



WASHTENAW COUNTY 4-H

Feline Showmanship and Information



Feline Showmanship and Information

- Types of Cats
- Husbandry
- Vaccinations
- Parasites and Prevention
- Common Communicable Diseases
- Common Non-Communicable Diseases
- Fitting
- Presentation and Examination



Types of Cats

■ Feral Cats

- These are domestic cats that have been born outside and have limited human contact.
- They often have “jobs” and help control rodent populations in barns, greenhouses or communities.
- Because of their limited human contact most are afraid of humans and will run or hide when approached.
- These cats are typically born outside and some become part of the TNR (Trap, Neuter, Return) movement.
- On average these cats have a shortened life span of approximately 8 years. However, with expert care from a colony caregiver they can live much longer.



Types of Cats

- Stray Cats
 - These cats have typically been exposed to humans and do not fear them as a feral cat.
 - In many cases these cats have escaped their homes or are released by their owners to the outdoors.
 - They can be friendly and some are brought to rescues by good humans to be adopted by a new family.
 - Sometimes these cats also have microchips and can be traced back to their original owners in the event of accidental escape or emergency.

Types of Cats

- Domestic Cats
 - These are the cats that live in our houses and are considered part of the family.
 - Sometimes these cats have once been stray but have been socialized and now live peacefully with humans and rely on them for all of their needs.
 - Unless purchased from a breeder they are typically listed as one of three types: Domestic Shorthair, Domestic Mediumhair, or Domestic Longhair.
 - If your cat has been purchased from the breeder it is important to know the common standards of the breed as well as disposition for common diseases.



Husbandry

- Diet

- Cats are obligate carnivores, meaning they require a meat protein in their diet.
- Commercially available cat diets are fully balanced and provide all dietary needs.
- Taurine is an important component of feline diets.
- Diets can be of two varieties: dry (kibble) and moist (canned).
- Encouraging canned food intake can be beneficial to the feline diet to help control kidney conditions later in life.



Husbandry

- Water

- Most cats do not take in enough water, so encouraging water intake is recommended especially for male cats who are prone to urinary blockages.
- Some cats prefer water with movement, using a pet fountain may be preferred or drinking from a dripping tap.
- Cats should always be provided a fresh water bowl that is changed and cleaned frequently.



Husbandry

▪ Litter

- Cats have an instinct to bury their eliminations including both urine and stool.
- Providing an appropriate place for them to do this is important for both their health and hygiene.
- There are several different litter substrate but cats seems to prefer a simple clumping un-scented clay litter.
- Because cats have a strong sense of smell using a litter that have a scent is not recommended.
- Scooping or changing the litter often is necessary to maintain a clean environment. Scooping daily is the standard of litter box care.
- Some cats prefer a large open style box, while some prefer an enclosed type box.
- It's important to be consistent with litter attention.



Husbandry

■ Environment

- Cats need stimulation to keep them happy and healthy.
- This can be obtained by play, other cats, scratching posts and climbing trees.
- Because cats in the wild spend their time hunting, cats in the house need this same stimulation to prevent unwanted behaviors.
- Wand type toys and interactive feeding is one way to simulate a hunting type situation.
- Cats also naturally prefer to be up high so providing a cat tree or a cat highway above the floor will also help curb unwanted behaviors.



Husbandry

■ Grooming

- What time cats aren't eating or sleeping they spend cleaning and grooming themselves.
- Have you ever noticed your cat cleaning their face after a good meal?
- Most cats do not require bathing unless they have gotten something really undesirable on their coats.
- Some long haired cats can become easily matted so regular brushing is recommended.
- It is also important to keep your indoor cats nails neatly trimmed, especially in their older years to avoid ingrown nails.



Vaccinations

- Rabies Vaccine

- This is the most important core vaccine for your cat.
- Rabies is a 100% fatal disease that is preventable with yearly (or every three year) vaccine.
- In 2018, there has already been two rabies positive bats in Washtenaw County, the most common wild animal to encounter in your home.



