

FORT WAYNE ANIMAL CARE & CONTROL

CAT & KITTEN FOSTER MANUAL



Fort Wayne Animal Care and Control
HELPING PEOPLE . HELPING ANIMALS



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For basic foster questions please email us at Foster.help@cityoffortwayne.org

We have a closed group Facebook page specifically for our foster families to see what animals are in need of loving foster homes. You are welcome to post questions to this page but please realize that it is not checked regularly after hours or on the weekends. If you have an emergency please follow the emergency protocol below.

Emergency Protocol

- Contact the volunteer/foster department during regular business hours: Mondays 10am-6pm and Tuesday-Friday 8am-6pm.
- If after hours call **260-449-3000**. An animal control officer will be available to assist you.

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Section 1: Introduction

Thank you so much for your interest in fostering for Fort Wayne Animal Care & Control. By opening up your home to foster, you're not only helping to save lives, you're providing the individual attention and care these kittens desperately need.

Kittens are some of the most at-risk animals in shelters because they require intensive around-the-clock care and many shelters don't have the resources or staff to provide that level of care.

Once you have completed your foster profile, our volunteer/foster coordinator will get in touch with you to schedule a training, answer questions you may have and add you to our Fort Wayne Animal Care & Control foster Facebook page where you can see all animals who are awaiting loving foster homes.

We also have a great group of volunteer mentors that are admins on our foster Facebook page as well that are equipped to answer many questions about fostering. They triage questions and contact the volunteer/foster coordinator accordingly.

Fosters are asked to provide care for the kittens and provide transportation to and from shelter appointments, which are typically every 2 weeks. Once the kittens are old enough and weigh enough to be spayed or neutered (two pounds), you'll bring them to the shelter for surgery and then they will come into the adoption program. Care for foster kittens includes a strict feeding schedule, cleaning, and lots of snuggling and play time.

Although fostering kittens is a lot of work, it is a very rewarding experience!

Section 2: Frequently asked questions

What do foster families need to provide?

Foster families need to provide:

- A healthy and safe environment for their foster kittens
- Transportation to and from the shelter for all appointments
- Socialization and cuddle time to help teach the kittens about positive family and pet relationships

How much time do I need to spend with the kittens?

As much time as you can. The more time you spend with your foster kittens, the more socialized they will be to people. The amount of time required for feeding will vary depending on the age of the kittens you are fostering. Very young kittens need to be bottle-fed every two to three hours, while older ones may be eating on their own and need to be fed just a couple times a day.

Can I foster kittens even if I have a full-time job?

Yes. The volunteer/foster coordinator will match you with kittens appropriate for your schedule. We will need you to be available, however, to take the kittens to all shelter appointments, including nonscheduled ones if your kittens get sick.

How many kittens will I be fostering?

We like to have at least two kittens in a foster home so they can socialize with and learn from each other.

How long will the kittens need to be in foster care?

Once a kitten weighs two pounds, he/she can be spayed or neutered and then put up for adoption. If you are fostering a litter of kittens, we try to keep at least two of the kittens together, but we want to get everyone spayed or neutered and ready for adoption as early as possible.

What is my role before and after the kittens' spay/neuter surgery?

Once your kittens reach two pounds you will contact the volunteer/foster department so they can be scheduled for their spay/neuter surgeries. You will drop the kittens off at the shelter the afternoon before the surgery date between 4-6pm or between 7-7:30am the day of surgery. There is no need to withhold food or water for kittens. If you are bringing a mom cat in for surgery please withhold food and water after 10pm the evening before surgery. The day after surgery kittens will come into the adoption program. As you would expect, kittens are usually adopted quickly.

Will I need to give medicine to the foster kittens?

While we do our best to ensure that we are sending out healthy kittens to foster care, most illnesses have incubation periods, meaning that if the kittens picked up something at the shelter, symptoms can arise after you take them home. So, some kittens do not require any medicine, while others do. If your foster kittens need medication, we can show you how to administer it before you take them home.

Can I let my foster kittens play with my personal pets?

No, kittens are very susceptible to illness and can carry or catch dangerous ailments easily. For this reason, we require that foster parents isolate foster kittens with their own supplies in an area that is separated from your personal pets. We also advise that you consult with your veterinarian before fostering to ensure that all of your personal pets are healthy and up-to-date on all vaccines. If, for any reason, your personal pet becomes ill while you are fostering for Fort Wayne Animal Care & Control, we cannot provide medical care for your personal pet.

Will any of my foster kittens die?

Sadly, kittens are fragile, so it is always possible for them to become ill and pass away while in a foster home. This may be the hardest thing about fostering kittens. Please keep in mind that without foster homes, most of these kittens would not stand a chance of survival in a shelter. You're helping to save lives.

Who will take care of my foster kittens if I need to go out of town?

If you have travel plans while you are fostering kittens for Fort Wayne Animal Care & Control, you will need to contact the volunteer/foster coordinator and make arrangements to return your foster group to the shelter for the duration of the time that you are gone. Please provide at least one week's notice to ensure that we can make alternate arrangements for your kittens. If your trip is over a holiday, please provide a minimum of two weeks' notice.

You cannot leave your foster cat with an unauthorized person or pet sitter. We have specific training for foster parents, and pet sitters have not undergone that training or signed the release waivers for the foster program.

What if a foster kitten bites me?

If you are bitten and the skin breaks, causing you to bleed, you need to report the bite to the volunteer/foster coordinator within 24 hours of when the bite occurred. The law requires that we must report all bites. The tooth of the kitten/cat, not the nails, must have broken the skin.

What if I want to adopt one of my foster kittens or know someone who does?

If you would like to adopt your foster, or find someone who wants to adopt your foster, we will need a completed adoption profile from the potential adopter (with foster's name and animal number by the end of business on the day of their surgery) and the full adoption process will be followed. Please contact the volunteer/foster coordinator right away with this information because once the cat is up for adoption, we cannot hold him/her for anyone, including the foster parent.

