

LIFE-SAVING DOG

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 dogs in need. Dogs who stay in the shelter long term deteriorate over time. Some of these effects can be life-long.

Fostering dogs and puppies is a rewarding process that saves hundreds 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. Our dogs typically need to be fostered until they are adopted and this process can take anywhere from a few days to a few months. We encourage fosters to give their foster dogs time to decompress away from residential animals. Going from the shelter environment to a home environment is a big change and oftentimes they need time to settle, sleep, and recharge before being ready to engage with new animals and environments.

Requirements to foster dogs vary depending on the dog. The Foster Coordinator and PAWS staff can help find the best fit for your home.

Sincerely,

The PAWS & More Foster Team

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Preparing Your Home:

PAWS & More will provide all necessary items including, but not limited to:

- Food: Dry and Wet
- Crate/Kennel
- Blankets and Beds
- Toys and Enrichment items: kongs, puzzle toys, lick mats, and more
- Shampoo, flea and tick prevention, heartworm prevention, vaccinations, and dewormer
- Any medication that they need or special dietary items

Foster families need to provide:

- A healthy and safe environment for their foster dogs
- Transportation to and from adoption appointments and well-checks and all vet appointments as needed
- Socialization and cuddle time to help teach dogs positive family and pet relationships
- Lots of exercise and positive stimulation to help them develop into great dogs
- PAWS & More will provide you with any supplies that you may need. Including any enrichment items.

Dog-proofing your home:

Foster dogs come from a shelter environment, and even if they have previously lived in a home, we don't always know how they will react in a new home. So, before bringing home a new foster dog, you'll want to survey the area where you are going to keep your foster dog. Remove anything that would be unsafe or undesirable for the dog to chew on, and latch securely any cupboards and doors that the foster dog could get into. People food and chemicals can be very harmful if consumed by dogs, so please store them in a place that the foster dog cannot access. Never underestimate your foster dog's abilities. Here are some additional tips for dog-proofing your home:

- Make sure that all trash cans are covered or latched and keep them inside a closet. (Don't forget the bathroom trash bins.)
- Keep the toilet lids closed.
- Keep both people and pet food out of reach and off all counter tops.
- Move house plants or secure them. Some dogs like to play with them and may knock them over.
- Make sure aquariums or cages that house small animals, like hamsters or fish, are securely out of reach of your foster dog.
- Remove medications, lotions or cosmetics from any accessible surfaces.
- Move and secure all electrical and phone wires out of reach. Dogs may chew on or get tangled in them.
- Pick up any clothing items that have buttons or strings, which can be harmful to your foster dog if consumed.
- Relocate knickknacks or valuables that your foster dog could knock down.

Puppy Proofing & Set up:

- Confine your puppy in a space with you so you can keep an eye on puppy behavior, watch for bathroom cues, and give them plenty of attention
 - Include lots of toys, water, and comfy places to lay
 - Make sure this space is free of anything you don't want puppies to have access to: hazardous materials, valuables, etc.
-

Preparing Your Home:



Tips & Tails

Kennels should be used as a positive and safe place. They should not be used for punishments or time outs.

Give your foster kongs, lick mats, and lots of tasty treats in their safe space/kennel.

Before bringing your foster dog home, you will want to create a safe, separate space for them to relax and decompress in a quiet part of the home.

- Kennel with cozy bedding and tasty treat
- Separate room with everything they need:
 - Toys, bedding, food, and water
- The majority of shelter dogs need at least two weeks to decompress before introductions with other animals and people outside the home.
- It should be enough space for the dog to comfortably play, move, stretch, etc.

