



Congratulations on your new...
Family Member



Kitten Introduction Kit

Congratulations on Your New Kitten!

This is an exciting time and whether you are a first time pet owner or a seasoned pro, we are so pleased that you have chosen Western Animal Clinic to be part of this journey with you.

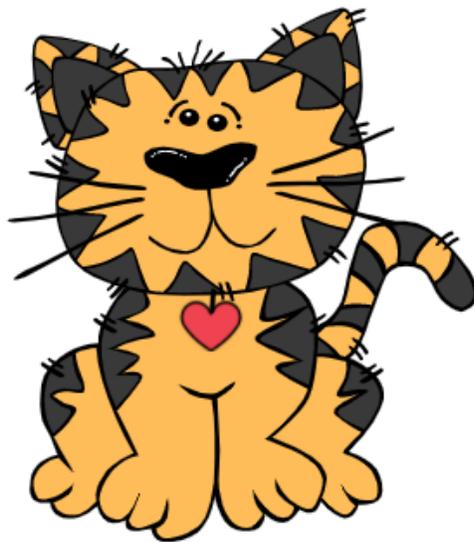
We hope that you find the information and resources in this package helpful and please know that we are only ever a phone call away to help with your pet healthcare needs.

At Western we strive to form lifelong bonds with our clients and their pets and consider it a privilege to work with you to help keep your four legged family member happy and healthy for many years to come.

We welcome you to Western where we believe that communication, collaboration and prevention are the keys to good health.

Sincerely,

Dr. Rachel Thomas, Dr. Izabela Mac Dougall and the staff at Western Animal Clinic





Core Kitten Vaccines



FVRCP (8, 12 & 16 weeks and 6 months of age) Rabies (16 weeks of age)

When a kitten is born, its immune system is not yet mature; the baby is wide open for infection. Fortunately, nature has a system of protection. The mother produces a certain type of milk called colostrum that is rich in all the antibodies the mother has to offer. As babies drink this milk, they are taking in their mother's immunity. After the first couple of days, regular milk is produced and the baby's intestines undergo what is called closure, which means they are no longer able to take externally produced antibodies into their systems. The first two days are critical to determining what kind of immunity the baby will receive until its own system can take over.

How long this maternal antibody lasts in a given kitten is totally individual. It can depend on the birth order of the babies, how well they nursed and a number of other factors. Maternal antibodies against different diseases wear off after different amounts of time. We do know that by 14-20 weeks of age, maternal antibodies are gone and the baby must be able to provide its own immunity.

While maternal antibody is still in the kittens' system, any vaccines given will be inactivated. Vaccines will not be able to "take" until maternal antibodies have sufficiently dropped. Kittens receive a series of vaccines ending at a time when we know the baby's own immune system will be able to respond. If we wait until we know the baby's immune system is old enough to definitely respond, it could leave a large window of vulnerability. To give babies the best chance of responding to vaccination, we vaccinate intermittently (usually every 3-4 weeks) during this period, in hope of gaining some early protection.

When a vaccine against a specific disease is started for the first time, even in an adult animal, it is best to give at least two vaccinations. This is because the second vaccination will produce a much greater response if it is given following a vaccine given 2-4 weeks prior.

Therefore, we typically vaccinate kittens at 8, 12 and 16 weeks of age with another booster recommended at 6 months of age to cover those kittens who still had strong maternal antibody levels at 4 months of age.

Which vaccines are recommended to an individual pet depends on many factors including lifestyle and exposure risks. In cats, feline distemper (panleukopenia), feline herpes (feline viral rhinotracheitis), feline calicivirus and rabies are considered core vaccines and should be given to all cats whether or not they go outdoors. Feline leukemia vaccine is recommended for those cats that go outdoors or who are exposed to other cats such as in multi-cat households or in households where owners foster cats or kittens.

Feline Herpes Virus and Feline Calicivirus

Feline herpes virus and feline calicivirus account for 90% of upper respiratory infections in cats and kittens.

The agents of feline upper respiratory infection are highly contagious and getting infected is easy. A cat simply must socialize with an infected cat or share the same human caretaker, toys or food bowls. It would seem that the average house cat would be at low risk for infection; however, it is important to realize how common upper respiratory infection is. In some areas, the infection rate is felt to be 60% or higher. This means that there is an excellent chance that any cat or kitten is already infected at the time of adoption regardless of whether is showing any symptoms. Kittens are predisposed due to their immature immune systems, and are usually hit the hardest. When these kittens grow up, they are still infected and symptoms may come out whenever stress surprises their immune system. Herpes virus can survive 18 hours outside its host and calicivirus lasts up to 30 days outside its host.

