

LIFE-SAVING ORPHAN KITTEN

FOSTER CARE

GUIDE



DEAR FOSTER FAMILY,

You are about to embark on a memorable live-saving adventure! Thank you for opening your home and heart to orphan kittens. Kittens younger than eight weeks old are the most at-risk population in our shelter.

Fostering orphaned kittens is a rewarding process that saves thousands of lives in our community each year, and we could not do it without you! In this manual, you will find helpful tips to ensure success. Orphaned kittens usually require consistent love and attention that is difficult to provide in a shelter environment. These kittens are typically only placed in foster homes until they are big enough to undergo spay/neuter surgery. We encourage fosters to take more than one kitten at a time to help promote socialization and normal behavioral growth. When kittens are unable to have appropriate social interaction with other kittens it can stunt proper socialization and lead to behavioral problems. Multiple kittens are not only fun, they can also self-entertain!

There are several requirements to be the perfect foster for this type of animal. If the requirements included in the following section do not work well with your current schedule, please let us know. We can help you find a foster situation that will work best for you!

Sincerely,

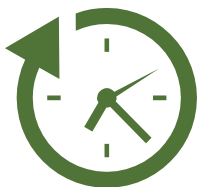
The PAWS and More Foster
Team



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ARE YOU A FOSTER KITTEN CANDIDATE



TIME

Are you able to devote the required time daily and weekly to your foster animal (see chart below)?

YES NO

Are you able to bring foster animals to the shelter for vaccinations and wellness exams every 1-2 weeks?

YES NO

Are you able to contact PAWS or bring foster animals to the shelter facility quickly in an emergency?

YES NO



SPACE

Are you able to separate your foster animals from your household pets for at least two weeks to protect them from illnesses and allow for proper adjustment period?

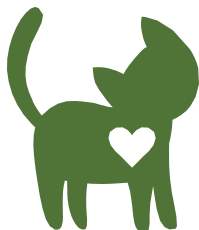
YES NO

Are you able to handle cleaning procedures such as washing hands after every encounter and cleaning / disinfecting the kittens' quarters routinely?

YES NO

Are you able to handle any potential home damage (carpet, clothing, and/or furniture) associated with animals?

YES NO



CARE

Are you prepared to handle sickness or possible death of your foster animal?

YES NO

Are you able to emotionally handle letting go of the foster animal after becoming attached once their foster period is over?

YES NO

Are you able to handle the potential of foster animals carrying illness that could affect your household animals / family?

YES NO

Kitten Foster Time Commitments

TYPE OF FOSTER	DURATION OF FOSTER	DAILY COMMITMENT
Weaned Kittens	1-3 weeks	2 hours
URI Cats	2-3 weeks	1-2 hours
Kittens with Mom	2-8 weeks	1-2 hours or more
Injured Cat	1 week - 2 months	1-2 hours
Neonate Kittens	6-8 weeks	Up to 8 hours



Tips & Tails

Use glass or metal bowls as plastic bowls are porous and not as easy to clean.

Clean linens and toys daily.

Supervise play time.

Preparing the Kitty Room

Before you bring home your kittens, make sure that you have a suitable place for them to stay. A bathroom often works well. The kitten room should adhere to the following guidelines:

- A space where temperature can be controlled.
- The space has been disinfected by using a mild bleach solution (1 part bleach to 32 parts water).
- Separate from other household pets.
- Can withstand kitty messes: litter box accidents, vomit, spilled water, etc.
- No breakable items.
- Electrical outlets and wires are blocked.
- No small items.
- Secured windows (closed or with a secure screen).
- Secured appliances (toilet lids closed).

HOW OLD IS THAT KITTEN!

Kittens grow quickly! Below you'll find a handy chart made by Alley Cat Allies, which can be used to determine your kitten(s) age.

Please keep in mind that each kitten is different and can hit development milestones quicker/slower than others.

HOW OLD IS THAT KITTEN? Alley Cat Allies

Kittens are adorable at any age, but did you know that figuring out how old a kitten is can help determine what sort of care they need? It can be tricky to tell, but our at-a-glance kitten progression chart, featuring Darling the kitten, is here to help you out!



NEWBORN

When kittens are first born they are completely helpless—their **eyes are closed**, their **ears are folded**, and they can't stand, keep themselves warm or eat on their own. They rely on mom for everything!



