

Caring for Your Cat at Any Age:

The Purina Pet Institute's
Health and Wellness Checklist



 **PURINA**
Advancing Life™

The Purina Pet Institute's Health and Wellness Checklist

When a cat graces your life, you want nothing more than to give him the gift of a long, healthy, happy existence. Your cat will have a better chance at such a life if you invest in a “wellness program” that includes routine wellness check-ups at home and at the veterinarian.

The Purina Pet Institute is dedicated to helping all cats live longer, healthier lives. We've created this booklet to give you the tools you need to perform regular “wellness check-ups” with your cat at home. It also includes general guidelines of when your cat should visit the veterinarian and what to expect and discuss during these visits.

But this brochure is just the beginning. There is a wealth of other information on our web site at www.Purina.com, including the complete *“Caring for Your Pet at Any Age: The Purina Pet Institute's Pet Health & Wellness Guide”* for dogs and cats.

Regular monitoring of your cat's health and behavior is the best defense against serious, preventable problems. So whether your feline friend is six months, six years or 16 years old, treat him to a “wellness program” – it can affect not only the years your cat lives but also how well he lives.



ROUTINE HOME HEALTH CHECK-UP:



Monitoring your cat's health at home is one of the prime responsibilities of cat ownership. You should get in the habit of conducting a periodic home health check once a month or during weekly grooming sessions. For kittens and senior cats, a home health check should be performed once a week.

Refer to this **C-A-T S-C-A-N** chart to determine what to look for when conducting a health check-up at home.

What to Look for:

C

COAT AND BODY:

Smooth, thick, shiny coat. Free of lumps, tumors, ticks, fleas, greasiness, dandruff and bare patches. When scanning the body, pay attention to the nose, ears and eyes. Nose should be moist and free of discharge or sores. Eyes should be bright and clear without discharge, irritation, discoloration, tearing or cloudiness.

A

ACTIVITY:

No changes in activity level. Make sure your cat is not showing signs of stiffness, pain or limping when walking. Also watch out for excessive panting or changes in breathing patterns when engaging in physical activity. Make sure your cat is getting the proper activity on a daily basis.

T

TEETH:

No evidence of excessive tartar buildup. Pink gums with no redness or swelling, bad breath, sores or growths.

S

SENSES:

Any changes in response to smells, the sound of your voice, tastes, etc.

C

CHANGES IN YOUR CAT'S...

1. Eating and drinking habits

Any changes in amount of food and water normally consumed. Make sure that there are no signs of increased or decreased thirst or hunger.

2. Urine and bowel movements

Any changes in the appearance or frequency when your cat is urinating or defecating. No signs of pain when urinating or defecating. Anus should be free from swelling, with no evidence of internal parasites (excessive scratching, licking or chewing in this area are signs).

A

ATTITUDE:

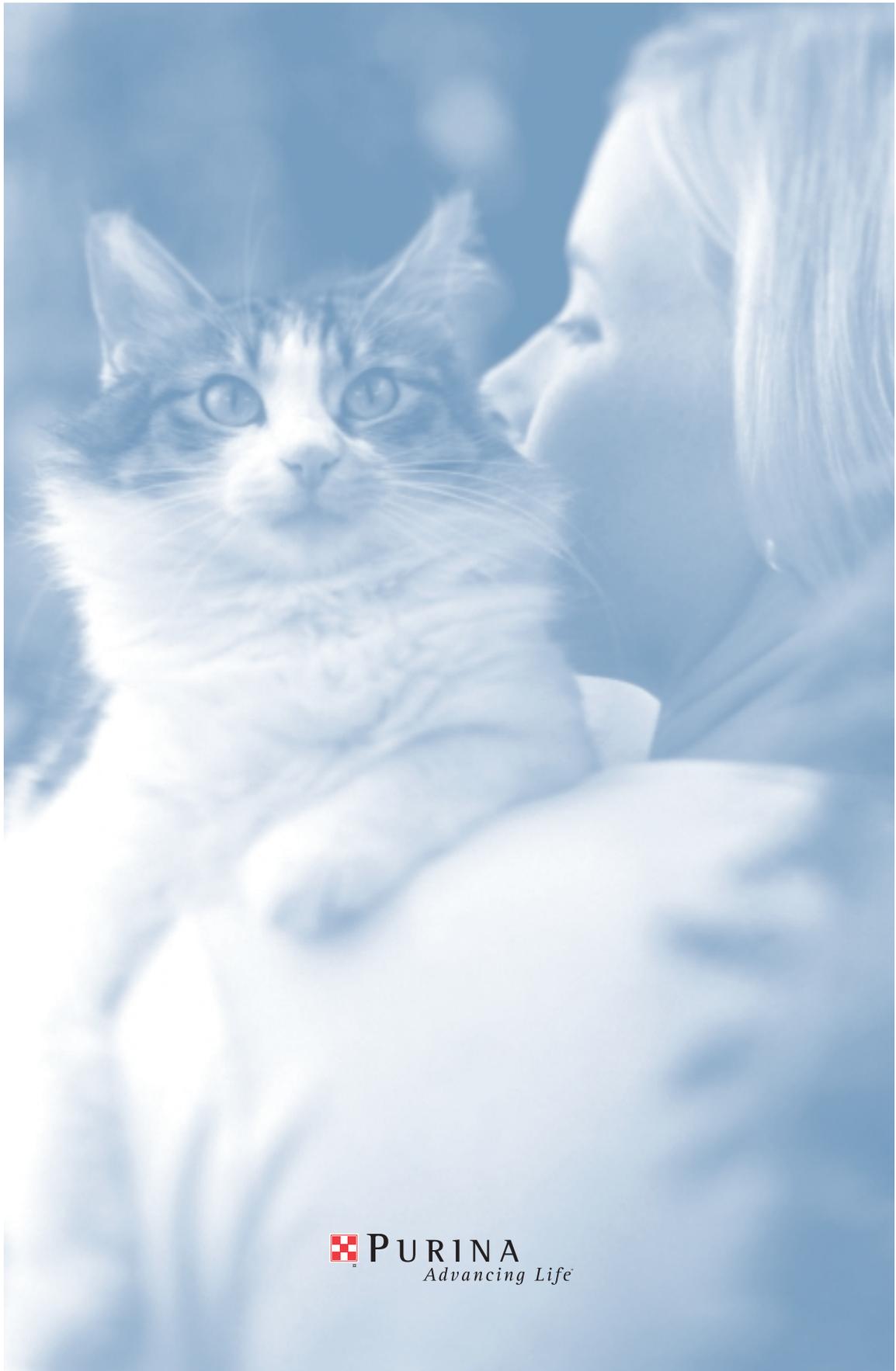
Any changes in normal responsiveness and interaction with family, sleeping or meowing patterns, signs of confusion, disorientation or lethargy.