Introducing Your Foster to Residential Animals/People:

Dog introductions

- Introduce dogs one at a time
- Have both dogs leashed
- Introduce dogs outside in a large yard, or on a walk
 - While leashed, walk parallel with the dogs a safe distance apart
 - Continue walking until dogs have decreased reactivity to each other
 - Slowly bring the dogs closer. If dogs reactivity increases, keep them at that distance until the reactivity has decreased again.
 - Once they are close together, allow them to sniff each other and stand behind the dog holding the leash, ready to pull back if necessary. You can keep the dogs leash on, but drop the leash if they are not showing signs of aggression and are listening to each other's cues.
- Supervise their interactions
- Make sure all high value items (food, treats, toys) are put away and out of sight before letting the dogs interact.

Cat introductions

- Make sure the cat has a safe place to escape
- Hold the foster dog on the leash and allow him/her to approach and smell the cat.
- Try to get the dogs attention away from the cat and see if they respond or remain fixated on the cat
- Watch their behavior, lunging, lip lifting, growling are all signs that they should be redirected or removed from the interaction.
- If the introduction goes well, continue to monitor interactions, keep a leash attached to the foster dog so they are easily able to be restrained and continue to make sure the cat has multiple escape routes away from the dog.

Children and Dogs

- Always leave the foster dog alone when he/she is eating, chewing or sleeping. Some dogs may nip or bite if bothered while eating or startled while sleeping.
- Do not take away a toy or prized possession from the foster dog.
- Do not tease the foster dog.
- Don't chase the foster dog around the house or run quickly around the foster dog; it may scare him.
- Pick up all your toys. Some dogs may not be able to tell the difference between what is theirs and what belongs to the kids.
- Provide the dog a safe space to get away from the children.

Tips & Tails

Never leave your foster dog unsupervised with children

Always provide safe places for dogs and cats to retreat to when overstimulated.

Supervise your foster dogs interactions with other dogs and cats until you feel comfortable leaving them alone in the same space together

Take introductions slowly, don't rush things, and give them time in between interactions to regroup and decompress before trying again.

Give them time!

Tapeworms



Roundworms



Parasites

Dogs can show tapeworms either in their feces or on their anus. These look like segmented grains of rice or could be long with connected rice-like segments. Roundworms look like spaghetti and can be seen in feces or in vomit. It is common to see parasites a few days after a dog has received de-wormer. That means it's working! If you notice worms, contact the Foster Coordinator or PAWS.

Diarrhea

Diarrhea is liquid, with or without color to it. Diarrhea 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 dog is active/behaving normally, mild diarrhea that occurs for 24 hours is not a concern. If the diarrhea is severe or contains blood/parasites, contact the Foster Coordinator or PAWS to schedule a check.

Vomiting

Vomiting is not serious unless it happens continuously. It can lead to dehydration. If vomiting occurs, contact the Foster Coordinator or PAWS right away. If dehydration occurs, PAWS will provide sub-q fluids at the shelter. We can also provide anti-nausea medication, when necessary.

Kennel Cough/URI

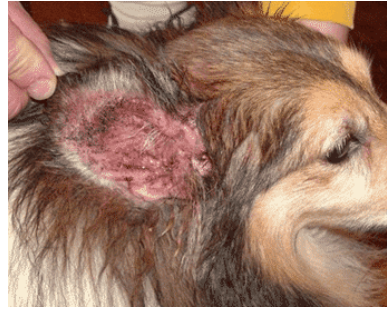
Kennel Cough is a common upper respiratory infection in shelter dogs, the symptoms are typically: sneezing, coughing, runny nose, and sometimes eye discharge. If you notice any of these symptoms, contact PAWS or the Foster Coordinator.

Parvovirus

If the dog/puppy is not eating or drinking or is eating and drinking less, is lethargic, and has foul smelling diarrhea or is vomiting, the dog/puppy should be seen as soon as possible. Contact PAWS or Foster Coordinator right away

Yeast Infections and Mites

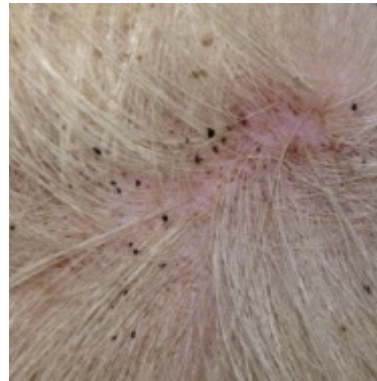
- Yeast infections in a dog's ears generally cause redness, a brown/yellow discharge, head shaking or rubbing, odor, and itching.
- Ear mite infections are extremely itchy and can cause many of the same symptoms. The discharge from the ear is usually dark and waxy or crusty. It may resemble coffee grounds
- Contact the Foster Coordinator if you notice any of these symptoms.