ONE WEEK

Darling is starting to become **more aware of his surroundings!** At about seven days old, a kitten's ears will unfold and their eyes may start to open.



TWO WEEKS

Look at those blue peepers! Darling's **eyes are fully open**, and he is taking his **first wobbly steps**. Kittens this age start interacting more with each other, but still need mom.



THREE WEEKS

Darling's now playing with his siblings and getting more mobile. You should be able to **tell if kittens are boys or girls**. You can start providing a **litter box** and **wet food**.



FOUR WEEKS

Look how much Darling has grown! At four weeks kittens are **sturdy on their feet** and playing with each other, toys, and people.



FIVE WEEKS

Get ready for a lot of fun! Darling is now full of energy and **plays exuberantly**. **Interacting with people** is important for kittens at this age. Darling is developing lots of personality!



SIX WEEKS

Every day Darling is getting more sure of himself through socialization and play. He's **using the litter box** and **eating cat food**—though he still visits mom for snacks and comfort.



SEVEN WEEKS

Darling is **almost fully weaned**, and continues to play and learn. Being **introduced to new people, places** in the home, and **other pets** is an important part of socialization.



EIGHT WEEKS

Two pounds! Darling now **weighs enough to be neutered**. He's also getting more skilled and adventurous. Darling is learning so much from his mom, siblings, and human caregiver.



NINE WEEKS

Looking pretty grown-up, Darling! At this age kittens are behaving and using their body language like adult cats. Darling is **eating all solid food**, and his eyes have gone from blue to yellow.



TEN WEEKS

Darling is fully weaned, neutered, and—because he was socialized to people—**ready for his loving adoptive home**. They grow up so fast!

Get even more details (and cute pics!) with our week-by-week kitten progression resource at

alleycat.org/KittenProgression



GO! KITTY CARE

Tips & Tails

Heat Rice Socks in Microwave for 1 minute maximum. This will provide up to 60 minutes of warmth.

Play with your kitten with toys instead of your hand, this will prevent your kitten from thinking you are a toy and scratching and biting you.

If your kitten is having issues using their litter-box try having more than one litter box in the kitten's room. Also you may try using Kitten Attract™ litter.

Do not give dairy products such as cow's milk to your foster.

Heating

It is important to keep the kittens warm! However, it is also important that kittens have space to move away from a heat source. Covering a heating pad or warm rice sock with a towel works well. Be sure that the heat source only covers part of the area. Small litters or single kittens need more help staying warm.

Feeding

Follow the feeding schedule provided in the Feeding section. For neonates keep track of the feedings on the Daily Weight and Feeding Record.

Elimination

Young kittens (3 weeks or less) often need help urinating and defecating. To do so, gently rub a warm cloth or cotton pad on the anus and genital areas immediately after a feeding. This will stimulate kittens to urinate and/or defecate into the cloth or cotton pad. If a mother cat is present she will stimulate the kittens.

Cleaning

Kittens are usually groomed by their mother. In the absence of the mother, you must work hard to keep the kittens clean.

Dried feces in the fur can be removed by using a flea comb.

Use a warm, damp cloth to stroke the kittens' fur. This simulates how a mother cat would groom her kittens.

A small amount of dawn soap on the warm, damp cloth will help to remove any lingering dirt/ fleas that may be present. This is only to be done once weekly at most.

Dipping dirty feet or tails in warm water is also helpful.

Be aware that some kittens may not enjoy being wet, so they may protest. Be careful of escapees and their sharp claws!

Dry kittens well so that they do not get chilled.

Socialization

Socialization is a very important part of kitty care. It is your job to convince kittens that humans are kind and loving.

Allow all kittens to acclimate to their new environment before trying to play with them. This usually takes just one day.

Outgoing kittens can be cuddled and played with.

Shy kittens need to have many short encounters to encourage them that humans are friendly. Hold shy kittens calmly, stroking them and talking to them in a comforting voice. Put the kitten down before he or she starts squirming. If you repeat this often – perhaps only 30 seconds at a time – shy kittens will begin to love the experience.

Fearful kittens will run away from you when you try to approach them. Simply sit on the floor calmly and wait for them to come to you. Let them become accustomed to your presence and, when they finally approach, use a calming voice and stroke them gently.

Not all kittens will grow into cats that love to be cuddled and held. This is ok! Although some people want affectionate cats, others prefer independent pets.