N

NUTRITION:

Kittens, cats and senior cats have different nutritional requirements, so be sure to provide your cat with food that is appropriate for his age. Is your cat in ideal body condition? Ask your veterinarian to give your cat a Body Condition Score to make sure your cat is not carrying too much weight for his breed and size. Or perform a Purina Rib Check:

1. Begin by placing both thumbs on your cat's backbone. Run your fingers along the rib cage. If you can't easily feel the bony part of each rib, your cat may need to lose weight.
2. While your cat is standing, stand directly over him and look down at him. You should see a slight indentation or waist behind the ribs. If your cat curves out instead of in, he may be carrying extra pounds.
3. Check your cat's profile. If you don't see a clearly defined abdomen tucked up behind his rib cage, he is probably overweight.



 **PURINA**
Advancing Life

VETERINARY CARE GUIDELINES FOR KITTENS

0-12 Months

Kittens must visit the veterinarian two to three times in their first year for immunizations and routine health care. As soon as you bring your new kitten home, you should take him to the veterinarian for an initial exam. The following wellness checklist for kittens outlines some of the important health care your kitten needs during the first year. This should only be used as a guide — it is important that you work together with your veterinarian to ensure your kitten is receiving the appropriate health care, which may differ based on your cat's age and background or the part of the country where you live.

Kitten's Age	Veterinary Visit to Include:	Things to Consider:
10-14 weeks	<p>A baseline physical examination, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fecal examination and heartworm test (if possible, bring along a recent stool sample in a plastic bag) <p>Veterinary visit for core vaccinations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1st vaccinations for Feline Viral Rhinotracheitis, Calicivirus and Panleukopenia (FVR-CP) FeLV and FIV test <p>Ask your veterinarian if the following non-core vaccinations are necessary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feline Leukemia Virus (FeLV) Feline Infectious Peritonitis (FIP) vaccination 	<p>Important for first visit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be prepared to give the kitten's history (birth date, any vaccinations dates if applicable, health history, etc.) Discuss core and non-core vaccinations with your veterinarian and establish vaccination schedule: <p>Core vaccinations are those required by law or recommended for all cats</p> <p>Non-Core vaccinations should depend on your veterinarian's recommendation and your pet's lifestyle</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Find out if there are any special care instructions you need to be aware of after your kitten has been vaccinated Discuss spay/neuter procedure with veterinarian and schedule if possible If you are considering declawing, discuss options with your veterinarian (nail covers, tendonectomy, etc.) Have your veterinarian show you how to clip your cat's nails Find out the clinic's hours, location, and emergency pet clinic number <p>Now is a great time to kitten-proof your home including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Securely screen all windows and store poisonous material Keep doors, drawers, cabinets and toilet lids closed
14-16 weeks		<p>Now is a great time to introduce weekly grooming sessions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Start with short sessions Softly handle the paws so your kitten is comfortable when you clip his nails Stroke around his cheeks and mouth and rub his gums to get your kitten used to dental care and check-ups Gently brush his entire body, including the underside Reassure and praise your kitten as you groom (to make the experience a pleasant one)
4-6 months		
16 weeks (4 months)	<p>Veterinary visit for booster vaccinations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2nd vaccinations for Feline Viral Rhinotracheitis, and Calicivirus <p>Possible non-core boosters for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2nd Feline Leukemia Virus Vaccination (FeLV) <p>Ask your veterinarian if the following vaccinations would be beneficial to your cat:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feline Infectious Peritonitis (FIP) Rabies <p>Discuss schedule for spaying/neutering</p>	<p>Now is a great time to establish an exercise routine with your pet:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make a consistent exercise and playtime schedule Play games using your cat's toys or play hide-and-seek <p>Now is a great time to begin cleaning your kitten's teeth on a regular basis. Ask your veterinarian to recommend the proper dental tools and techniques:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gently rub a soft cloth with baking soda and water along the teeth and gums Pet supply stores also sell cat toothbrushes and specially formulated pet toothpastes – never use toothpaste formulated for humans <p>Schedule spaying or neutering</p>
24 weeks (6 months)	<p>Veterinary visit, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical exam for overall development and body condition Fecal examination Examination of cat's teeth and gums Spaying/Neutering surgery, if not already completed 	<p>Recommended questions for the veterinarian:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is my cat's weight in a healthy range? A kitten's energy needs decrease after spaying or neutering, so be sure to adjust the amount of food fed to maintain an ideal body condition. How do I perform a Rib Check? How often should I do one? Mention any concerns you have with kitten's health and development Discuss training issues you are having and your veterinarian's recommendations