Vaccinations

- FELINE RHINOTRACHEITIS, CALICI, AND PANLEUKOPENIA (DISTEMPER, FVRCP) VACCINATION
 - THIS IS ALSO KNOWN AS THE UPPER RESPIRATORY VIRUS COMPLEX.
 - AS KITTENS THIS IS AN IMPORTANT VACCINE AS URIS ARE VERY COMMON.
 - THIS VACCINE IS GIVEN IN A SERIES TO KITTENS OR ADULTS WITH UNKNOWN VACCINE HISTORY AND IS THEN GIVEN AT ONE YEAR AND THEN EVERY THREE YEARS.
 - IT MAY BE RECOMMENDED THAT THIS VACCINE BE GIVEN MORE FREQUENTLY IN HIGH RISK CASES.
 - THIS VACCINE CAN BE GIVEN AS AN INJECTION OR INTRANASAL.



Vaccinations

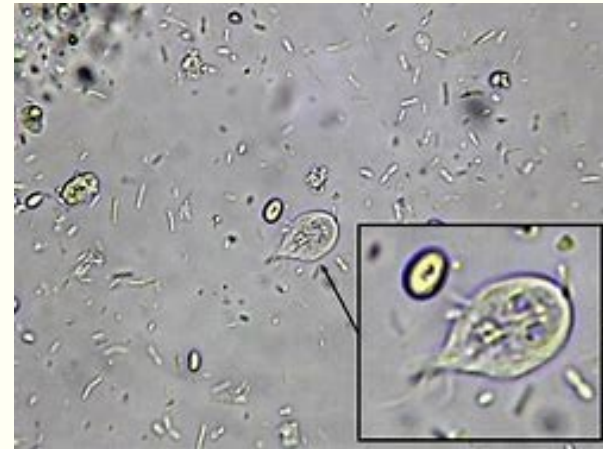
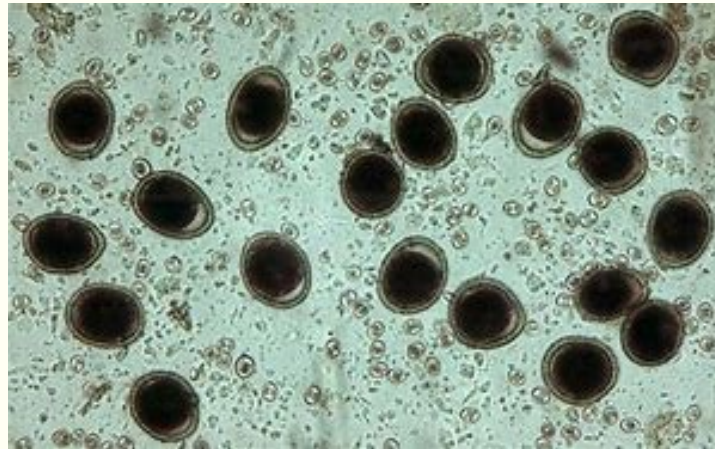
- Feline Leukemia

- This vaccine is NOT considered a core vaccine for indoor only or low risk cats.
- It is recommended for those that spend time outdoors unsupervised where they may come in contact with an infected cat.
- This virus can be spread through friendly contact. A cat does not need to fight with a positive cat for transmission to be possible.



Parasites & Prevention

- Intestinal Parasites
 - These include worms and protozoa.
 - The most common are:
 - Round Worms
 - Tape Worms
 - Coccidia
 - Giardia