Litter Box Training

Use a low box, such as a cake pan, with one inch of non-clumping kitty litter or shredded newspaper. (Clumping kitty litter can be dangerous if it is ingested.) After feeding, place the kitten in the litter box. Take her paw and gently scratch the litter. Give lots of praise when they are successful. Be patient! Keep the litter box clean and away from the food area. Note: Litter box will not be used for neonates.

Foster Rechecks

Fosters will need to come in every 2 weeks for needed medications, de-worming, and booster vaccinations. To schedule check ups, please contact the Foster Coordinator or the shelter.



Tips & Tails

Kittens sleep up to 18-20 hours a day.

Playtime with your kitten is a must for kitten development.

Neonate kittens are kittens that are under four weeks of age with or without a nursing mom cat.

Kitten Development

In the first few weeks of life, kittens are helpless and vulnerable. They are still developing basic reflexes, their hearing and vision are still not fully developed, and they are unable to properly control their body temperatures. They should therefore be confined to a nursery area. Kittens should not be allowed to mingle with your own pets.

During the first 1-3 weeks of life kittens do not urinate or defecate on their own and require stimulation for elimination. Gently rub a warm cloth or cotton pad on the kitten's genital area and anus. This should be done before or after feeding.

Keeping the kittens clean from food and feces is vital for his or her health. If you notice your kitten has food, urine or feces on him or her, gently wipe the kitten down with a warm damp cloth or baby wipe. Be sure to dry the kitten well afterwards so that they do not become chilled.



Kitty Expectations & Care by Age

WEEKS	FEEDING	DEVELOPMENT
0-1	Bottle feed ½ tablespoon of formula every 2-3 hours, overnight feeding can be every 3-4 hours. If there is a Mom cat, make sure that all kittens are nursing. Kittens can nurse from Mom for up to 45 minutes at a time. A lot of crying or activity could indicate a problem with Mom's milk supply.	Kittens will weigh about 4 oz. Kittens will sleep 90% of the time and eat the rest of the time. Handle the kittens minimally. Newborns are deaf and blind and are unable to maintain their body temperature. Keep kittens warm with provided heating source.
1-2	Bottle feed every 2-3 hours until kittens are full but not bloated. Overnight feeding can be every 3-4 hours. Generally, kittens eat ½ tablespoon per feeding.	Kittens will weigh about 7 oz. Ear canals open between 5-8 days. Eyes open between 8-14 days. Healthy kittens will be round and warm and have pink skin. Healthy kittens seldom cry. They are still unable to maintain their body temperature, keep kittens warm with provided heating source.
2-3	Bottle feed up to 1 tablespoon (15 mL) every 3-4 hours. Overnight feeding can be every 4-5 hours.	Kittens will weigh about 10 oz. and will begin to crawl and stand between 18-21 days old. They begin to play with each other. Increase handling of kittens to get them used to human contact. Ensure that all interactions are gentle and positive. They are still unable to maintain their body temperature, keep kittens warm with provided heating source.
3-4	Bottle feed every 3-4 hours until kittens are full but not bloated. Overnight feeding can be every 4 hours. Kittens may start lapping from a bowl. Feedings during the night are not required, unless kittens are not thriving.	Kittens will weigh about 13 oz. Kittens begin to see well. They may start cleaning themselves but will still need help for serious cleaning. Litter box training may begin at 4 weeks of age. (See Litter Box Training description in Kitty Care section.) They are still unable to maintain their body temperature. Keep kittens warm with provided heating source.
4-5	Feed 3 tablespoons of formula every 8 hours. Weaning of kittens may begin gradually. (See Weaning description in Kitty Care section.)	Litter box training may begin at 4 weeks of age. (See Litter Box Training description in Kitty Care section.)
5-6	Feed gruel 4 times a day. Introduce dry food and water. Some kittens do not like canned food – try mixing any meat flavored human baby food with water. Be sure the meat flavor does NOT have onion powder as this is hazardous to kittens.	Kittens can start to wander around the room, under supervision. Play with your kittens often! (See Socialization description in Kitty Care section.)
6-7	Feed canned and dry food at least 3 meals daily. If any kittens are territorial with food, provide a second bowl so that everyone gets fed.	Kittens will start to act like actual cats: playing and washing themselves. Be sure to show them the litter box after meals, play sessions and naps.
7-8	Each kitten will be eating a little over one can of food per day. Offer wet food 3-4 times a day. Leave a bowl of dry food and water for kittens to use at will. DO NOT feed kitten table scraps.	Continue playing and socializing with the kittens.
8+	Feed wet food 2 times per day. Leave a bowl of dry food and water for kittens to use at will. DO NOT feed kitten table scraps.	Kittens should weigh about 2 pounds! When they reach this point, they are ready for adoption, and for spay/neuter.