Symptoms include sneezing, nasal discharge, runny eyes, cough, oral or nasal ulcers, sniffles, fever, hoarse voice or any combination thereof and can progress to loss of appetite, congestion with open mouth breathing and high fever and extreme listlessness.

Feline Distemper (Panleukopenia)

Feline distemper is a very contagious, life-threatening infectious disease of cats. The feline distemper virus is extremely stable in the environment and is ubiquitous. It can last a year indoors at room temperature and survives freezing as well as treatment with common disinfectants. Virtually every cat in the world will be exposed to this virus to some extent because the virus lives all around us.

Infection occurs when the virus enters the body through the mouth or nose. An infected cat sheds large amounts of the virus in all body secretions including feces, vomit, urine, saliva and mucus. When the virus enters the body, the lymph nodes in the throat are the first to be affected and from there, the virus rushes to the bone marrow and intestines. In the bone marrow, the virus suppresses production of the entire white blood cell line. White blood cells are the immune cells needed to fight the infection and without them, the victim is completely vulnerable to the advance of the virus. In the intestines, the virus causes ulceration leading to diarrhea and life-threatening dehydration as well as bacterial infection as the barrier between the body and the intestinal bacteria is lost. The patient dies from either dehydration or secondary bacterial infection. The infection can be so rapidly overwhelming that death occurs before the vomiting and diarrhea even start.

Fortunately, vaccination is highly effective and the feline distemper vaccine is considered to be the core immunization for all cats and kittens.

Feline Rabies Vaccination

Feline rabies vaccination is mandatory for all cats in Ontario by provincial legislation. Individuals having the care and custody of any animal are responsible for ensuring that animals in their care and custody including both indoor and outdoor pet cats are in compliance with rabies immunization requirements.



Summarized from Veterinary Partner



Feline Leukemia and Feline Immunodeficiency Virus

Feline Leukemia Virus (FELV) and Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV) are highly contagious and often deadly diseases in cats.

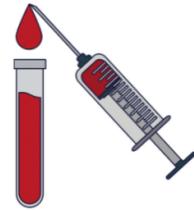
They are transmitted from the mom via placenta and milk, and between cats by bite wounds and through body excretions.

Signs of both diseases are similar and include weight loss, fever, serious infections and with FELV - cancer.

The challenge with these diseases is that a cat could be infected with either or both viruses, but not show any signs of being ill for months to years. These viruses can remain dormant (latent) for long periods of time before making a cat ill. During this time, they can still be contagious to other cats in the family or other neighbourhood cats if they go outside.

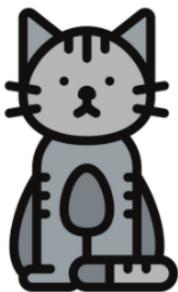
At Western Animal Clinic we feel it is extremely important to have any new cat tested for these viruses, especially if the cat/kitten is a stray, from a multi cat facility, from the humane society or from animal care and control. It's most important to test new kittens/cats prior to them being exposed to other cats in your household. The ideal time to test is 4-6 weeks after your cats last possible exposure, as there may be a false negative if you test sooner.

A false positive test can also be seen. Young kittens, under 6 months of age, can test positive as they have their mothers circulating antibodies from the placental or milk transfer. Therefore, if the test comes back positive in these young kittens, and they are otherwise healthy, we recommend re testing again around 6 months of age.



The FELV/FIV test only requires a few drops of blood and the results are usually available within a day.

We also recommend vaccinating cats at risk of exposure to these viruses with a vaccine for FELV. This vaccine has to be boosted 4 weeks after initial vaccine, then it is given annually. At this time, the current FIV vaccine on the market is not effective. Cats who go outdoors or could have potential exposure to unknown cats should be vaccinated for FELV annually.





Neutering Your Male Cat

Neutering a male cat is an excellent step to help your young man grow into a loving, well-adapted household citizen. The main reason to neuter a male cat is to reduce the incidence of objectionable behaviours that are normal in the feline world but not acceptable in ours. A neutered male cat has had his testicles removed, not only ending his ability to reproduce but also removing his source of testosterone and his interest in hormone-driven behaviours.