 **PURINA**
Advancing Life

VETERINARY CARE GUIDELINES FOR ADULT CATS: 1-7 Years Old



Regular health care is essential throughout your cat's adult life. In general, healthy adult cats should visit the veterinarian once a year. As an easy reminder, you may want to schedule the annual check-up around your cat's birthday. Use this checklist to help guide you through your cat's adult years and ensure you're on top of all your cat's physical health needs. However, it is important that you work with your veterinarian to establish the appropriate health plan for your cat.

Cat's Age	Annual Check-Up to Include:	Things to Consider:
Age 1-7	<p>Annual:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical examination • Weight analysis and Body Condition Score • Nutrition counseling as necessary <p>As recommended by veterinarian:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blood drawn for CBC • Blood chemistry profile • Thyroid profile • Fecal examination • Heartworm <p>Core vaccinations boosters for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feline Distemper, Rhinotracheitis and Calicivirus (FVR-CP) <p>Non-core vaccinations may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rabies Vaccination (each year according to local law by your veterinarian) • Chlamydia (Pneumonitis) (where chlamydia is a concern) • Feline Leukemia Virus (FeLV) • Feline Infectious Peritonitis (FIP) 	<p>Recommended questions for the veterinarian:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is my cat's general health? • What should I be watching for to maintain optimum health? • Is my cat's weight in a healthy range? If not, what should I do? • Which vaccines does my cat need? • Discuss your cat's activity level. Is he getting enough exercise? What activities does the veterinarian recommend? • Discuss any training issues you may be having and solicit your veterinarian's recommendations



 **PURINA**
Advancing Life

VETERINARY CARE GUIDELINES FOR SENIOR CATS: 7 Years Old and Up



Regular health care is essential throughout your cat's adult life, particularly as your cat gets older. In general, healthy senior cats should visit the veterinarian every six months. Use this checklist to help guide you through your cat's senior years and ensure you're on top of all your cat's physical health needs, but work closely with your veterinarian to establish the appropriate health plan for your cat.

Cat's Age	Six-Month Check-Ups to Include:	Things to Consider:
<p>7 years old and older</p>	<p>Regular health checks are advisable every six months. Visits may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical examination • Weight analysis and Body Condition Score • Nutrition counseling as necessary <p>As recommended by veterinarian:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blood drawn for CBC • Blood chemistry profile • Thyroid profile • Fecal examination • Heartworm <p>Annual core vaccinations boosters for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feline Distemper, Rhinotracheitis and Calicivirus (FVR-CP) <p>Non-core vaccinations may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rabies Vaccination (each year according to local law by your veterinarian) • Chlamydia (Pneumonitis) (where chlamydia is a concern) • Feline Leukemia Virus (FeLV) • Feline Infectious Peritonitis (FIP) <p>As your cat gets older, give him a thorough home check-up every week to catch any signs of ill health.</p> <p>Conduct a Rib Check and assess your cat's body condition on a monthly basis, as senior cats are prone to gaining weight.</p>	<p>Things to Discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any changes in behavior, activity level or appearance • Weight – Is your cat a healthy weight? If not, how can you tell? • Exercise – Is your cat getting any? What type and how often? Is the activity still appropriate for your cat's age and health condition? <p>A few things you can do:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check your cat's eyes for discharge. Has your cat shown any sign of decreasing vision like bumping into things? • Check the ears for a bad smell, which could indicate an ear infection. • Check the fur and scalp for any black specks of flea dirt. Increased dandruff can be a sign of poor diet, fleas or underlying liver problems. • Look for matted fur: if mats occur in a shorthaired cat, painful gums could be preventing your cat from its usual grooming routine. • Check your cat's anus: a small white rice grain may indicate your cat has a tapeworm.



 **PURINA**
Advancing Life