Yeast Infection in Dog's Ears

Fleas

When fleas are severe you will notice fleas jumping and crawling on your fosters fur and skin. When less severe (early stages) you may start to notice itching. Look for flea dirt. Flea dirt resembles coffee grounds and will be found on the skin when fleas have been present. If you notice adult fleas, flea dirt, or other symptoms, contact the Foster Coordinator or PAWS.



Flea Dirt



Adult Flea

Allergy/Dry Skin

If your foster dog has red, inflamed skin, is itching, is missing hair, has flakes of skin shedding, is licking their paws or other body parts raw, please contact PAWS & More or the Foster Coordinator. They may have allergies, dermatitis, or dry skin that needs to be addressed.



Mange

Mange is caused by parasites that infect the skin of dogs. 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.



Setting Your Foster Up for Success:

Tips & Tails

Offer food in different ways: Sprinkle food on a towel and roll it up, use a slow feed bowl, put wet food and other healthy foods on a lick mat.

After your foster has time to decompress, try taking them for walks in the park and pet friendly stores to help socialize them.

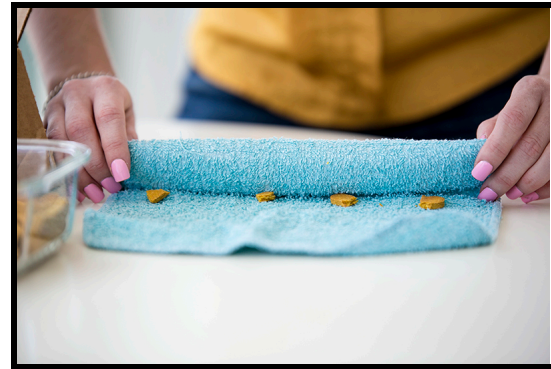
If your foster has a specific behavior plan in place, please follow the plan to ensure their success.

Play with your foster dog/puppy a lot and encourage healthy play with your residential dogs and family.

Enrichment

It is important to give your foster dog lots of exciting things to do, here are some ideas to keep them busy and reduce behavioral challenges in the home:

- Fill a kong with dog food or small treats and put peanut butter or spray cheese just at the opening.
- Take them for a walk in a new area.
- Hide treats for them around the house, show them where a few are, and allow them to sniff out the rest.
- Puzzle toys, Lick mats, and Kongs can be provided by the shelter.



Feeding

At the shelter, we free feed our dogs. You may decide it is a better fit to have scheduled feeding times and that's perfectly okay with us. They currently get a bowl of food around 9:30-10:00 am and if they need more, we feed them again at 2:00 pm.





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

Dogs receive vaccinations before leaving for foster and do not need a vaccine booster unless they are 12 months or younger. If they are 12 months or younger they will receive a vaccine booster three weeks from the first DA2PPV vaccine. All dogs will receive 2 doses of Pyrantal, 2 weeks apart. Depending on the dog, additional medications may be needed for parasites. The Rabies vaccination will be administered before they are sent to foster if they are healthy enough and are old enough to receive the vaccination. If they do not receive their rabies before they leave the shelter for foster, they will either come back for their rabies vaccination, or will receive the vaccine when they are spayed/neutered.