Roaming: More than 90% will reduce this behaviour with neutering. Approximately 60% reduce this behaviour right away.

Fighting: More than 90% will reduce this behaviour with neutering. Approximately 60% reduce this behaviour right away.

Urine marking: More than 90% will reduce this behaviour with neutering. Approximately 80% reduce this behaviour right away.

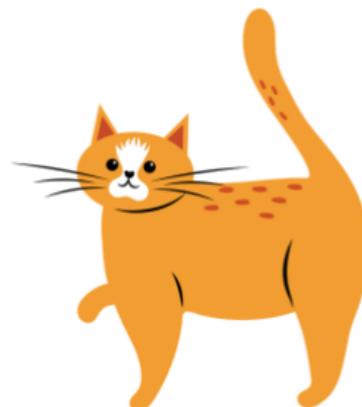
Other benefits of neutering include a drastic reduction in cat urine odour, reduced incidence of feline asthma and of gingivitis (gum inflammation). The reduction in fighting and roaming helps an outdoor male cat reduce his risk of FIV infection, bite wounds and associated abscesses, automobile-related trauma, dog/coyote-related injury, and other outdoor lifestyle situations that result from traveling away from home.

Cosmetic reasons to neuter a male cat have to do with physical appearance. The mature tomcat is built for battle with a muscular body and facial thickenings (called shields) for protection against the bites of his combat opponents. Tomcats neutered after puberty will eventually lose these characteristics and male cats neutered before puberty never develop them.

What Should I Expect the Day of Surgery?

Neutering is day surgery. Your veterinarian will discuss the procedure and answer any questions you may have at one of your appointments prior to the day of surgery. The day of surgery, you will meet with one of our registered veterinary technicians for an intake appointment. Your pet will then be admitted to the hospital where they will receive a full physical exam by the veterinarian. They will be placed on intravenous fluids and receive sedation and pre-emptive pain control. The surgery itself occurs under general anesthesia and further pain control is administered both intra-operatively and upon recovery. Your pet will stay with us for the remainder of the day so they can be monitored closely until they are fully recovered and receive the benefits of ongoing fluid therapy. You will receive an update from their surgeon once they are successfully out of surgery and to let you know how they are recovering. When it is time for them to be discharged that evening, you will have a discharge appointment with our registered veterinary technician to go over home care instructions, what to expect and to answer any further questions you may have. We also send written instructions for you to refer to. There are no sutures used when neutering so suture removal is not needed.

For those of you interested in more information regarding neutering your male cat, please visit www.veterinarypartner.com and type in neutering your male cat in the search bar.





Spaying Your Female Cat

Spaying your cat is an important part of basic cat health care. Spaying at a young age prevents mammary cancer and spaying at any age prevents unwanted kittens, noisy heat cycles, and possibly even urine marking in the house.

Spaying is an ovariectomy, which means that both the ovaries and uterus are removed. Since it is the ovaries that are responsible for the heat cycles, possible mammary tumour development and behavioural problems, it is crucial that the ovaries be removed intact.

What Should I Expect the Day of Surgery?

Spaying is day surgery. Your veterinarian will discuss the procedure and answer any questions you may have at one of your appointments prior to the day of surgery. The day of surgery, you will meet with one of our registered veterinary technicians for an intake appointment. Your pet will then be admitted to the hospital where they will receive a full physical exam by the veterinarian. They will be placed on intravenous fluids and receive sedation and pre-emptive pain control. The surgery itself occurs under general anesthesia and further pain control is administered both intra-operatively and upon recovery. Your pet will stay with us for the remainder of the day so they can be monitored closely until they are fully recovered and receive the benefits of ongoing fluid therapy. You will receive an update from their surgeon once they are successfully out of surgery and to let you know how they are recovering. When it is time for them to be discharged that evening, you will have a discharge appointment with our registered veterinary technician to go over home care instructions, what to expect and to answer any further questions you may have. We also send written instructions for you to refer to. All of our routine spay surgeries are done with all buried, absorbable sutures so there is no suture removal for you to worry about.

At What Age Can My Cat be Spayed?

The traditional age for spaying is six months. However, cats can be spayed at any age.

What If She Is In Heat At The Time Of Spay?

Some female cats are disruptively annoying when they are in heat, yowling and carrying on and they are spayed to end the heat quickly. Other cats are spayed in heat randomly when the owner does not realize that the cat is in heat. Either way, the spay is slightly more difficult due to the engorgement of the tissues and larger blood vessels. Spaying during the heat does not carry a significant risk to the cat but, since extra surgery time is required, an extra charge may be incurred.

