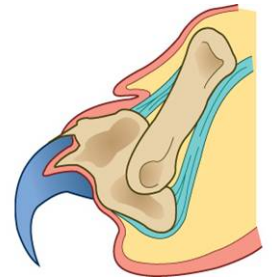
## **TRIMMING YOUR CAT'S CLAWS**

### **WHY DO CATS CLAW?**

Cats claw to sharpen or condition the nails just like you do with an emery board, and to mark territory to reassure himself that he has a safe place to exist. In addition, cats experience considerable pleasure and have a sense of power from their feet and claws. They enjoy the act of clawing and derive exercise from it as well.

### **WHAT IS DECLAWING?**

The feline is unique in its ability to extend and retract its claws, and this facilitates footing for springing, walking, running, and climbing. Declawing involves the amputation of the last joint of each toe. Most people believe only the nail is removed but this is not true. Part of the bone is also removed to prevent the claw from regrowing. There also may be healing complications from the proced



Below is a 3-point program that helps to train your kitten or re-train an older cat:

#### **1. Trim your cat's nails regularly!**

For best results use a pair of fingernail clippers or pet nail trimmers. Sit the cat in your lap as you'd hold a baby and take a front foot between your thumb and forefinger. Gently press on the toes until the claw appears. You will see a dark red wedge shaped vein running through the claw. Trim the claw about an 1/8th of an inch up to the vein so as not to cut it. If you happen to cut the quick plunge the nail into some cornstarch or flour, or treat it with kwik stop. Remember, the more relaxed you are the more your cat will tolerate restraint. It is often best to catch a kitten sleeping or in a quiet mood to make trimming easier at first. As you continue to trim the nail the vein will get smaller, enabling you to cut more of the nail each time.

#### **2. Make a scratching post your cat will use!**

Take a real look at what your cat already likes to scratch on when thinking about making a scratching post. Chances are it's big, tall, and sturdy, and is covered with woven or knobby fabric. Make the post at least 40 inches tall and if possible make it floor to ceiling. Use tightly woven or knobby carpet or use sisal rope. Other ideas would be to take a tree log with rough bark and mount it on a sturdy base. Catnip can be placed on and around the post. Put the post by the couch if that is where he is scratching and slowly move it to a more acceptable area. Your cat will need to claw something so good options will ensure that he spares your furniture!

#### **3. Train your cat to claw where he is supposed to do it!**

Show your cat his new, wonderful scratching post. Place his paws on it and move them. If you catch him clawing furniture calmly pick him up and place him on his new post. Be consistent with this and eventually it will work. A little squirt of water from a spray bottle can be added encouragement to stop clawing a favorite chair!