Will it be difficult for me to say goodbye to my foster kittens?

Saying goodbye can be the most difficult part of fostering but remember that we always have more kittens who need wonderful foster homes. Keep in mind that by fostering these vulnerable pets, you are playing a crucial role in helping to save lives.

Section 3: Preparing for your foster kittens

Your foster kittens should be separated from all other animals in your household and kept in a small area, such as a spare room or bathroom, where they have access to their food, water and litter box. We can use play pens, crates, and towers as well. And because kittens cannot regulate their body temperature, this area should also be in a warm, draft-free area. It may be a good idea to consider an area that is easy to clean up in terms of spills and litter box accidents, which will happen since the kittens are learning. Please don't put the kittens in a garage or place that has outdoor access; those locations are not safe.

Kittens must always be confined when not being directly supervised. This is for the safety of the kittens and also allows the kittens to retain their calories and not just burn them all off by running around.

Supplies you'll need

Fort Wayne Animal Care & Control will provide you with any supplies that you may need. However, we greatly appreciate any help that you can provide in supplying items for your foster kittens. Here's what you'll need to care for your foster kittens:

- At least one bowl for dry food and one for water: If you have a large litter, you will need to provide more than one bowl each for water and food.
- A supply of kitten food: we will provide Hill's Science Diet dry food and some wet food to help entice the kittens to eat.
- Breeder's Edge is the required brand of formula for bottle-feeding kittens with the use of the Miracle Nipple.
- Litter box with low sides: More than one may be needed for larger litters.
- Non-clumping litter and scoop.
- Heat source: Kittens can't keep themselves warm, so you have to provide a heat source. The SnuggleSafe microwave heating disc is recommended.
- A soft place to sleep: Old towels or blankets work well.
- A secure sleeping area: A cat carrier with the door removed or a box laid on its side work well located inside a play pen, crate, or tower if not in an enclosed small room.
- Toys: Use kitten-safe toys that are easy to sanitize and clean. Kittens can play with them when you're not home.
- Food scale to weigh kittens daily.

Additional supplies helpful to have on hand for fosters:

- Nail clippers
- Digital thermometer
- Extra towels/puppy pads
- Extra blankets
- Scratching post
- Canned pumpkin
- Plain yogurt
- Turkey or Chicken baby food without onion or garlic powder

- Karo syrup
- Pedialyte

Kitten-proofing your home

Foster kittens are tiny and cute, but just like children, they are also very curious. They will try to get into everything to explore, so you will need to kitten-proof your home. Here are some tips:

- Put away any small items that a kitten can swallow.
- Hide any breakable items, block electrical outlets and remove toxic plants.
- If your kittens are staying in a bathroom, make sure that the toilet lid is closed at all times.
- Block off any spaces that the kittens could crawl into and hide in.
- When setting up your kitten room, be sure to place the litter boxes as far away from food and water as possible.

Section 4: Caring for your foster kittens

Because kittens are fragile, it is important for you to watch the behavior of your foster kittens closely and monitor their health daily. To keep track of their health, document the kittens' weight, eating habits and overall health on the wellness log. You should weigh the kittens daily to ensure that they are growing and record the weight.

Kittens are susceptible to illness, so foster kittens must be kept indoors. If your personal cat has access to the outdoors, he or she cannot interact with your foster kittens. Also, please do not let your foster kittens ride loose in a car. Use a carrier at all times to transport kittens to and from appointments.

Feeding and watering

Dry kitten food should be available to your kittens at all times. The bowl should be large enough for two kittens to eat out of it at the same time. Place the food as far away from the litter as possible in your foster set up. If the kittens are not interested in eating the dry food you can try moistening it with a small amount of water.

Pate food should be offered 2-3 times a day for kittens eating it well and even more often for small kittens who are weaning onto solid food. Often times warming the food encourages the kittens to eat. You can also add a small amount of water to the wet food but please know that adding too much water can cause the kittens to fill up on empty calories so only use this as a temporary step.

If you are having a hard time getting your kittens to eat you can add in some baby food or a mixture of canned pumpkin and plain yogurt. Please know that kittens cannot survive on these methods alone. If you are struggling with a kitten that doesn't want to eat please reach out to the volunteer/foster coordinator.

Never feed a cat/kitten cow's milk! It is very difficult to digest and will cause GI upset. Feeding kittens any non-approved items will result in dismissal from our foster program.

Replace the water in their water dish daily and wipe out the dish if needed.

Quick feeding guide

We will provide you with very detailed training regarding feeding before you take your foster kittens home. But here's a brief summary of the feeding protocol for kittens up to eight weeks old:

Week 1: Bottle-feeding

Food type: Milk replacement formula

Frequency: Every 2–3 hours (8–12 times per day)

Amount: 3–4 cc per feeding, approximately 3–6 g per kitten

Week 2: Bottle-feeding

Food type: Milk replacement formula

Frequency: Every 3 hours (8 times per day)

Amount: 5–6 cc per feeding, approximately 8–15 g per kitten

Week 3: Bottle-feeding

Food type: Milk replacement formula

Frequency: Every 4 hours (6 times per day)

Amount: 13–17 cc per feeding, approximately 10–20 g per kitten

Week 4: Weaning stage

Food type: Milk replacement formula, gruel, kitten kibble and water

Frequency: Kibble, water and gruel should be available to kittens at all times; bottle-feed every 8 hours (3 times per day)

Amount: 13–17 cc per feeding with the bottle; will vary depending on how much gruel the kitten eats

Weeks 5–8: Solid food

Food type: Dry kitten food, wet kitten food and water

Frequency: Available at all times

You will need to offer fresh wet food 2 to 3 times daily.

Weighing

Please weigh the kittens each day and record the weights to be sure they are gaining weight appropriately. If your kittens are decreasing in weight contact the volunteer/foster department as kittens can crash quickly.