NEONATE FEEDING

Tips & Tails

To warm nursing bottles, fill a coffee mug half way with hot water and place the bottle of formula into mug. After a minute or two, test formula by sprinkling a few drops on the back of your hand. Formula should be warm to the touch, but not hot.

Type of Food

Never give a neonate kitten anything other than their specified formula! (No cow's milk!)

Kittens who are less than three weeks old are fed liquid or powder formula.

All kittens must be weighed before and after feeding!

Formula Feeding Etiquette:

- Only use clean nipples and bottles!
- Feed kittens one at a time. Place them on a counter top and allow them to feed with four paws on the counter and with a level head. This simulates how they would nurse from a mom.
- Do not feed a kitten while she is on her back. This can cause formula to go down the wrong way and end up in the lungs.
- Mix 2 parts warm water to 1 part powdered formula (unless otherwise advised). Shake well to dissolve lumps! Store mixed formula in the fridge up to 48 hrs.
- Kittens love warmth, wrap or drape kitten in a towel or blanket while feeding.
- Gently open the kitten's mouth with your finger and place the nipple on the tongue. Some kittens need practice latching, please be patient! If a kitten has troubles, a 1ml syringe will be necessary until they can learn to latch.
- Stroking kittens can help them to eat.
- Pull lightly on the bottle. This promotes strong sucking.
- Tilt the bottle up slightly. This prevents the kitten from inhaling too much air.
- Do not squeeze the bottle to force formula into the kitten's mouth. This can cause formula to move into the lungs.
- After feeding, burp your kitten by gently massaging their back.
- After feeding stimulate the kittens to urinate and/or defecate. Stimulate them with a warm cloth if necessary.
- Thoroughly clean off any formula on kitten's fur and dry kitten off. (Formula will stick and is very hard to remove if it dries and is also painful for the kitten!)
- Fill out the Daily Weight and Feeding Record.
- Please, watch these videos for clarification:
www.maddiesfund.org/orphaned-kitten-care-how-to.htm

NEONATE-GRUEL FEEDING

Gruel Babies -

Once your kittens are about four weeks old, it is time to start the weaning process. Your goal is to have the kittens eating on their own consistently by the time they're adopted. So, beginning at four weeks, start offering warm gruel (two parts wet food, one part formula) at all times. Gruel will have the consistency of a milkshake. Dry kitten food and water should also be provided at all times. Every four to six hours, discard any uneaten gruel and provide a fresh batch.

You will still be supplementing the kittens with a bottle every eight hours to ensure that they are getting all the nutrients they need, but encourage them to eat gruel before you offer a bottle. To get a kitten interested in trying the gruel, you may have to offer the gruel with a spoon or use your finger to place a small amount on the kitten's tongue. Ideally, by the end of five weeks, your foster kittens will be happily eating dry and wet food on their own.

It is important to continue weighing your foster kittens every day, after each feeding, to ensure that they are always gaining weight. During the weaning stage, you should also begin introducing the kittens to the litter box because they should be able to eliminate on their own by about four weeks of age.

* Please note: Weaning is individual. Each kitten is different, some may take more time to transition, others may skip over gruel and go right to wet food, and some even skip all that and go right to hard food. Please do not stress over weaning, it's a trial and error process! *



NEONATE FEEDING CHART

Example of Neonate Kitten Daily Weight and Feeding Record

NAME/ID	KITTEN 1	KITTEN 2	KITTEN 3	KITTEN 4	KITTEN 5	KITTEN 6
Date						
Weight						
Attitude						
FEEDING 1						
Milk volume						
Stool/urine						
FEEDING 2						
Milk volume						
Stool/urine						
FEEDING 3						
Milk volume						
Stool/urine						
FEEDING 4						
Milk volume						
Stool/urine						
FEEDING 5						
Milk volume						
Stool/urine						
FEEDING 6						
Milk volume						
Stool/urine						

NOTES:

SELF FEEDERS!