Parasites & Prevention

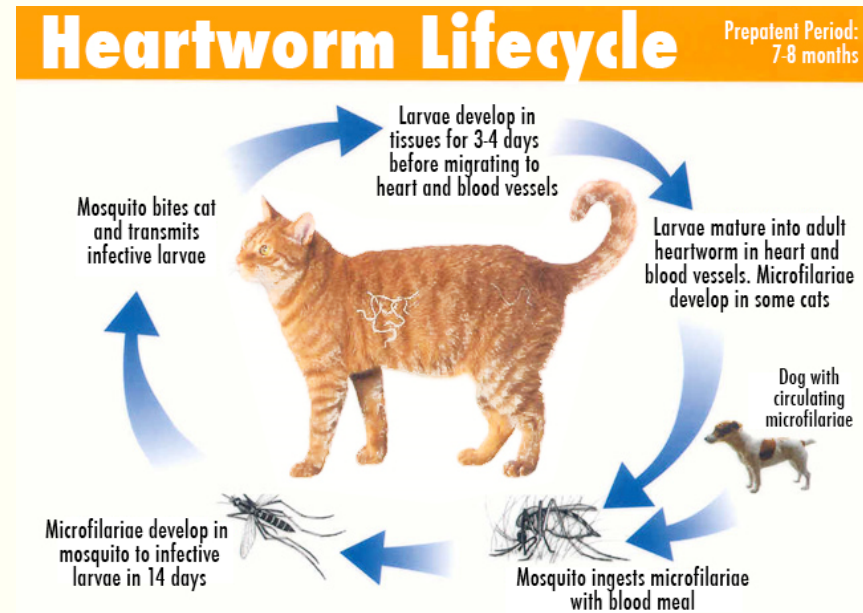
- Ectoparasites (outside of body)
 - Fleas!
 - Ear mites!
 - Ticks and other mites



Parasites & Prevention

■ Heartworm

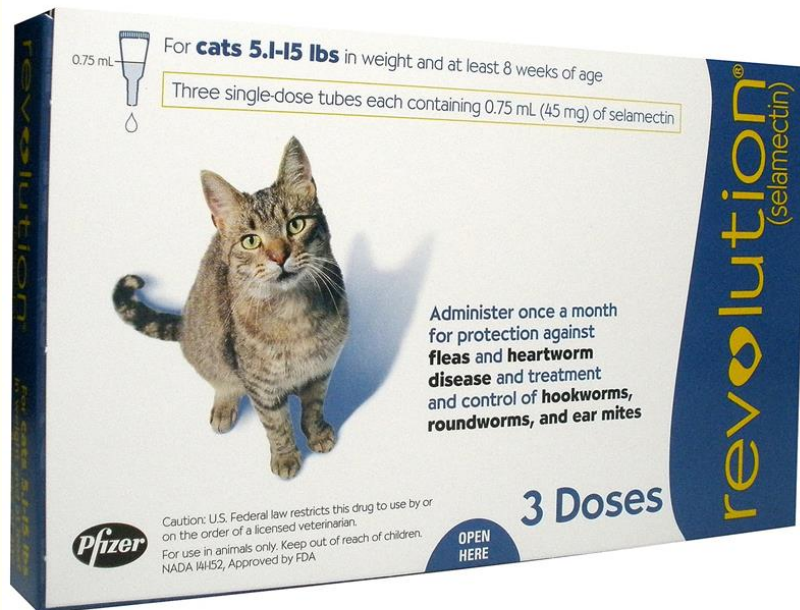
- While cats are not the definitive host for this parasite they can become infected.
- This parasite actually lives within the heart and blood stream.
- The most common sign of infection in cats is “sudden death”.
- Cats typically only have a few adult worms where as dogs can carry 100s.
- Prevention is the only cure for this parasite in cats.
- Heartworm is transmitted by mosquitos and is becoming more prevalent every year.



Parasites & Prevention

■ Prevention

- While there is no all-in-one prevention, you can provide protection from most parasites with one to two treatments per month.
- Many of the preventatives for cats are applied topically making administration a breeze.



Common communicable diseases

- Feline Herpes (Rhinothracetitis)
 - Upper respiratory condition.
 - Usually affect the eyes and nose.
 - Can stay in remission and flare up under times of stress or anxiety.
 - Treated with antibiotics if severe.
 - A cat with herpes will always be a carry and will never be cured, only controlled.
 - Part of the FVRCP vaccine, but not always 100% protective.