Keeping kittens warm

When kittens are infants, they can be kept in small carriers or playpens that can easily be covered by a blanket to maintain heat and reduce draftiness. As they grow and become more mobile, they will need more space to roam and play. Also, don't forget that kittens cannot regulate their body temperatures, so please keep a SnuggleSafe disc warm and with them at all times. Because kittens' skin is very sensitive and prone to thermal burns, the warming disc must be covered by a blanket and puppy pad that the kittens cannot burrow under. We discourage the use of heating pads due to cord chewing, exposure to electricity, and overheating which may cause burns. It is important the kittens have the opportunity to get off the SnuggleSafe if they choose to. The ideal temperature for your foster space should be between 72-75 degrees.

Confinement

It is important that your kittens stay confined to their foster area at all times unless they are under close supervision for some free time. Too much roaming can cause the kittens to burn their calories which leads to weight loss. They are also in danger of getting hurt while running free unattended.

Cleaning**Daily Cleaning Protocols:**

- Remove and throw away disposable items.

- Remove reusable items. Place unsoiled bedding and toys aside to return to the same kennel once cleaning is complete.
- Dirty bedding and toys should be laundered.
- Clean out all debris from the kennel area.
- If any spots remain, lightly spray a towel with bleach solution and scrub the area until clean. NEVER spray the kennel area, only spray the cleaning towel.
- (Bleach solution is 1:32, 32oz Spray Bottle = 1oz of bleach + 32oz of water)
- Make sure the kennel is **completely dry** before setting the kennel area back up.

Deep Cleaning Protocols should be utilized as needed and after a batch of kittens return to FWACC:

- Put on a pair of gloves.
- Remove ALL items from kennel.
- Throw away all disposable items. Place all bedding and fabric toys in the laundry and all reusable items in the sink. When available, use metal bowls instead of plastic. Plastic is porous and can harbor bacteria.
- Clean out all litter debris from the kennel.
- Thoroughly spray all surfaces with bleach solution.
- (Bleach solution is 1:10 ratio; 32oz Spray Bottle = 3oz of bleach + 30oz of water)
- Let the chemical sit for **10 minutes** while it disinfects the kennel.
- Dampen towel with more bleach solution and wipe down the kennel while making sure to clean any nooks, crannies, and surfaces as thoroughly as possible.
- Make sure the kennel is **completely dry** before setting back up with all fresh items.

Bleach Rules

Make a new batch of bleach solution for each use. Bleach rapidly degrades in the presence of light and when mixed with water.

Let it sit on the surface for 10 minutes. Enough solution should be applied to ensure it does not evaporate within 10 minutes.

Discard any remaining solution.

During disease outbreak, clean all kennels with disposable paper towels rather than fabric towels. Discard any fabric items that the infected cat/kitten came in contact with and soak any reusable plastic/metal items in Bleach solution overnight. Discard all mop heads and brooms. Deep clean contaminated kennel multiple times over multiple days with Bleach before allowing a new animal to occupy.

Bathing

If absolutely necessary, you may give your kittens a mild bath. The most important thing to remember is they must be completely dried off afterwards as they cannot maintain their body temperature and are at great risk of it becoming dangerously low when cold and wet. Before bathing ask yourself if just spot cleaning them with a warm/damp washcloth will be sufficient enough as most of the time it is.

Section 5: Litter boxes

Litter box training for kittens and cats

When kittens are about four weeks old, they will begin to play in, dig through and explore loose, soft materials such as dirt or litter. As a result of this investigative digging, kittens begin to relieve themselves in these materials. So, kittens do not have to be taught by either their mothers or humans to relieve themselves in soft, loose materials, or to dig and bury their waste. Kittens are simply born knowing how to do it.

It's not necessary to take kittens to the litter box and move their paws back and forth in the litter. Doing so may actually be an unpleasant experience for them, causing them to have some negative associations with the litter box.

However, litter boxes that don't provide an acceptable place to eliminate (from the cats' point of view) may cause cats to relieve themselves elsewhere. That's why it's important to provide a litter box that meets the kittens' needs. You want the kittens to like the box and use it consistently. Make sure the litter box you are using has low sides, to make it easy for the kittens to climb in and out. Some foster parents like to use disposable litter boxes, and that's fine. Keep kittens confined to a small area and have at least one litter box in each room that the kittens can access. You can encourage the kittens to use the bathroom facilities by gently returning them to their litter box every 15–20 minutes while they're playing.

Location

Place the litter pan as far away from food and water in the kitten's space as you can so that litter is not tossed into the bowls while the kitten is covering/digging.

Type and depth of litter

With kittens younger than eight weeks use only non-clumping litter. The reason for this is that very young kittens tend to taste their litter and play in it. If you use clumping litter, the dust from the litter can solidify in their respiratory or digestive tracts.

Different cats prefer different depths of litter, but most cats don't like litter that's more than about two inches deep. Cats don't choose areas for elimination where they sink into several inches of litter or dirt. It's not true that the more litter you put into a litter box, the less often you will have to clean it. Regular cleaning is essential, regardless of the depth of the litter.

Number of boxes

Depending on the size of the litter you foster and the size of your foster area depends on how many boxes you should have.

Litter boxes can be placed in several locations around the foster area. This practice helps to train young kittens because there's always a box nearby that they can get to in time to eliminate.

Cleaning the box

Litter boxes should always be kept clean. Feces should be scooped out of the litter box twice a day or more if you have a large litter of diarrhea. The number of cats and the number of litter boxes will determine how often the litter needs to be dumped and completely changed. If you notice any odor or if much of the litter is wet or clumped, it is time to change all the litter.

