

## PROTOCOL FOR ACTIVITIES FOR CLIENTS TO PRACTICE WITH PUPPIES AND KITTENS

The chart below outlines recommended handling for puppies and kittens beginning at 8 weeks of age. You can start this earlier, if needed or wanted, but you should know that you may have difficulty engaging in many of these activities with kittens older than 12 weeks. Kittens should be handled extensively between 2 and 9 weeks of age if they are to be as calm as possible with handling. If you have an older kitten who is

resistant to these manipulations, *please talk to your veterinarian about ways to teach your kitten that handling is a good thing.* Puppies are fairly flexible, but the earlier you gently handle them, the better. Please note that all of these activities are done very slowly and gently. *If at any point your puppy or kitten becomes distressed, resists any touch, or you begin to worry, please make an appointment to see your veterinarian.*

### Activity

Firmly but gently stroke the kitten or puppy starting at the top of the head to the tail, and continue more gently to the tip of the tail.



### How Frequently to Do It

Multiple times daily

### When to Call the Vet

Become familiar with how your pet feels and report any lumps, bumps, scabs, changes in coat texture or behavior.

With the puppy or kitten supported in your lap or gently supported on the floor, pick up their tail and look at their rectal area. Put the tail down and gently touch around this area. (Wash your hands afterward!)

Once a day as a kitten or puppy, at least weekly as an adult

If you see any swelling, or the dog or cat suddenly doesn't want you to touch around her tail base, or the tail is being held oddly, or there is feces caked to the pet's bottom.

Run your hands gently over the pet's face, and gently pick up each ear and look in it.



Once a day as a kitten or puppy, and once a week as an adult

If the pet shies away before you get to the ear, yelps, cries, hisses, et cetera, or if there is swelling, discharge or an odor. Normal ears are clean and pink and without odor.

Continued

### Activity

Run your hands gently over the pet's face, and gently wipe the corners of the pet's eyes while looking at the eyes.

Stroke the pet slowly from head to tail until the dog or cat lies down ("settles"), then slowly stroke his sides, until he is relaxed, and finally, move his legs gently and stroke his belly, gently rolling him onto his back ("puppy/kitty belly"). Gently run your hands over all of the nipples.



When the kitten or puppy is relaxed in your lap ("settled"), gently move your hands from his side or belly and down each leg. Gently spread and flex all toes and claws.



### How Frequently to Do It

Once a day as a kitten or puppy, and once a week as an adult

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### When to Call the Vet

If the pet doesn't let you touch his face, moves away from you as you clean the corners of his eyes, vocalizes, or there is a bad smell, something oozing from the eye, or the eye is swollen or red.

If the cat or dog cries when any pressure is exerted, if you feel lumps, bumps, changes in texture, see wounds, see a rash, feel a swelling or hard area under a nipple, or smell anything foul.

If the cat or dog won't let you touch the leg or paw, the pads are swollen or cut, nails are broken, there is any discharge, the pads are cracked, or there is any odor or blood.

### Activity

Learn to file or trim the nails with the appropriate nail clipper and do this frequently, taking off the tiniest amount of nail when the pet is young so that the pet learns nail trimming isn't scary; putting treats on the towel your pet is sitting on can help.



### How Frequently to Do It

Multiple times a week as a kitten or puppy and once a week as an adult.

### When to Call the Vet

If you could previously trim the dog's or cat's nails and now you cannot; this change could be due to a behavioral or physical problem.

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Using pet toothpaste and a soft, pet toothbrush, finger brush, or cloth, rub all the teeth and the nearby gums.

At least weekly, but daily is better

If the gums bleed; if the cat or dog will not let you touch or open her mouth; if the dog or cat bites, growls, or hisses; if there is any foul smell or discharge.

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Give the puppy or kitten a "pill." Accustoming the pet to taking medication is essential for minimally stressful care. Normal, healthy animals can be given a "blank" daily. This "blank" can be a small amount of cream cheese, peanut butter, sausage, hot dog, sardine, Marmite/Vegemite, cheese, or a pill pocket that is soft enough to be molded around a pill.

Daily

By encouraging the dog or cat to take a "pill"/"blank" made of something the pet really loves as a treat daily, when the pet needs real medication, you will have a way to get the pet to swallow it without being overly suspicious. The ideal "blanks" are wolfed down without chewing.

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