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most important thing you can do is get them desexed. This is even more critical now as we approach the warmer months of the year which marks the beginning of breeding season for cats.

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Pet Emergencies: Snakes & Blowfish

Summer is a great time to get your pet involved in family activities. The extended daylight hours mean more time for fishing, boating and playing on the beach. Whether you are going to the beach, a river or just staying at home by the pool, we all need to be vigilant with our pets and keep on the lookout for dangers such as snakes and blowfish/puffer fish toxicity.



Snakes

Signs your pet may have been bitten by a snake:

- Dilated pupils - the black centre of the eye is large and does not decrease when light shined in;
- Salivation, vomiting, panting;
- Ataxia - stumbling and staggering;
- Paralysis - unable to get up/move can progress to

respiratory paralysis- your pet will be unable to breath;

- Passing bloody coloured urine or dribbling urine;
- Collapse;
- Depression - poor response when called.

If you suspect your pet may have been bitten by a snake it is best to seek a veterinarians' opinion immediately on the matter before your pet becomes too unwell.

If your pet requires treatment, this usually involves hospitalisation for at least 12 – 24 hours, and in some cases, several days. When your pet is discharged home, your vet will recommend confined rest for 1 – 2 weeks.

In some patients, no treatment is required, due to a lack of clinical and laboratory evidence that the patient has been envenomated. In these cases, monitoring your pet for any delayed symptom of envenomation at a veterinary hospital for a period for 12 – 24 hours may be all that is required.

With appropriate and timely medical therapy, many patients recover completely. Unfortunately, if necessary treatment is not instigated, many of these patients will not survive.





Blowfish

Signs your dog may have ingested a toxic blowfish/puffer fish:

- Nausea, drooling, vomiting;
- Display signs of weakness this starts with the back legs they may almost appear drunk (ataxic), this can however progress to generalised paralysis and can lead to respiratory failure (inability to breath)



If your dog is displaying any of these signs and may have eaten a blowfish/puffer fish it is best to seek a veterinarians' advice.

Many pets are only mildly affected and will recover within a day or two. Pets that become paralysed have a good chance of recovery with appropriate care (removal of the toxin and breathing support). Without veterinary care, pets that are paralysed are not likely to recover.

Source: <http://pve.net.au/info-for-owners/common-pet-emergencies>

Benefits of Desexing your Cat

If you live with a companion animal the most important thing you can do is get them desexed. This is more critical now than ever as we approach the warmer months of the year which marks the beginning of breeding season for cats. Cat Haven receives about 6000-8000 cats and kittens each year of which 25% end up having to be euthanized (www.cathaven.com.au). The majority of these animals will be killed during spring and summer.

These shocking statistics are not the only reason to desex your pet. Desexing is also vital for maintaining their health, increasing their life span and preventing antisocial behaviour.

There are several benefits to desexing your pet, but the bottom line is that if we are going to solve the problem of pet overpopulation and the seemingly endless cycle of killing homeless animals, it begins with you – the pet owner (www.catrescue.com.au).

Improves Health & Prevents Disease

It is a proven and well known fact that desexing is essential for the health of companion animals, prevents disease and injury, and promotes longevity

Desexing female cats prevents:

- Mammary Cancer: is the third most common tumour found in female cats. If a cat is desexed before she has her first heat cycle, there is an extremely low chance she will develop it.
- Pyometra: an infection of the uterus which can be fatal if not treated during the very early stages.
- Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV): female cats can be infected with FIV when they mate.
- Injury: undesexed female cats are prone to wandering in their search for mates, placing them at enormous risk of being hit by cars. They can also sustain abscesses during mating and fighting.
- Depressed immune system & poor physical health: when a cat has multiple litters during her life she can become exhausted and develop poor physical health. The exhaustion of pregnancy and rearing kittens can also lead to a depressed immune system making her more susceptible to illness. On average, cats who are desexed live longer than cats who are allowed to breed.
- Tumours of the uterus & ovaries.

Desexing male cats prevents:

- Injury: undesexed male cats are prone to wandering in their search for mates and territory placing them at



enormous risk of being hit by cars. If they fight with other cats any wounds they sustain can become infected and develop abscesses.

- Malignant tumours of the testicles.
- Prostate problems and other associated issues: early desexing significantly reduces the risk of infections, prostate enlargement and other behavioural issues such as urine spraying.

Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV): undesexed male cats are more likely to be aggressive and show territorial behaviour because of the excess testosterone in their bodies. They are at a huge risk of contracting diseases such as FIV when they fight with other cats.

Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV)

Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV), also referred to as Feline AIDS (is not transmissible from cat to human), is an infectious disease which attacks certain cells in the cat's immune system. As the virus replicates and spreads, it compromises the body's ability to fight off secondary infections.

Undesexed cats are the main carriers of FIV. Undesexed males are extremely territorial and will fight other cats for resources such as territory, food and mates. Undesexed female cats attract undesexed males from the neighbourhood because of their vocalisation and through the release of pheromones. Both fighting and mating is the most common way that FIV is spread, because infected cats have large amounts of the virus present in their blood.

Desexing your cat is the only way to protect them from this incurable disease, as it reduces the behaviours which predispose them coming into contact with FIV positive cats. A vaccine has been developed, however the protection it offers is far from complete.

Preventing Antisocial Behaviour

Spraying, wandering, fighting, excessive vocalisation and aggression are the most common traits of an undesexed cat. These antisocial behaviours can lead to disease, injury, and at the very least make it extremely difficult for the owners' – the spraying will make the house and yard smell terrible, and the vocalisation will lead to sleepless nights.