When washing the litter box, do not use strong-smelling chemicals or cleaning products because the smell of vinegar, bleach or pine cleaners may cause the cat to avoid using the litter box. Washing with soap and water should be sufficient. A clean litter box will promote good bathroom habits for the kittens going forward. If your foster kittens are not using the litter box, please notify the volunteer/foster coordinator so you can start resolving the issue before it becomes a habit.

Oftentimes, kittens miss the litter box if they have medical issues like diarrhea, or if they have too much free space, causing them to forget where the box is when they have to go. Clean all accidents with an enzymatic cleaner and don't ever punish a kitten for having an accident.

Section 6: Socializing and instilling good behaviors in kittens

Your goal as a foster parent is to prepare your foster kittens for forever homes. While a big part of that is helping the kittens to grow and be healthy, another component is helping them develop the good habits that will make them wonderful companions for their adopters.

Discipline

One of your goals as a foster parent is to help prepare your foster kittens for living successfully in a home. So, we ask that you help your foster kittens to develop good habits and skills through the use of positive reinforcement, which builds a bond of trust between you and your foster pets. The basic idea is to reward desirable behaviors and ignore unwanted behaviors.

You must not punish the kittens for behavior that you find undesirable because punishment is ineffective at eliminating the behavior. If a kitten is doing something undesirable, distract him or her before the behavior occurs. It is also important for every human in the foster home to stick to the rules established for your foster pets, which will help them to learn faster.

Play time

Play time is a very important part of kitten development. It is crucial for young kittens to have other kittens to wrestle with in order to develop appropriate play skills and be properly socialized with other kittens. Kittens also need toys to play with so that they can get physical exercise and mental stimulation. There are two types of toys that help with kitten development:

- Solo toys are things the kittens can play with when you aren't there. These toys should be easy to clean and impossible for the kittens to consume. Examples are ping pong balls, toilet paper tubes, bottle corks and plastic shower curtain rings.
- Interactive toys are things that you use to engage the kittens in play. Examples are wand toys and other toys with yarn or string attached. Don't leave kittens alone with these toys, since they can easily strangle or be ingested by the kittens.

During play time, it is always important to discourage kittens from biting your hands and feet. It may seem cute, but we want to avoid teaching kittens a habit that adopters may find undesirable.

Socializing and handling

Introducing your foster kittens to new things and new experiences will also help prepare them for living happily in forever homes. Follow these rules to positively expose your kittens to new people, environments and noises:

- New people: Introducing your foster animals to new people will help them become well-adjusted adult cats. Monitor all interactions with new people to ensure that they are positive, not scary, experiences for the kittens. Have new people give gentle pets and treats to the kittens and interact with them using fun toys. If children are visiting, they must always be supervised until they are old enough to understand how to gently interact with a kitten.
- New environments: It will help the kittens' adjustment into adopters' homes if you can allow your kittens to experience different parts of your home. Whenever you introduce the kittens to a new space, provide lots of treats and play with interactive toys so that the kittens associate the new space with their favorite things. Keep the exploratory sessions brief so you don't overwhelm your kittens and return them to their living space if they do seem overwhelmed or scared.
- New noises: It is beneficial to expose kittens to a variety of normal household noises but, again, try to do it in a positive way. The key is to introduce different noises gradually. For example, start by keeping a radio on low volume and gradually increase the volume over a few days. Another example: Run the vacuum in another room at first, with your kittens at a safe

distance. Then, over the course of a few days, move the vacuum noise closer to their room. If another person plays with the kittens while you make the noise, it may help alleviate any stress or fear that they may feel. Some kittens are naturally fearful, so just go even slower with the timid ones.

Another thing you can work on with your foster kittens is getting them comfortable with being in a cat carrier. When you are not using the carrier for transportation, leave the carrier (with the door removed or securely propped open) in your foster kittens' room. Put toys, treats and a soft blanket in the carrier, to encourage the kittens to go in and spend time there.

Schedule for successful socialization

If your foster kittens are not socialized at all when you bring them home, you'll need to have a more focused socialization plan. Remember, keep all experiences positive for the kittens.

Days 1–7: Your foster kittens may be hissing, swatting, spitting and/or growling. Activities to engage in:

- “Burrito-wrapping” the kitten in a blanket or towel: Use a towel to handle the kitten if needed.
- Hand-feeding: Feed the kittens dabs of baby food (protein only, with no onion or garlic on the ingredients list) or canned tuna by hand.
- Picking up and returning: Repeatedly pick up each kitten and return him/her to their safe space.
- Playing: Try engaging the kittens in play with interactive toys.

Days 7–14: The kittens may hiss when you approach but respond to touching and petting.

Activities to engage in:

- Handling: Continue handling and petting the kittens. If improvement is shown, try to move to handling other body parts, but do not go too fast.
- More playing: Start standing and walking around while playing with the kittens, to get them used to normal human movement.
- More hand-feeding: Give the kittens treats while you handle them, to help them learn that you are not a threat.

After 14 days: Your kittens may still be shy but should be more comfortable with you approaching them and should no longer display defensive aggression behaviors. If your kittens do not show improvement at all after two weeks of attempts at socialization, please contact the volunteer/foster department for guidance.

Kitten development and what you can do

Time and effort are required to properly socialize kittens. In fact, when they're between four and twelve weeks old, daily socialization sessions are important in shaping the kitten's personality and emotional growth.

You'll want your foster kittens to become familiar with having their paws touched (front and back), their mouths opened, and their ears touched. Combining this type of handling with regular grooming sessions and body massages helps to prevent skin sensitivity or aversion to touch. If mom is not around you can use a toothbrush to simulate a mother's tongue grooming her kittens. And

acquainting kittens with a variety of sights, sounds and textures will help them to grow into well-socialized adult cats. Listed below are some characteristics of kittens at different stages and the steps you can take to help socialize them.

Newborn

Appearance: Newborn kittens should be pink, firm, plump and generally healthy-looking.

Temperature: Normal rectal temperature for newborns is 96 or 97 degrees Fahrenheit.