Will Spaying Affect Her Personality?

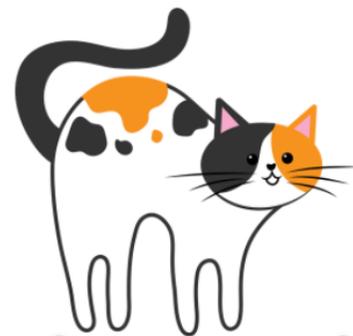
The female cat spends at least half the year with her reproductive tract dormant (cats only cycle seasonally, primarily in the spring and summer). This means that, behaviourally speaking, she acts spayed most of the time and no personality change should be noted. This said, it is important to realize that a cycling cat can be extremely solicitous of affection. This kind of playful, flirtatious behaviour will stop with spaying.

Will She Get Fat and Lazy After Spaying?

Estrogens have a natural appetite suppressing effect and the loss of estrogens may lead to an increased appetite. Further, sterilization surgery has been shown to slow a cat's metabolism. Depending on the cat's age and activity level at the time of surgery, a diet change to a "lite" diet may be in order. Ask your vet if you are not sure.

Once again, spaying is an important part of cat ownership and one of the most significant steps in health care that a cat owner can provide to their female cat.

For more information, please visit www.veterinarypartner.com





Microchipping Could Save your Pet's Life

WHAT IS A MICROCHIP?

A microchip ID is a small transmitter about the size of a grain of rice. When a scanner passes over it, a signal is emitted indicating the unique identification number of the chip. This tiny but sturdy little implant can reunite you with a lost pet, serve as proof of ownership in a dispute.

What Information is Encoded on the Chip?

Only the unique identification number is encoded on the chip. None of your personal information is on the chip. The chip number is similar to a Vehicle Identification Number on a car. The chip number is registered in one of several central registries and it is the central registry that has your personal information (name, address, phone number, alternate contact, pet description etc.). Each chip number is unique and no two chips have the same number.

Microchip Implantation: Basically a Shot With a Big Needle

The microchip ID is small enough to pass through the bore of a large needle made for this purpose. Implantation is basically an injection. The needle is fairly large so sometimes can hurt, but most often is well tolerated. Many owners like to wait until the pet is being spayed or neutered so as to be anesthetized and not feel the injection. Waiting runs the risk of the pet escaping unidentified so it is a good idea to implant the chip as soon as possible. The chip is always inserted under the skin between the shoulder blades.



Can a Microchip be Used to Locate a Lost Pet?

No. A microchip is not a location device. At the present time, GPS collars are available but their use is limited by the fact that a collar can be removed or can come off. A microchip is an identification device, not a locator and DOES NOT have a GPS.

What happens if my pet is lost?

If a pet is lost, and it is picked up by the city, shelter or a vet, the site will be scanned. If a chip is found, they will be able to contact the registry and find the pet's owner. It is very important to keep your information on file with the microchip company current, in order to facilitate this.



Intestinal Parasites in Dogs Cat

Most common Intestinal parasites in dogs & cats

- Nematodes - Roundworms and Hookworms
- Cestodes - Tapeworms
- Protozoans - Coccidia and Giardia



Roundworms

Roundworms are the most common gastrointestinal parasite in kittens and puppies. They are transferred via the fecal oral route, and also from the mother via the placenta and milk. They live in the intestine and eat the food the pet ingests, so will stunt the animals growth, and cause digestive upset and too much gas in the intestines leading to pot bellied appearance. Fecal tests looks for eggs of this parasite. The eggs are intermittently shed, which means that sometimes they will not be present in the stool, even though there is an infestation. Most kittens and puppies have this parasite, therefore we recommend deworming your young pet, even with a negative fecal float (poop test for parasites)

Hookworms

Hookworms are one of the most pathogenic intestinal parasites. They are 1-2 cm long and attach to the lining of the small intestine where they feed on blood. Kittens and puppies with this parasite can be anemic as well as have diarrhea, which leads to poor growth, and in severe cases even death. Hookworms are more common in kittens and puppies that come from outdoor environments. They are spread via the fecal oral route.