Common communicable diseases

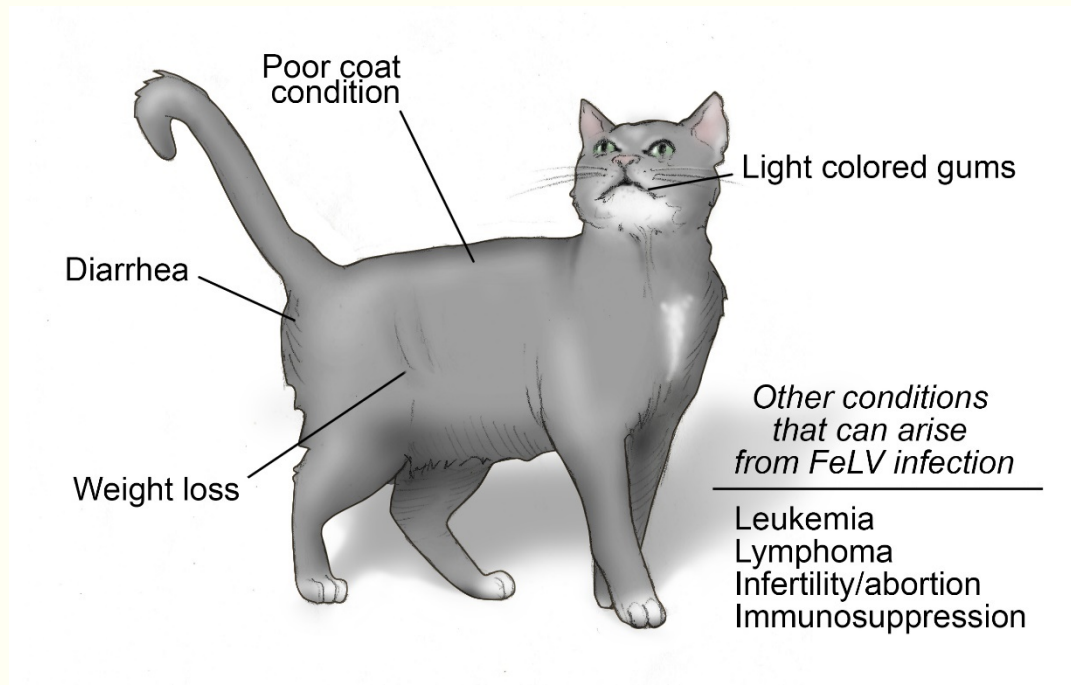
- Feline Immunodeficiency Virus
 - Virus that is transmitted by deep bite wounds (think cat fight!)
 - Attacks the immune system.
 - These cats can live a long normal life with good care.
 - No preventative for this virus.
 - Diagnosed by blood testing; SNAP test.



Common communicable diseases

■ Feline Leukemia Virus

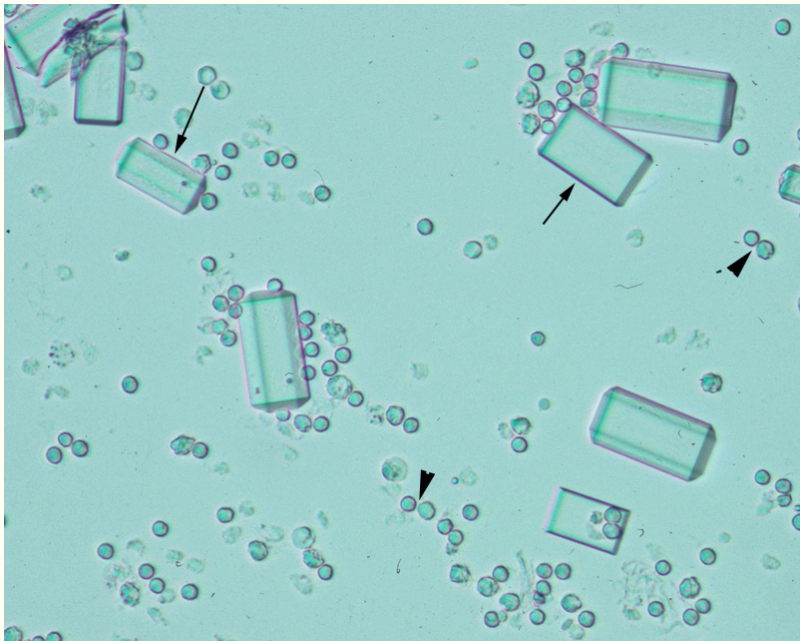
- That's right... it's a virus not a cancer.
- This virus is transmitted by friendly contact.
- Some adults have natural immunity to the virus.
- Attacks the immune system and makes cats prone to infection and other health conditions.
- Shorter lifespan.
- There is a vaccine that is administered to high risk cats.