Eyes and ears: Closed, but they can still hear (though poorly) and respond to bright light with a blink reflex.

Muscles: Healthy kittens will curl their bodies and limbs inward.

1 to 2 weeks

Temperature: Normal rectal temperature has gradually increased to 100 degrees F.

Eyes and ears: Open at approximately 11-15 days.

Muscles: Kittens can use their front legs to stand and walk shakily.

What you can do: You can engage in gentle handling and cuddling at this point. These sessions should be very short (one to two minutes), and great care should be taken in the handling process.

Rub the hair coat gently with your hands, and gently finger the webbing in between the toes. Rub the ears and muzzle.

2 to 3 weeks

Temperature: Kittens are able to maintain their own body temperature within the normal range (100.5 – 102.5 degrees F).

Eyes: Vision is initially poor, even after the eyes have opened, but continues to develop until three to four weeks of age. If the eyes fail to open and the lids look sticky, wipe the lids very gently with dampened cotton lightly smeared with a little petroleum jelly to ease their opening. The eyelids should never be pulled apart. If a kitten's eyelids still haven't opened by 14 days, contact the foster department.

Muscles: The rear legs can now support the body. Kittens are crawling.

Teeth: Deciduous incisors start to appear, followed by deciduous canines.

What you can do:

- Provide the kittens with a whelping box area for sleeping and another area, away from the sleeping and feeding area, that contains the litter box.
- Provide five minutes of handling exercises. Gently roll the kitten over on her back for 5-10 seconds, and then draw her close to you, stroking and cuddling her. Never do this while actively feeding the kitten. Be careful not to startle the kitten with sudden movements or loud sounds.
- Start grooming: Softly and gently brush the kitten's coat with a few strokes, touch the ears and mouth, and pretend to clip the nails by adding gentle pressure to the kitten's paws.

3 to 4 weeks

Eyes and ears: Vision and hearing are normal. Blink response disappears with the development of accurate pupil control. The kitten is now able to use visual clues to locate and approach the mother. The eyes should be completely open by 17 days.

Muscles: By 21 days, kittens can walk with a fairly steady gait. They can also sit and have reasonable control of their toes.

Teeth: Deciduous incisors and canine teeth continue to come in.

What you can do:

- If the mother and kittens are no longer using the whelping box, it's OK to remove it.
- At about four weeks old, the kittens will begin to eliminate on their own. This is a good time to introduce additional litter boxes. Use boxes with low edges so that the kittens can easily climb in and out. Only use non-clumping litter, since kittens often try to eat the litter when they are learning.
- The kittens will start to explore their immediate environment. Provide safe, simple toys to help stimulate them.
- The kittens can be introduced to other people at this time, but this interaction should be carefully controlled. The interaction should be limited to five minutes of time spent in gentle massage and cuddling.
- As the main caregiver, you should continue the grooming and handling exercises: holding, cuddling and stroking each kitten's body, including ears, tail and muzzle.

4 to 5 weeks

Eyes and ears: Vision is markedly improved. From three to five weeks, kittens learn guided paw placement and obstacle avoidance.

Muscles: Kittens are walking normally and start climbing. Social play is prevalent.

Teeth: Deciduous premolars come in.

What you can do: Continue the handling and socialization exercises.

5 to 8 weeks of age

Temperature: Normal range is 100.5 degrees to 102.5 degrees F.

Teeth: Kittens have an entire set of deciduous teeth by five to six weeks of age.

What you can do:

- The kittens are totally dependent on the environment you provide to stimulate and develop them. Play with objects increases around seven to eight weeks of age, so continue to add appropriate toys to the kittens' environment.
- Introduce the kittens to as many different people as possible — people of different shapes, sizes, colors, sexes and ages. Encourage the kittens to allow individual handling by different people: men, women and supervised children. Keep the visits short.
- Expose the kittens to mild sounds, different areas and surfaces, allowing them to investigate.
- As the main caregiver, you should continue the handling and grooming exercises.

8 weeks or older

What you can do:

- Protect the kittens from unpleasant or negative experiences. The kittens' environment should be designed to help them develop a sense of security.
- Continue to introduce the kittens to as many different people as possible.
- Continue the handling and grooming exercises.
- At this stage, you can gradually introduce some more intrusive noises, such as whistles blowing, hands clapping, bells jingling and the vacuum cleaner running. Play with the kittens as you introduce the noise in the background.

Section 7: Caring for bottle-fed kittens

Bottle-feeding neonatal kittens requires an around-the-clock commitment. Thank you so much for offering your time and attention to these fragile babies. Please remember that we are here to support you. Here's some general info about bottle-feeding.

Milk preparation

You can pre-mix enough formula to last for 24 hours of feeding, but it must be refrigerated at all times. Discard all unused and mixed formula after 24 hours. Only heat enough formula for each feeding and throw away any uneaten warmed formula after each feeding. Do not re-use warmed formula because harmful bacteria can develop and cause harm to the kittens.

Bottle-feeding tips

It is easier to feed your kittens when they are gently wrapped in a towel or blanket, instead of just using your hands. The towel or blanket is softer and warmer than your hands and being wrapped up makes the kittens feel safer as they eat. If the kitten allows it, the forelegs should be free to allow him to “knead” with his feet. This kneading activity is essential to the kitten’s muscle development and helps aid in digestion of the kitten’s food. Also, be careful to position the kitten so that his belly is toward the floor. To decrease the chance of formula being aspirated into the lungs, kittens should not be fed on their backs.

Latching on

It may take a couple tries for a kitten to latch on to the bottle nipple. Just be patient; sometimes kittens need some encouragement to eat. Make sure that the nipple you are using on the bottle has an adequate flow of milk. When the nipple tip is punctured, formula should drip out (one drop at a time, not a stream) when the bottle is inverted 180 degrees. Do not hesitate to call the volunteer/foster department if you need any help or assistance with feeding your kittens. We are always here for you, ready to answer any questions that you may have.