Tapeworms

Tapeworms are contracted via ingestion of an intermediate host by a dog or cat. The most common intermediate host is a flea. Birds and rodents are also intermediate hosts. The adult tapeworm inside the pet can be a half a foot or more long. It is made of small segments, each about the size of a grain of rice. The tapeworm's head hooks onto the pet's intestine by tiny teeth and the worm absorbs nutrients through its skin. Each segment contains a complete set of organs but as new segments grow in at the neck area and older segments progress to the tip of the tail, the organs disintegrate except for the reproductive organs. When the segment drops off from the tail tip, it is only a sac of eggs. Tapeworms look like pieces of mobile rice in the stool, or sesame seeds adherent to the perianal area.

Coccidia

Coccidia are single-celled organisms that infect the intestine. They are microscopic parasites detectable on routine fecal tests in the same way that worms are, but coccidia are not worms and are not susceptible to deworming medications. They are also not visible to the naked eye. Coccidia infection causes a watery diarrhea that is sometimes bloody and can be a life-threatening problem to an especially young or small pet. There are many different species of coccidia but for dogs and cats, the most common infections are with coccidia of the genus *Cystoisospora*. Dogs and cats each have their own coccidia species and cannot infect each other, nor can they infect people.

Giardia

Giardia are single-celled organisms, infectious to many types of animals (including humans) all over the world. *Giardia* organisms have little whip-like tentacles called flagella that classify them as flagellates. They use their flagella to move around from place to place but when they find a spot where they wish to stay (like a cozy nook in the host's intestine), they use a suction cup-like structure to attach. Their presence in the host intestine can cause diarrhea, though some hosts are symptom-free carriers. Different types of *Giardia* infect different types of animals; it is rare for *Giardia* from a pet to infect a human. Furthermore, dog and cat *Giardia* species are separate and are unlikely to cross from dog to cat or vice versa.

Giardia is not visible to the naked eye. It is also difficult to detect on routine fecals due to its size and shape. Therefore your veterinarian may recommend an ELISA test that picks up the parasites DNA in a stool sample that is sent to an outside laboratory.



Fecal Float & Deworming

What is a fecal flotation?

Fecal flotation is a test done at Western Animal Clinic to diagnose internal parasites or "worms." The test detects the eggs of mature parasites that live inside the body and pass their eggs to the outside by shedding them into the host's stool. Some of these parasites are worm-like, while others are tiny single-celled organisms called protozoa. As there are many different "dewormers", this test helps to identify which parasites the animal has, so that the appropriate treatment can be administered.

How is the test done?

Stool material is mixed with a special liquid that causes the parasite eggs to float to the surface. The eggs are collected from the surface using a glass slide. The slide is examined under a microscope, and the appearance of the eggs identifies what type of adult parasite is present. The number of eggs found may reflect the severity of the infection, but this is not always reliable.



What do you need to bring for a fecal?

A one inch piece of fresh stool. Ideally, the stool sample should be no more than 24 hours old and should be as free as possible of grass, gravel, kitty litter, etc. Any clean, dry container with a tightly fitting lid can be used, such as a jar or plastic tub or a doubled up plastic bag can be used to bring in the sample.

When should fecal flotation be done?

Kittens and puppies are frequently infected with intestinal parasites (most commonly roundworms that were transmitted via the placenta and milk) and are susceptible to re-infection. Therefore, at least one stool sample should be brought when the kitten/puppy is coming for its initial vaccines. If a pet is found to have parasites, follow-up fecal flotations may be recommended to monitor the response to treatment. Fecal flotation may also be recommended if a pet develops diarrhea or fails to gain weight as expected.

Does the test work every time?

No. Fecal flotation is only a basic screening test and may fail to detect infection in some situations. A fecal flotation test may fail to detect parasite infection because; the parasites themselves are too young to produce eggs; the infection is mild and there are only a few adult parasites present; some parasites only produce small numbers of eggs and infection may be missed on a single test as the eggs are shed intermittently in the stool and some parasites just cannot be detected reliably with fecal flotation, such as the protozoan parasite giardia, and lungworm.

Deworming Recommendations

For puppies and kittens, it is recommended that they get a complete dewormer 2 weeks apart until they are 4 months old. The type of deworming will be based on the results of the fecal test. In light of a negative fecal test, the most important parasite to deworm young animals for is roundworm, as due to its life cycle, it can be often missed on a fecal. This parasite is almost guaranteed to be present in our young kittens and puppies as they acquire it through maternal transmission via the placenta and milk. Deworming for roundworms improves overall health and growth, and decreases the chance of intestinal inflammation and allergies later on in life.