The behaviour of cats when they are not desexed is yet another compelling and common sense argument for desexing. It is always recommended that the cat be desexed prior to them reaching sexual maturity.

Source: <http://www.catrescue.com.au/desex-now/benefits-of-desexing>; <http://www.cathaven.com.au/>

Caring for Your Kitten

Now that you have a young kitten to care for there are several things you will need to consider. One of the most important things to do straight away is to take your kitten to the veterinarian for a general health check. Your vet will be able to give you advice regarding basic care for your kitten as well as give them any vaccinations and worming treatments that they are due for.

In the meantime some of the basic aspects of kitten care you will need to consider are: nutrition, bedding, grooming, play & training and health care.

Your kitten's essential health needs



	IMMUNITY	
	HEALTH FEATURE	Protects the immune system of kittens
	BENEFIT	Supports the immune system between vaccinations and helps build a healthy immune system in 90 days*
	KEY TECHNOLOGY	Clinically proven antioxidants, including vitamins E & C
	WEIGHT MANAGEMENT	
	HEALTH FEATURE	Precisely balanced nutrition and high quality protein
	BENEFIT	Helps achieve ideal body weight and ensure optimal growth and development
	KEY TECHNOLOGY	High quality protein
	URINARY HEALTH	
	HEALTH FEATURE	Designed to produce a urinary pH between 6.2 – 6.4
	BENEFIT	Supports the development of a healthy urinary tract
	KEY TECHNOLOGY	Optimal mineral balance
	HEALTHY DIGESTION	
	HEALTH FEATURE	Provides an optimal fibre mixture
	BENEFIT	Helps maintain a healthy digestive tract and firm stools
	KEY TECHNOLOGY	Natural vegetable fibre
	SKIN & COAT HEALTH	
	HEALTH FEATURE	Nourishes skin cells and hair follicles to rejuvenate the skin
	BENEFIT	Promotes healthy skin and a luxurious coat
	KEY TECHNOLOGY	Omega fatty acids



Nutrition

The first few months are vital for your kitten's lifelong health. Kittens should be fed a high quality commercial kitten food to ensure a "balanced" diet is provided. Hill's™ Science Diet™ VetEssentials™ Kitten is specially formulated to address the essential health needs of your kitten. It also contains increased levels of DHA from high quality fish oil proven to help support visual and brain development along with a balance of minerals and Omega 3 fatty acids to help growing bones and joints.

Ask your veterinarian how much to feed your kitten and for tips on monitoring body condition and weight. For best

results, mix your kitten's current food with Hill's™ Science Diet™ VetEssentials™, gradually increasing the amount of VetEssentials™ while decreasing the amount of previous food over a 7-day period.

Ensure that your kitten always has an adequate supply of fresh, clean water.

Bedding

Although your kitten may want to share your bed it is important to provide them with a warm, dry bed of their own. Use bedding that can be easily cleaned and dried and place the bed somewhere warm and private.

Grooming

Regular grooming is essential, particularly for long-haired cats. Start grooming your kitten early on so that it becomes an enjoyable bonding activity and part of routine care. Grooming removes dust, dead skin, loose hairs, grass seeds and tangles and reduces the amount of fur shed during the moulting season in autumn and spring.

Play and training

Play time is important for bonding between you and your kitten. Kittens are very playful and curious and love to develop their instinctive hunting behaviour by chasing toys. Play time is a good opportunity for you to teach your kitten good manners. Occasionally hunting games turn into play aggression – make sure that the fun ends if their claws come out. Never punish your kitten physically as they are unlikely to associate your punishment with their mistake. If they do something naughty, such as sharpening their claws on the furniture, give them a gently spray with a water pistol. It is important that your kitten doesn't turn their hunting skills on the local wildlife. Place bells on your cat's collar and keep them in at night to make sure that the native birds, reptiles and marsupials are safe.

Health care

You cat will require annual visits to the vet for vaccinations, boosters and general health checks. Ask your vet about flea, tick and worm prevention. Some commonly found plants, such as lilies, are toxic to cats and it is important that you familiarise yourself with these and remove them from your garden and house. Your cat should be desexed before he or she reaches sexually maturity. This is usually performed at the age of five or six months although some vets, including RSPCA vets, will neuter kittens from 12 weeks of age. Desexing your cat will prevent the birth of unexpected, unwanted litters and prevent health conditions, such as mammary cancers and prostatic enlargement, later in life.

Source: <http://kb.rspca.org.au/entry/27/>

Case Study – Pebbles

Pebbles was found living amongst a community of feral cats in a local industrial area. On arrival at Port Kennedy Veterinary Hospital she was very shy and wary of human contact, but far from the "feral" cats we have come across in the past.

With plenty of love and patience from nursing staff it was only a matter of days before Pebbles began to come out of her shell and quickly let us know how fond she is of smooches and scratch time. She is a very affectionate kitten and loves her toys.

Given her history she is still a little wary of restraint and handling, but will happily let you know when she wants some human loving or a bit of play time.

Pebbles would be best suited to a young couple or a family with older children. She is likely to adjust to a multiple pet household given appropriate introduction and supervision.

For more information on available cats and kittens in our stray program, please speak to PKVH staff at the the reception desk.





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Search 'Port Kennedy Vet Hospital' in the appstore or google play. Alternatively use the QR codes below to get it.