Aspiration

If liquid bubbles out through the kitten’s nose or he starts coughing, he may have gotten formula in his lungs. Pat the kitten very gently on the back to elicit a cough or sneeze, or hold him in an inverted position, tail overhead, for a moment to remove the formula from his lungs. Please notify the volunteer/foster department if this happens so we can determine if a vet visit is needed.

Peeing and pooping

Bottle-fed kittens need help with elimination, so you’ll need to stimulate your kittens to pee and poop. After you feed them, wipe each kitten’s genital area with a baby wipe or warm wet cotton ball. Remember to do this every time you feed them. Document the color and consistency. Kittens should urinate after every meal and should poop at least once a day. The normal color of kitten poop is various shades of mustard and the consistency is similar as well. When a kitten is first introduced to formula, it is normal for him or her not to poop for 48 hours.

Signs of illness

Watch for signs of illness, including frequent crying, restlessness, weakness, coldness (hypothermia), diarrhea, dehydration, shallow or labored breathing, paleness or blueness in color. Notify the volunteer/foster department immediately if a kitten is losing weight, is cold to the touch, or is having trouble breathing (either shallow or heavy breathing).

Weaning kittens

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, along with dry kitten food and water. 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 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.

Making formula

Mix two parts water with one part formula. Mix the powder and water until all clumps are gone. Remember, mixed formula only lasts for 24 hours.

Making gruel

Mix 1/2 can of wet food with 1/4 cup of formula per kitten. You can add a little water if the kittens seem to like a looser consistency. It's OK make gruel in bulk and refrigerate it, but you'll need to warm it before offering it to the kittens.

How to bottle-feed kittens

Kittens will bottle-feed every two to four hours, depending on their age. Steps for bottle-feeding a kitten:

1. Warm the formula: Place the bottle in a bowl of hot water for a few minutes. Before feeding the kittens, always test the temperature of the formula by placing a few drops on your inner wrist to be sure it is not too hot. It should be slightly warmer than your body temperature.
2. Ensure that your foster kitten is warm before offering food. Do not attempt to feed a kitten who is chilled* because it can have serious health consequences.
3. Wrap the kitten in a towel or blanket and position him so that his belly is toward the floor. Kittens should not be fed on their backs or in an upright position.
4. Turn the bottle upside down and allow a drop of formula to come out. Place the bottle nipple in the kitten's mouth and gently move it back and forth, holding the bottle at a 45-degree angle to keep air from getting into the kitten's stomach. This movement should encourage the kitten to start eating. If at first you don't succeed, wait a few minutes and try again. Usually the kitten will latch on and begin to suckle. If the bottle appears to be collapsing, gently remove the nipple from the kitten's mouth and let more air return to the bottle.
5. Weigh each kitten daily to make sure they are all gaining weight.

* A kitten's ideal body temperature is 100 to 102 degrees. If a kitten feels cold to the touch, contact the volunteer/foster coordinator immediately. A kitten who is cold and unresponsive should be warmed right away. Place the kitten on an approved heating pad safely wrapped in two or three layers of towels. Turn the kitten side to side every 5 minutes. To stimulate blood flow, you may, ever so gently, massage the kitten with hand-rubbing.

Section 8: Fostering moms and kittens

Mother cats, also known as "queens," need to be in a calm environment so that they can be stress-free and feel like they are keeping their kittens safe. Sometimes, stress can cause a mother cat to become aggressive or to not care for her babies properly. With that in mind, choose a private and quiet room of your home, away from the daily activities of your family, in which to situate the mother cat and her kittens.

It's also important that they be kept away from other pets in the home. Other pets can be perceived as a threat by the mother cat and cause her to act aggressively to protect her young. If you have children and an active home, it may be best to foster when the kittens are four weeks or older. Sometimes mother cats will behave less defensively if their kittens are older.

Bringing everyone home

Set up your fostering room before you bring the mother cat and her kittens' home. You should put the litter box as far away from the mother cat's food and water bowls as possible and provide a couple of different safe places where she can care for her kittens. A dark area equipped with a whelping box is ideal.

A whelping box is a box that is large enough for the mother cat to lie on her side slightly away from her kittens with all of the kittens in the box with her. The box should have sides high enough to prevent the kittens from wandering away, but low enough so it's easy for the mother cat to come and go as she needs to. Lining the bottom of the box with puppy pads topped with newspapers will help absorb moisture. You can place an easy-to-clean blanket on top of the absorbent materials to give the mother cat and kittens a soft place to lie on. Please keep all these materials dry so that the kittens are not chilled by dampness. Do not place straw, hay or shavings in the area where the mother and kittens are kept.

When you bring your foster kittens and their mom home, put them all in the fostering room and close the door, allowing the mom to explore on her own. Give her a couple of hours before you enter her room.

Mom's care of her kittens

The momma cat should take care of her kittens by herself for at least three to four weeks before she starts the weaning process for her babies. Each momma cat that you foster will be slightly different in her level of attentiveness, but there are three basic stages of nursing (see below). If for any reason your momma cat is not performing one of the listed functions, please notify the volunteer/foster coordinator right away to evaluate whether the mom has a medical concern that we need to address. Kittens are born blind, but they can feel their mother's heat and seek her out to begin nursing within two hours of being born. Mother cats should be lying on their sides to ensure that their kittens can find the nipples for nursing. Here are three stages of nursing:

- One to two weeks old: The mother cat initiates nursing by licking her kittens to wake them up and curling her body around them. After she wakes all of her babies, the kittens search for a short time period and then quickly latch on.
- Two to three weeks old: The kittens' eyes and ears begin to function, and they start to explore beyond the nesting area. This is when the kittens start interacting and playing with their mother. At this age, the kittens start to initiate some of the nursing and momma should comply by lying in the nursing position.
- Four to five weeks old: The kittens begin weaning and, in turn, the mother cat no longer initiates any nursing. If the mother cat still allows the kittens to nurse, it will be initiated by the kittens and can be lateral or upright nursing.