Additional supportive/medical care PAWS provides directly at the shelter

- Sub-Q Fluids - for dehydration
- Eye drops/ointment-for eye infections
- Antibiotics - For kennel cough or infections
- 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 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

Caring for Puppies:

Tips & Tails

Caring for Puppies over 7-8 Weeks Old

- Puppies over 7-8 weeks old are eating dry and wet food independently.
- They will need to be let out as frequently as every 30 minutes.
- You should crate or confine your puppy when you are unable to supervise them.
- They will likely want to chew on everything in reach so it is important to offer safe toys and keep valuables and household items out of reach.

Gruel Babies

Once your puppies are about four weeks old, it is time to start the weaning process. Your goal is to have the puppies 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 puppy 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 puppies with a bottle every eight hours if they are without mom. If they are with mom, allow them to continue nursing to ensure that they are getting all the nutrients they need, but encourage them to eat gruel before you offer a bottle/mom. To get a puppy 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 puppy's tongue. Ideally, by 6-7 weeks, your foster puppies will be happily eating dry and wet food on their own.

For younger and older puppies, especially, watch for signs of sickness such as: lethargy, lack of appetite, severe and/or foul smelling vomiting or diarrhea, refusing to drink water. If your foster is showing any of these symptoms, use the emergency contact sheet to determine who to contact. It may be urgent. Please bring a poop sample if you are able.

* Please note: Weaning is individual. Each puppy 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! *





Keeping Nursing Moms

Most of the time, moms are fostered together with their puppies. 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 puppies.

Bringing Mom Home

You will need a separate space for a mom with her puppies. 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 breaks outside away from her puppies.

Socialization

Puppies should be handled, held, and played with regularly to ensure they grow up comfortable with humans. By the time they are walking and playing, you can start introducing the great outdoors in a confined area. Let them smell, explore, and play in this new environment often.

Fostering Moms:

Mom and Her Puppies

For the first few weeks, mom will do everything necessary to take care of her puppies. Puppies start nursing very soon after birth. Mom will also groom her puppies and will likely clean up their messes.

Possible Issues with Mom Dogs

Maternal neglect – While most dogs take to motherhood instinctively without any support, sadly a mother dog neglecting or rejecting her pups happens occasionally. There are a few causes of this. Some dogs lack maternal instincts and, in other cases, it is nature's way of handling sick or weak puppies. 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 puppies and ignores their cries.

Signs to watch out for of Maternal Neglect

- Does not clean her pups
- Abandons her litter right after delivery
- Does not nurse her pups
- Attacks and sometimes kills or attempts to eat (or will eat) her pups as a redirection of their aggression when threatened by people or other animals
- Attacks or kills her pups when they appear to be different in appearance or smell

Maternal Aggression – As mom protects her puppies, 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.



An APDT Guide to Crate Training:

Introducing the crate

- The following steps are general guidelines to ensure your dog is happy to go into the crate. It may take several days, or just a few moments to progress through these steps.
- If you are consistent, the dog should quickly learn that the crate is a nice place to be—he gets to lie down in a soft spot and gets to chew on something he enjoys. Once you have successfully trained your dog to accept the crate, you can leave the crate open in your house. You may find that your dog will go into the crate and lie down there on his own with the door open, and enjoy a nice cozy place they can snuggle into and retire from the world.

When crate training, please keep the following in mind:

- Crates should not be used for punishment
- Crates should be large enough for the dog to comfortably turn, sit, lay down, and stand.
- Crates should be in a safe location and stimulation (toys, enrichment, food, and water) should be offered.
- A dog should not be crated any longer than the dog can hold their urine. For some dogs, that may only be for an hour.

Tips & Tails

- Examples of food toys include Kongs, Busy Buddy toys, Buster Cubes, etc.
- Stuff hollow rubber toys with a little bit of peanut butter; cream cheese, cheese wiz, cottage cheese, applesauce, plain yogurt, etc. mixed with kibble or broken up dry dog biscuits. Be creative! You may even try to freeze it, as this makes it harder for the dog to get the food out and increases the time his attention will be occupied..