Caring for Self Feeding Kittens

By six to seven weeks old, your kittens should be independent eaters. Dry food should be their primary source of food, but offer wet food frequently as well to encourage eating and maximize growth. Replace the water in their water dish 1-2 times a day and wipe out the dish if needed. During this stage, your daily responsibilities include socializing the kittens and exposing them to new situations and environments. It's important to try and keep all experiences positive for the kittens, so give them lots of treats and toys as they learn about new sounds, smells, places and faces.

As always, watch the behavior of your kittens and monitor their health daily. It's can be helpful to keep a journal detailing each foster kitten's weight, appetite, energy level and overall health. Weigh the kittens once a day, preferably around the same time, to minimize the variables when tracking the kittens' growth. Look over each kitten every day for physical changes or potential medical problems.

Now that the kittens are using a litter box, be sure to scoop the box at least 1 - 2 times daily. Every other day, dump the litter, clean the box with a mild detergent (such as dishwashing liquid) and put in fresh litter. You'll want to monitor the kittens for diarrhea, and clean the litter box more frequently if diarrhea is apparent. See page 18 for the examples of kitten stool you will see.

At this stage, play with the kittens several times a day with interactive toys. Play time provides stimulation, encourages socialization and releases excess energy. Try a variety of toys (balls, squeaky toys, feather toys, etc.) to see which ones your foster kittens like. Cat toys don't have to be fancy or expensive. Cats often enjoy playing with something as simple as a paper bag (remove the handles for safety) or a box with holes cut in the sides.

Don't leave your foster kittens alone with any toys that could be easily ingested or cause harm to them. Examples are string toys, yarn and Da Bird (feathers dangling from a string and wand). Toys such as ping-pong balls and toilet paper tubes are safe. Also, it may seem cute, but discourage your foster kittens from play-biting your hands and feet. This is something that adopters may not find desirable.





In some cases, moms are fostered together with their litters. There are a few things to keep in mind for this type of foster situation. Moms require a calm setting with privacy and minimal activity. Stress can cause moms to stop taking care of their kittens.

Bringing Mom Home

You will need a separate space for a mom with her litter. When you first bring them home, leave them alone in their new space. Mom will need some time, up to a few days, to adjust to her new space. Be sure to offer mom fresh food, water and a clean litter box.

Socialization

Even adult cats need socialization; however, proceed slowly with any adult cat that you do not know. Create situations for socialization but let her come to you. Stop the session if you notice any negative signs, such as swishing tail, ears laid back, head jerk towards you, tensing up, cranky meow, moving away, hissing or growling.

Tips & Tails

Be sure to keep mom & kittens separated from other pets in home. Mother cats need a quiet area to raise their kittens

Mom and Her Kittens

For the first few weeks, mom will do everything necessary to take care of her kittens. Kittens start nursing very soon after birth.

Mom will also groom her kittens. Cats should be left alone for the first two weeks except to feed, clean and check on the kittens a few times a day.

Possible Issues with Mom Cats

Maternal neglect – In some cases, about 8% of the time, kittens die from poor maternal care. There are a few causes of this. Some cats lack maternal instincts and, in other cases, it is nature's way of handling sick or weak kittens. Environmental stress is an important factor, which is why it is important to create a calm environment for mom and the litter. As the foster parent, watch for signs of maternal neglect. Contact the Foster Coordinator if you notice the mom avoids feeding and grooming her kittens and ignores their cries.

Maternal Aggression – As mom protects her kittens, it is common for her to be aggressive towards humans or other animals. Do not try to introduce your household pets to your foster mom as this adds too much stress to the environment. If aggression becomes severe, contact the Foster Coordinator.





Healthy kittens have bright eyes, a sleek coat and a plump belly. Their eyes and noses are generally free from discharge. A normal body temperature for kittens is 100-102.5°F

Measuring Growth

Kittens are weighed to measure growth and development. Neonate kittens should be weighed daily to ensure growth and weight gain. Kittens over 4 weeks of age are weighed once a week.

When weighing your kitten if you notice if he or she has lost or not gained weight please contact the Foster Coordinator.

MAINTAINING KITTEN HEALTH



Normal Stool



Soft Stool



Diarrhea



Diarrhea

There are three types of cat stool: normal, soft and diarrhea. Normal stool is firm and has a definite shape. Soft stool is not firm but still has some shape. Diarrhea is liquid, with or without color to it. Diarrhea is common in kittens and can be caused by parasites, viruses, bacteria, food changes, stress, overfeeding and other issues.