Occasionally, mom cats develop mastitis when their kittens stop nursing. Mastitis occurs when the mammary glands inflame and harden, creating a very painful infection for the mother cat and causing symptoms such as a fever and listlessness. If you think your mother cat may have mastitis, call the volunteer/foster coordinator on the next business day.

The mother cat will groom and lick her babies frequently for the first two to four weeks. She will stimulate her kittens to pee and poop and will generally consume the fecal matter and urine. As the babies become more mobile, they will start to leave the nest and deposit urine and feces nearby,

which is a good time to start introducing a couple of low-sided litter boxes (disposable tend to work best).

To ensure that the mother cat has enough to eat, give her access dry food at all times and offer wet food 2-3 times daily. Food intake for a nursing mother can be two to four times the amount eaten by a cat who's not nursing.

When fostering a momma cat, it is very important to observe her behavior daily and watch her interactions with her kittens to spot any problems.

Problem behaviors in momma cats

Here are some details about problem behaviors in momma cats and what you can do about them.

Maternal neglect

Sometimes a mother cat stops providing care to one or all of her kittens. The neglect may be because of a birth defect or weakness in the kitten; she may just be trying to follow nature's course, focusing her attention on the stronger kittens. Neglect may also happen because she is inexperienced or she's in a stressful environment. Either way, that's why it's so important to make daily observations to ensure that she is caring for her babies. You should weigh each kitten once a day to ensure that they are gaining weight. If you notice that she is spending all of her time away from the kittens, is not grooming or nursing them frequently, or doesn't respond to their cries, please call the volunteer/foster coordinator right away.

Maternal aggression toward other animals

Aggressive behavior directed at other animals is common and expected from mother cats because they have a maternal instinct to protect their young at all times. With that in mind, please do not try to introduce her to the other animals in your home. As mentioned above, the mom cat and her kittens should have a quiet room of their own away from all other pets so that she and her babies can always feel safe. If she has seen another animal and becomes stressed or aggressive, it is very important to leave her alone and not try to comfort her. Give her 20 minutes or so to calm down and then check on her.

Maternal aggression toward people

Sometimes mother cats will act aggressively toward people. These behaviors may include hissing, growling, swatting and nipping. Again, the mother is merely trying to protect her young. We evaluate mom cats for these behaviors before sending them into foster homes, but sometimes the behaviors develop later. If you have a mother exhibiting these behaviors, do not try to "correct" the behavior with a spray bottle or any type of punishment. She is only acting out of instinct to protect her babies and you could cause her aggressive behavior to escalate.

Contact the volunteer/foster coordinator at the first sign of any of the above behaviors so we can assess the situation and decide on the safest option for momma and her babies.

Separating kittens and moms

If all of your foster animals, mom included, are healthy and friendly, we have no reason to separate mom from kittens before they are eight weeks old. But there are a few medical or behavioral reasons for separating them earlier than eight weeks:

- As mentioned above, if the mother cat is showing signs of maternal neglect and is no longer caring for her kittens, the foster coordinator may decide to separate her from her kittens.
- If the mother cat is under socialized, we may decide to separate the kittens once they are eating on their own consistently and no longer need to nurse (around four to five weeks old). Separating them would prevent the kittens from learning behaviors from their mother and help them to become socialized, which increases their chances of finding forever homes.

- If there is a medical concern about the mom or babies, our shelter veterinarian could make the decision to separate the kittens from the mother cat.

The kittens' best chance at survival is to stay with their mom. Please do not separate your foster kittens from their mom for any reason, or attempt to supplement the mother's milk with formula, without consulting the volunteer/foster coordinator.

Section 9: Medical and emergency protocols

Fort Wayne Animal Care & Control provides all medical care for our foster animals through our shelter veterinarian. Because we are ultimately responsible for your foster kitten's well-being, our staff must authorize any and all treatment for foster kittens.

If your foster kitten needs to see the shelter veterinarian, please notify the volunteer/foster coordinator by email or phone. The volunteer/foster coordinator will schedule the appointment and notify you of the date/time.

Remember, foster parents will be responsible for payment of any medical care if they take their foster animal to a veterinarian without authorization from the volunteer/foster coordinator.

When picking up your kittens you will receive a kitten medical sheet for each kitten you take. You will be able to see everything medically the kitten had done as well as when they are due to come back for their follow up appointments.

Signs of illness and what to do next

Kittens do a good job of masking when they don't feel well, so determining if a foster kitten is ill will require diligent observation of the kittens' daily activity and appetite levels. Be aware that kittens act differently at different ages. For example, a healthy two-week-old kitten will sleep often and get up only to nurse, whereas a healthy six-week-old kitten should have a lot of energy. If you have any questions about the health of your foster kittens, please contact the volunteer/foster coordinator, who will be happy to answer any questions that you may have.

Eye discharge

It is normal for kittens to have some discharge from their eyes when they wake up. But if a kitten has yellow or green discharge or swelling around the eyes (making it hard for him to open his eyes), or the third eyelid is showing, you need to contact the volunteer/foster coordinator.

Sneezing and nasal discharge

Occasional sneezing is common in kittens. If the sneezing becomes more frequent, examine the discharge coming from the sneeze. If the discharge is clear, the infection is probably viral and medication may not be necessary. It is important to monitor the kittens in case the problem becomes worse. If the discharge becomes colored, contact the volunteer/foster coordinator to schedule a vet appointment because the kittens may have a bacterial infection. Be sure to monitor the kittens' breathing. If they start to breathe with an open mouth or wheeze, call the volunteer/foster coordinator immediately and follow the emergency contact protocol. Also, once you notice nasal discharge, monitor the kittens' eating habits more closely to ensure that they are still eating. And, of course, continue to weigh them daily.