Common non-communicable diseases

■ Urinary Concerns

- One of the most common concerns cats are taken to a veterinarian is regarding urinary issues...usually urinating outside the litter box.
- In male cats we worry about worry crystals and stones that can cause urinary obstructions.
- In female cats we more often see urinary tract infections.
- In the older cats renal dysfunction can also cause urinary concerns.
- Sometimes urinating outside the little box can also be behavioral.



Common non-communicable diseases

■ Renal dysfunction

- Just like in humans as cats age their body systems also start to decline.
- Because domestic cats do not take in enough water and we tend to feed more dry kibble they are prone to renal dysfunction as they age.
- These cats usually have weight loss and drink a lot of water.
- Diagnosis is made with blood work and complete urinalysis.
- Treatment varies on severity but can range from a simple diet change to performing subcutaneous fluids on an outpatient basis.



TOXIN ALERT!!!
EXPOSURE TO LILLIES CAN
CAUSE ACUTE RENAL
FAILURE IN ANY CAT



Common non-communicable diseases

- Hyperthyroidism
 - These cats will eat everything offered to them but will continue to lose weight.
 - If left untreated disease process can affect other body systems including the heart.
 - Diagnosed by lab work.
 - Treatment includes daily medication, diet, and radioactive iodine (I-131)



Common non-communicable diseases

■ Diabetes

- This disease can have an onset at any age but we typically see it in middle aged cats.
- These cats in many cases have been obese previously to a rapid weight loss.
- They drink a lot of water.
- Diagnosis is lab work and urinalysis.
- Treatment includes insulin injections and diet changes.

Common signs of diabetes in cats



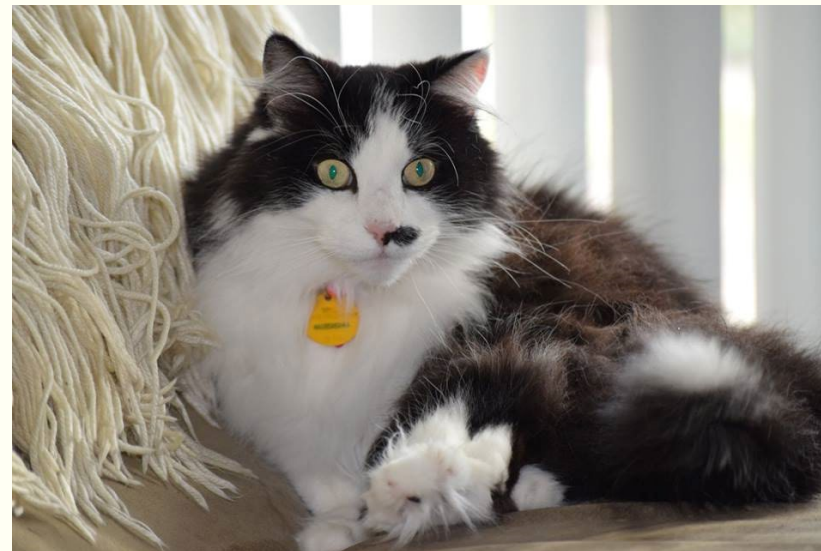
1. Drinking excessively
2. Overweight (or history of being overweight)
3. Sudden weight loss (without dieting)
4. Initially huge appetite, eventually inappetence & vomiting, foul/acetone breathe
5. More frequent visits to the litter tray
6. Lethargy, weakness in hind legs
7. Unkempt coat

If you think your cat may have diabetes please contact your local vet to make an appointment