Diarrhea must be monitored as it can quickly lead to dehydration. If the kitten is active, mild diarrhea that occurs for 24 hours is not a concern. Feed the kitten less at a time but more often. If the diarrhea is severe, lasts more than 3-4 feedings or contains blood/parasites, contact the Foster Coordinator to schedule a check. When dehydration occurs PAWS will provide sub-q fluids, and B12 vitamin injections at the shelter.

Parasites

Kittens can show tapeworms either in their feces or on their anus. These look like grains of rice. Roundworms look like spaghetti and can be seen in the litter box or in vomit. It is common to see parasites a few days after a kitten has received de-wormer. That means it's working! Parasites are commonly found in the stool of kittens. If you notice worms, contact the Foster Coordinator.

Vomiting

Vomiting is not serious unless it happens continuously. It can lead to dehydration. If vomiting occurs 2-3 times in a row, contact the Foster Coordinator right away. If dehydration occurs, PAWS will provide sub-q fluids, and B12 vitamin injections at the shelter. Depending on the size of the kitten we can also provide anti-nausea medication.

Eye Discharge

It is normal for kittens to have little pieces of crust in their eyes after waking up. If you see continuous yellow or green discharge, swollen or closed eyes contact the Foster Coordinator. You can use a warm, damp towel to wipe the affected eye(s). PAWS will provide antibiotic drops if needed.

MAINTAINING KITTEN HEALTH

Ear Mites

Ear mites are parasites that live in the ear canal. You may notice a bald spot behind ears due to continuous scratching. They may also violently shake their head. The ears may smell bad and you may see brown discharge that resembles coffee grounds. Ear mites are contagious to other cats and need to be treated. Contact the Foster Coordinator if you notice any of these symptoms.



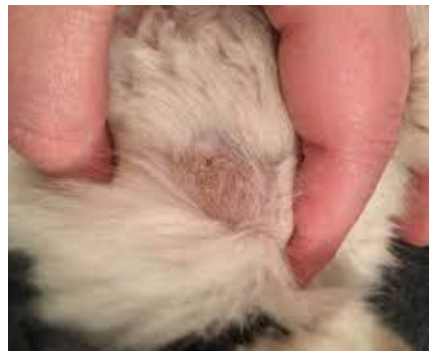
Fleas

Kittens that have fleas will scratch themselves often. Topical and oral flea prevention are given to kittens over 4 weeks of age. Flea prevention for kittens under 4 weeks includes daily brushing with the flea comb and daily bedding changes. If you still notice signs of fleas, you can wash the kitten in a small amount of Dawn dish soap followed by using a flea comb to remove any remaining fleas. Be sure to thoroughly dry following a bath. If you still notice signs of fleas, contact the Foster Coordinator.



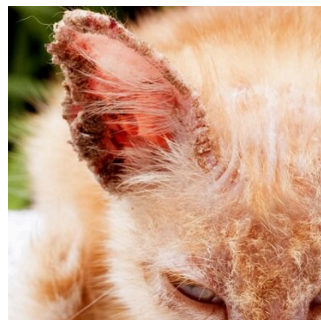
Ringworm

Ringworm is a contagious fungus that can spread to other animals and humans. A sign of ringworm is thinning hair or patches of hair loss with crusty looking skin. Ringworm is difficult to remove from your house. To help with prevention and to prevent spreading, maintain cleaning protocols and a good hand washing routine. Contact the Foster Coordinator if you notice any hair loss.



Mange

Mange is caused by parasites that infect the skin of kittens. Some forms of mange are contagious to other animals and humans. The symptoms include itching, hair loss and sores. Mange needs to be treated. If you notice these symptoms, contact the Foster Coordinator.



MAINTAINING KITTEN HEALTH



Upper Respiratory Tract Infection (URI)

URIs are common and are caused by contagious viruses and bacteria.

Signs to look for:

- Sneezing and discharge from eyes/nose
- Congested breathing
- Loss of appetite
- Lethargy (lack of energy)
- Dehydration

If you notice any of these signs, please contact the Foster Coordinator.



Fading Kittens

Occasionally, a kitten that appeared healthy will suddenly stop thriving. They will stop growing, socializing and crawling. They will begin to lose weight and may cry continuously. When this happens, they fade quickly and, even with medical intervention, may not survive 48 hours.

There is no understood cause for this condition.