1. Toss a few treats into the back of the crate. If your dog hesitates at all, go to the next step. If he eagerly enters the crate without hesitation, skip to step 8.
2. Feed the dog his meal next to the crate until you see no hesitation in response to the crate.
3. Place the dog's meal just inside the crate until you see no hesitation in response to the crate.
4. Place the dog's meal about halfway inside the crate until you see no hesitation in response to the crate.
5. Place the dog's meal all the way into the back of the crate until you see no hesitation in response to the crate.
6. Place the dog's meal all the way into the back of the crate, and gently close the door behind him while he eats. When he is finished, let him out.
7. Place the dog's meal all the way into the back of the crate, and gently close the door behind him while he eats. Wait for a few minutes to pass after completing the meal, and let him out.
8. Toss a food toy or chew toy into the back of the crate. Close the crate door (but don't try to "trick" your dog inside! Let him see you.). As long as he is relaxed and enjoys the chew item, allow him to stay in the crate for up to 5 minutes. If he panics at all, contact a professional.
9. Repeat step 8, and increase the amount of time by 5-10 minute increments. Keep repeating until you get up to an hour with a calm, happy dog inside the crate. If the dog panics at all, contact a professional.
10. Set the crate up with some toys near where you will be. For example, if you are sitting down to read the newspaper in the kitchen, set the crate in the kitchen where the dog can see you, and then sit down and read. If you planning on watching a TV show, set the crate up near the couch and proceed to watch your show. Intermittently talk to your dog in a calm, happy tone of voice and occasionally toss a treat to let him know he's being a good boy for calming lying in the crate.
11. Repeat step 10, and increase the amount of time by 5-10 minute increments. Keep repeating until you get up to an hour with a calm, happy dog inside the crate.

Re-Housetraining Your Adult Dog:

Many adult dogs adopted from animal shelters were housetrained by their previous homes. While at the shelter, however, they may not have gotten enough opportunities to eliminate outside, and consequently, they may have soiled their kennel areas. This tends to weaken their housetraining habits. Additionally, scents and odors from other pets in the new home may stimulate some initial urine marking. Remember that you and your new dog need some time to learn each other's signals and routines. Even if he was housetrained in his previous home, if you do not recognize his "bathroom" signal, you might miss his request to go out, causing him to eliminate indoors.

Therefore, for the first few weeks after you bring him home, you should assume your new dog is not housetrained and start from scratch. If he was housetrained in his previous home, the re-training process should progress quickly. The process will be much smoother if you take steps to prevent accidents and remind him where he's suppose to eliminate.

Establish a Routine

- Take your dog out at the same time every day. For example, first thing in the morning, when you arrive home from work, and before you go to bed.
- Praise your dog every time he eliminates outdoors; you can even give him a treat. You must praise him and give him a treat immediately after he has finished and not wait until he comes back inside the house. This step is vital because rewarding your dog for eliminating outdoors is the only way he will know that is what you want him to do.
- While your dog is eliminating, use a word or phrase like "go potty", that you can eventually use before he eliminates to remind him of what he is suppose to be doing.
- Feeding your dog on a set schedule, once or twice a day, will help make his elimination more regular.

Tips & Tails

Supervise, Supervise, Supervise

Do not give your dog an opportunity to soil in the house. He should be watched at all times when he is indoors. You can tether him to you with a six-foot leash, or use baby gates to keep him in the room where you are. Watch for signs that he needs to eliminate, like sniffing around or circling. If you see these signs, immediately take him outside, on a leash, to his bathroom spot. If he eliminates, praise him lavishly and reward him with a treat.

Confinement

When you're unable to watch your dog closely, he should be confined to an area small enough that he won't want to eliminate there. It should be just big enough for him to comfortably stand, lie down, and turn around in. This could be a portion of a bathroom or laundry room blocked off with boxes or baby gates. Or you may want to crate train your dog and use the crate to confine him. If he has spent several hours in confinement, let him out and praise him when he eliminates.

