

Cats

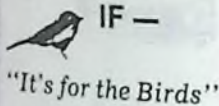
By Harry Brown, D.V.M.

Cats are second in popularity in the U. S. as house pets, but are often neglected in articles about pets. Perhaps for his reason they are also largely neglected by their owners. Like dogs, cats are victims of fleas, internal parasites (worms), and various skin and internal diseases. Most of these are really similar, but as canine and feline are different species, so are the specific problems. Cat fleas, for instance, are a smaller variety and some are the "stick-tight" type, which just hang on in one place instead of leaping around like an ordinary flea. You need to get the

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CAT flea powder right on them to do any good. I say CAT flea powder because here again, due to the habits of the cat in cleaning themselves, unless one uses a powder which will not poison the cat you could cause a real problem. Cats are less likely to get a heavy worm population since, their toilet habits are so tidy, but must again be carefully medicated to avoid poisoning.

Much has been said about cats as carriers of ringworm to children, but his may be a two-way street and children can often carry the disease home to the cat from school! It pays to examine pet and child to find any slightly rough, round itchy spots on the skin and treat them immediately to prevent spreading. The "cat scratch" fever syndrome can also be largely avoided by treating any wound made by cat as quickly as possible with merthiolate or an iodine solution. I speak from experience in saying that I follow this routine religiously and have had no illness caused by cats in 25 years of treating them.

Unless you are in the business of raising cats for fun and profit. I would strongly urge spaying or neutering a cat meant to be a pet. A female (queen) can have as many as four litters a year, and unless you have friends who need cats by the dozens, this can be a big problem. A male cat develops both roaming habits and a bad smell if left entire past the first year. Accidents and wounds usually end the lives of male cats at an early age.

Cats are very satisfactory pets for people, usually needing less grooming than dogs, but if grooming is not your favorite recreation get a short haired variety. Persians must be brushed almost daily to avoid mats on the skin and hair balls in the stomach.

Prevention of disease in the cat is fairly simple, with vaccines available for most of the dangerous diseases, but one often forgotten is the rabies vaccine which is vitally important because a cat may encounter a sick bat, rat or other animal, being the hunters that they are, and be bitten without the owner realizing it. Cats may be plentiful in numbers, but to a cat-lover there is no other animal to take its place. We really need to consider them more often to keep them as healthy as possible.

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Tryon Daily Bulletin, Tues., Sept. 30, 1980

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