One possible cause could be Panleukopenia, a contagious disease with a high mortality rate. Kittens will present with diarrhea and vomiting. If you notice any of these symptoms or lethargy and inactivity, please contact the Foster Coordinator.

Occasionally, kittens die in foster care. If this should occur contact the Foster Coordinators for information concerning the disposition of remains.

Tips & Tails

The use of a humidifier in the kitten's room will help with congestion.

Fading Kitten Protocol



Symptoms:

- Low Body Temperature – the kitten feels cool or cold to the touch
- Extreme Lethargy - not getting up, unable to stand, not responding when pet - Gaspings for breath
- Meowing/Crying out

Fading Kitten Syndrome is caused by 2 things:

Hypothermia (being too cold) and Hypoglycemia (not enough blood sugar).

When this happens, it is vital that you take these immediate steps!

Step 1- Get them warm:

- Create the "burrito" towel. Immediately wrap the kitten up in a towel like a burrito leaving their face exposed only. Their whole body, tail, ears, and paws should be in the towel, only nose and mouth exposed. Do not take the kitten out of the towel to adjust them, check on them, etc. - this is very important! Every time you take them out you will make them cold again, even if it is only for a second.
- Wrap a HEATING PAD turned onto *low* around the burrito towel (to avoid burns) as an EXTRA source of heat. Secure it around the towel so it stays in place

Step 2 - Get their blood sugar up:

Once you get the heat on them:

- Karo Syrup is a must have in your home for kittens. PAWS will provide you with this as well.
- Using a syringe give 3 drops every 3 minutes into the mouth.
- If they aren't swallowing, try not to get it down the throat, apply to a cotton swab and rub on the tongue or gums.
- Set an egg timer or use the stop watch on your cell phone to make sure you are doing it at least every 3 minutes. Every 5 minutes or 10 minutes will not work, it must be every 3 minutes.

If your kitten is experiencing Fading Kitten Syndrome please contact the Foster Coordinator ASAP. PAWS staff are trained on the "fading kitten protocol" which includes Sub-Q fluids, and B12 Vitamin Injections. This process can be repeated daily if needed.

Keep in mind, even with all the love and attention and perfect treatment of this condition, some of them still won't make it. Try not to blame yourself during this difficult time and focus on all the kittens you have personally saved. Any kitten you've ever taken care of was given a second chance at life BECAUSE of YOU!



Routine Care

Routine Care (medications, vaccinations, dewormers, etc) for foster animals is provided by the PAWS staff during normal business hours. After hours, the foster coordinator will take calls when emergencies arise. In the event of an emergency, the foster coordinator will contact the Shelter Director and medical staff at PAWS.

The PAWS and More Animal Shelter will not reimburse individuals for vet bills for foster animals when taken for veterinary care outside of that which is pre-authorized by the PAWS and More Animal Shelter.

Vaccines and De-worming Schedule

Kittens receive vaccinations every three weeks from the time they are 1 pound 8 ounces until they reach 2 FVRCP (distemper) vaccinations and will receive 2 doses of Pyrantel, 2 weeks apart. Depending on the kitten additional medications may be needed for parasites. The Rabies vaccination will be administered when they are spayed/neutered if they are old enough and reach the weight requirements.

Additional supportive/medical care PAWS provides directly at the shelter

- Sub-Q Fluids - for dehydration can occur in kittens.
- Vitamin B12 Injection-often used for lethargic kittens
- Eye drops/ointment-for conjunctivitis, which is very common in URI kittens
- Antibiotics - For URI's or infections
- Appetite Stimulants - Commonly used if kittens are sick and not eating
- Anti-Nausea Medication - used for vomiting
- Testing and Treatment for Parasites

In Person Check-ins:

The Foster Coordinator and PAWS staff will do our best to communicate and stay on top of scheduling in person check ins. If you have not had an in-person check in scheduled, please contact the shelter or the Foster Coordinator to make sure that your foster is on track!

- For kittens under 4 weeks without mother: ideally, once weekly for weight and wellbeing
- For kittens under 4 weeks with mother- every 2 weeks as needed for weight and wellbeing.
- For kittens 4-8 weeks: every 2 weeks for boosters, weights, and well-being
- For kittens 8-12 weeks: in person is ideal but not required as long as they have all medical needed and fosters are reporting that they are in good health
- For puppies under 12 weeks: in person check ins should be conducted at least every 2 weeks for boosters and to monitor health and wellness
- For dogs: in person check ins as needed for medical