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This is a very basic guide to get you started. If you are having issues potty training or crate training, PAWS is happy to provide you with more resources and insight.

The Finish Line:



Spay/Neuter Surgery

Most of the time, adult dogs will go to foster already spayed/neutered but we will inform you if they still need their surgery scheduled/completed. Puppies typically need a little more time before going to get their surgeries. Iowa Humane Alliance will spay/neuter medium to large breed dogs at 8 weeks old and will spay/neuter toy breeds at 12 weeks old.

Veterinary Clinic Information

Town and Country Veterinary Clinic
622 N 12th Ave, Washington, IA 52353

Iowa Humane Alliance
6540 6th St SW, Cedar Rapids, IA 52404

Animal Haven Veterinary Hospital
120 Oak Crest Hill Rd SE, Hills, IA 52327
319-679-3322

Kalona Veterinary Clinic
405 6th St, Kalona, IA 52247

Scheduling

Fosters can be dropped off at the shelter a few days before surgery if necessary. Please contact the shelter to coordinate spay and neuter surgeries. Beth S. transports animals to various vets depending on availability. If it is more convenient, fosters may drop off their foster animals at the scheduled appointment

The Day of Surgery

Dogs must be fasted. No food or water after midnight.

Ready For Adoption:

Tips & Tails

Photo Taking Tips:

Know your pet

Get on their level

Use the right lighting
and setting

Be patient

Have fun and be
creative!

What happens now?

We love when our fosters are able to find adopters for our dogs. If you have someone interested in your foster, please contact the shelter and have the interested party fill out our “Adoption Questionnaire”.

The Foster Coordinator will reach out periodically for updates, pictures, and descriptions of your fosters personalities!

Most dogs leave the shelter and go to foster ready to be adopted. We understand that sometimes fosters want to adopt the animal they are fostering and we love that! Please let us know before a meet and greet is scheduled if you are wanting to adopt your foster dog. Otherwise, fosters are listed on the website as soon as possible and meet and greets can be scheduled right away. Meet and greets may happen at the shelter, or if you are comfortable, adopters can meet the foster at your home.



Emergency Contact Sheet:



Foster Parent Emergency Information Chart

You may need to initially quarantine your foster animals away from your resident pets for medical reasons and to prevent the spread of illness. Remember to wash your hands after handling your fosters.

****You must have approval before seeking outside medical care****

Less Urgent - call # (319) 653-6713, email washingtonpawsandmore1978@gmail.com, ask the Paws and More Fosters Facebook group for advice, or message the PAWS & More Facebook page.

Supplies/medication refill, congestion-weepy or swollen eyes, nasal discharge, fleas, internal parasites (worms), vomiting 1-2 times, infrequent diarrhea (reminder, cats are prone to URIs and diarrhea when stressed. Your new foster has had multiple changes in environment, diet, and has been dewormed. Make sure your animal continues to eat, drink, and eliminate.)

Urgent - call # (319) 653-6713, email washingtonpawsandmore1978@gmail.com, ask the Paws and More Fosters Facebook group for advice, or message the PAWS & More Facebook page.

Severe or leaking diarrhea, vomiting more than twice, not eating, babies losing weight, limping, minor injuries, minimal bleeding that ceases after pressure is applied, skin lesions or missing hair (might be ringworm, isolate immediately)

Emergency - During Shelter Business hours (Tuesday-Sunday 12pm-4pm) Call #(319) 653-6713, before/after hours call the Foster Coordinator at #(319) 461-4963, call the Director: Amber T. #(319) 461-9708 [advice], message the PAWS & More Facebook page, or as a last resort call the safety center at # (319) 653-2107

Foster animal escapes your home, you have been bitten and have broken skin, severe lethargy, non-responsive, difficulty breathing, cold to the touch, broken bones, severe lacerations, seizure activity, vomiting blood



Thank you to Boone Area Humane Society for collaboration on this foster manual. Permission granted to duplicate.