For adult cats and dogs, the recommended deworming, is based on exposure. The fecal oral route is the most common way to get infected with parasites, hunting and eating prey is the next most common way. If your pet is exposed to other pets, or their fecal material, or is a hunter, then we at Western Animal Clinic recommend a routine deworming. For dogs, this routine deworming for the most common parasites is included in the monthly spring to fall prevention for heart worm. For cats, we usually dispense a complete oral dewormer to be give 4 times a year.



Fleas

Fleas are the most common external parasite to plague companion animals. They are wingless insects that feed on blood, can jump up to two feet high and are persistent in the environment. Though there are many species of fleas, the one that most often affects both dogs and cats in North America is the cat flea, *Ctenocephalides felis*.

Fleas can cause serious health problems for you and your pet.

Anemia: Fleas suck blood and blood loss leads to anemia. A heavy flea burden can be lethal, especially to smaller or younger animals. The cat flea has even been known to kill animals as large as dairy calves through heavy infestation.

Flea Allergy Dermatitis: Fleas can cause severe itching and also other problems such as skin infections and hair loss. Some animals can become allergic to fleas, and flea allergy dermatitis is the most common skin disease of dogs and cats.

Tapeworms and Bartonella: Fleas can carry and transmit a bacterium called *Bartonella* that can cause health issues in cats, dogs and people. Fleas can carry a type of parasite, a tapeworm called *Dipylidium caninum* that can suck nutrients from the pet's intestines and cause anal itchy.



Common Flea Myths:

Although fleas are the most common parasite in dogs and cats, there are many misconceptions about them. Myths that veterinarians hear about fleas almost every day are:

Myth: My pet cannot have fleas because he lives entirely indoors

Fact: Fleas thrive particularly well in the well-regulated temperatures in the home.

Myth: My pet cannot have any fleas because if there were any fleas they would be biting (insert name of a person in the family reportedly sensitive to flea bites). Since this person is not being bitten, there must not be any fleas.

Fact: The cat flea, *Ctenocephalides felis*, can suck the blood of a wide variety of animals. However, this flea definitively does not prefer human blood and won't eat it unless absolutely necessary. Humans tend not to be bitten unless flea population numbers are high.

Myth: We do not have fleas because we only have hard wood floors.

Fact: Fleas love to develop in the cracks between the boards of hard wood floors.

Myth: My pet cannot have fleas because I would see them.

Fact: You cannot expect to see fleas because many animals will lick, groom and chew after being bitten by a flea. This causes the flea to either jump off the pet or to get swallowed.

The Flea Life Cycle

There are four life stages of the flea. For effective flea control, it's important to know how to break this life cycle in more than one place.

The flea life cycle consists of egg, larval, pupal and adult stages. Eggs are laid in the hair coat and are designed to fall off your pet and into your home. Larvae hatch from the eggs and develop in a pet's environment by feeding on adult flea feces (i.e. digested blood) that fall out of the hair coat of the pet. Larvae eventually spin cocoons, often within carpet fibres, for population. Pupae are resistant to freezing, drying and insecticides, and can lie dormant for many months! New fleas develop from pupae and can begin feeding within hours of finding a dog or cat. The entire flea life cycle can be completed in as little as three weeks.

Flea Control Strategies

Today, veterinarians have some great flea control products in our arsenal. There are now many effective and safe new products to choose from.

Be sure to discuss effective flea prevention and treatment options with your veterinarian and remember, it is very important to never use products on your cat that are intended for dogs.





Helpful Reference Links

Client Education and Medical Information

www.veterinarypartner.com

Toxic Plant Reference

For a complete list of toxic and non-toxic plants for dogs and cats, visit www.asPCA.org and type in “toxic plants” to the search bar.

Or go directly to: <https://www.asPCA.org/pet-care/animal-poison-control/toxic-and-non-toxic-plants>

Veterinary Diets

www.royalcanin.ca

www.proplanveterinarydiets.com

www.hillspet.ca

www.raynecanada.ca

Pet Memorial Services

www.gatewaypetmemorial.com

Veterinary Medicine and Regulatory Organizations

www.ovc.uoguelph.ca

www.cvo.org

www.ovma.org

Online Shopping for pet food, toys, and more...

www.myVETstore.ca/westernanimalclinic