Fitting

- Selecting a cat for show
 - Must be at least 4 months of age and vaccinated for rabies and distemper (complete series)
 - Well groomed and nails trimmed.
 - Social and easy to handle.
 - Remains calm when placed in a harness.
 - A cat you are familiar with and can talk about breed, sex, and health status.
 - Because most cats are from rescues and most are mixed breed cats please know what category your cat falls under (i.e. longhaired, mediumhaired, or shorthaired).
 - If you do happen to be showing a purebred cat please be familiar with breed standards and common medical conditions of the breed



Fitting

- Preparing for show
 - If this is the first time you have shown your cat it is recommended to acclimate your cat to new experiences and environments as the judging area will likely be a new experience for your cat.
 - Start working with the harness before the show to also get your cat used to being in it. Some cats decide they cannot move when the harness is put on them and become stressed easily.
 - Run through your exam and review any questions you think you may be asked as if the judge were in front of you.
 - Also a trip to the veterinarian prior to the show to ensure your cat is healthy and parasite free may also be warranted.



Presentation and Examination

- Appearance and Conduct

- Exhibitors should be dressed neatly and comfortably.
- Closed toe shoes are a must for safety.
- You may wear a lab coat if you desire for presentation, but dress slacks and a nice clean polo style shirt is also appropriate.
- Please be respectful of others and keep your cat calm during the judging.



BE RESPECTFUL!
BE RESPONSIBLE!
BE SAFE!

Presentation and Examination

- Safety Carry and Presentation

- Your cat should always be wearing a harness and leash for presentation.
- When picking up your cat for placement on the judging table it should be presented in the “safety carry” position.
 - You can achieve this position by grasping the cat’s forelegs between your thumb and fingers, with at least once finger between the cat’s legs. Support the cat’s chest in the palm of your hand. Then, you may either tuck the cat’s rump and rear legs under your elbow against your body or riding on your hip, or you may hold the cat’s rear legs in the same manner at the cat’s forelegs.
- When presenting your cat to the judge: once given the signal, place the cat on the table facing the judge in either a sitting or laying position. Once you are asked to begin the exam follow the steps in order.



Examination for show

- **Step 1: Shape of head**
- Show the shape of your cat's head first, with your hands, verbally give the description (i.e. round, triangular).



Examination for show

- **Step 2: Shape and length of body**
- Show the shape of your cat's body by standing your cat up and showing the side of your cat to the judge, place both hands under the cat, one behind the front legs and one in front the cats hind legs and stretch the cat to show the full length and shape. Verbally describe what you are showing including the body condition of the cat.



Examination for show

- **Step 3: Coat and skin**
- To show the judge the coat run your hand back and forth over their back to demonstrate the cleanliness of your cat's coat. The coat should be free from debris and dander. Some shedding is expected but should not be excessive.



Examination for show

- Step 4: Examine the mouth
- Return your cat to face the judge. Demonstrate opening the cats mouth to examine the teeth and gums. Verbally tell the judge what you are looking for such as defects of teeth and pink, moist gums and tongue.



Examination for show

- **Step 5: Nose**
- Show the cat's nose to the judge and explain what you are looking for when examining the nose. There should be no discharge or abrasions. It should be clean and free of debris.



Examination for show

- **Step 6: Eyes and Ears**
- When showing the eyes to the judge open each eye individually to show that there is no discharge or debris present in either eye. Next flip each ear pinna (outer ear) slightly back to look for debris or ectoparasites.



Examination for show

- **Step 7: Legs, Paws and Claws**
- Run your hand down each leg, starting with the front legs, to show there are no concerns with legs and press gently to expose the nails (should be freshly trimmed) on the paws.



Examination for show

- **Step 8: Undercarriage**
- Stand your cat up on it's rear legs by lifting the front legs off the table to expose the underside of your cat to the judge to examine the coat on the underside, noting there is no hair loss and coat is clean.



Examination for show

- Step 9: Final pose
- Place your cat back facing the judge in the sitting (or laying) position with it's tail wrapped to the side and wait for the judge to ask any questions and release you from judging. Once released pick your cat back up in the safety carry and return your cat to it's carrier.



THE END

- ANY QUESTIONS???