Loss of appetite

Your foster kittens may be stressed after arriving in your home, and stress can cause lack of appetite. Unwillingness to eat in kittens can be very serious, so pay close attention to whether the kittens are eating. Kittens should eat on a four- to eight-hour schedule, depending on their age. If a kitten under four weeks old misses two meals or a kitten over four weeks of age goes more than 12 hours without eating, the volunteer/foster coordinator should be called. Also, if a kitten less than eight weeks old

does not urinate for over 12 hours, call the coordinator. With a kitten who is not eating, please do not change the kitten's diet without contacting the volunteer/foster department. An abrupt change in diet can cause diarrhea, which will lead to dehydration.

Lethargy

The activity level of your kittens will vary with each kitten in your litter and with age. Sick kittens may have lower energy levels and just want to sit in your lap or on the floor and not move much or play. If you notice a drop in your foster kittens' energy level, please contact the volunteer/foster coordinator. If a kitten cannot be roused or seems weak and unable to stand, this is an emergency, so you'll need to start the emergency contact protocol. Note: Some under socialized kittens will move less because they are frightened. If you have a fearful group of kittens, it can be more difficult to determine if their energy levels are low but tracking all behaviors will help you decide whether you should call the volunteer/foster coordinator to schedule an appointment.

Dehydration

Dehydration is usually associated with diarrhea, vomiting and/or loss of appetite. To test for dehydration, gently pinch the kitten's skin around the scruff area. If the skin stays taut, the kitten is dehydrated. Please call the volunteer/foster coordinator immediately and start the emergency contact protocol, as dehydration can be fatal in kittens.

Vomiting

If a foster kitten has thrown up two or more times in one day, please notify the volunteer/foster coordinator. If there is bile or blood in the vomit, please call right away.

Pain or strain while urinating

When kittens first go into a foster home, they may not urinate due to stress. If a kitten hasn't urinated in more than 12 hours, however, please contact the volunteer/foster coordinator. Also, if you notice the kitten straining to urinate with little or no results, or crying out when urinating, please contact the volunteer/foster coordinator immediately because it may be indicative of an infection or a urethral obstruction.

Diarrhea

In kittens, it can be tricky to determine if diarrhea is a problem. Soft stool diarrhea, most likely caused by stress, is normal for the first two days after you take kittens home. Kittens who are nursing tend to have loose stool, but if it is watery or very large in volume, that's a concern. By the time kittens are five weeks old and are eating consistently on their own, they should have firm, normal stool. If your foster kittens have liquid stool, please contact the volunteer/foster department.

Once your kittens are using a litter box, please monitor the box daily. Remember that diarrhea will dehydrate your kittens, so be proactive about contacting the foster department if you notice any diarrhea. If a kitten has bloody or mucus diarrhea, please contact the volunteer/foster coordinator.

Frequent ear scratching

A foster kitten may have ear mites if she scratches her ears often and/or shakes her head frequently, or if you see a dark discharge that resembles coffee grounds when you look in her ears. Ear mites can be treated, so please call or email the volunteer/foster coordinator for an appointment.

Fleas

All kittens are checked for fleas before going to their foster homes. If old enough kittens are given flea preventative. If you notice fleas on your kittens please contact the volunteer/foster department.

Hair loss

Please contact the foster department if you notice any hair loss on your foster kittens. It is normal for cats to have thin fur around the lips, eyelids and in front of the ears, but clumpy patches of hair loss or thinning hair can indicate ringworm or dermatitis. It is important to check your foster kittens' coats every day.

Felv/FIV

Both are viruses kittens can get from their mothers and other cats that lead to fatality. It is important to note that Fort Wayne Animal Care & Control does not routinely test kittens for these viruses. Should kittens show signs of illnesses for a repetitive amount of time we may test them to rule out possibilities. We do not adopt out Felv/FIV positive cats.

Serious kitten ailments

Kittens are susceptible to these illnesses:

- Fading kitten syndrome: Symptoms include unwillingness to eat, dehydration, lethargy, weight loss, coldness to the touch, and difficulty with breathing or labored breathing.
- Panleukopenia (feline distemper): Symptoms include unwillingness to eat, vomiting, diarrhea and/or dehydration. The diarrhea often has a mucoid texture and/or is bloody.

If a kitten is displaying any combination of the symptoms listed above, please contact the volunteer/foster coordinator immediately and start the emergency phone protocol. These ailments can be fatal if left untreated.

Criteria for emergencies

Here are some specific symptoms that could indicate an emergency:

- Not breathing or labored breathing
- Symptoms of fading kitten syndrome or distemper (see "Serious Kitten Ailments" above)
- Signs of extreme dehydration: dry gums, weakness, vomiting, not urinating, skin tenting (when the skin is pulled up, it stays there)
- Abnormal lethargy or unable to stand
- Unconsciousness or unable to wake up
- Cold to the touch
- Broken bones
- Any trauma
- A large wound or profuse bleeding that doesn't stop when pressure is applied
- Loss of appetite for more than 12 hours

If a foster kitten displays any of these symptoms, please follow the emergency phone protocol. If the animal is vomiting or has diarrhea, but is still active, eating and drinking, you can probably wait until the next day to get help. However, if the animal is lethargic and shows no interest in food or water, start the emergency protocol.

Emergency protocol

- Contact the volunteer/foster department during regular business hours.
- If after hours call **260-449-3000**. An animal control officer will be available to assist you.

Section 10: Scheduling appointments for your foster kittens

During the time that you foster kittens, you'll need to make a few appointments — to pick up and drop off your kittens, take them in for vaccines and spay/neuter, and pick up supplies. Please note that all appointments, including your pickup and drop-off appointments, should be scheduled in advance. If

you cannot make an appointment, please notify the volunteer/foster department immediately to reschedule as appointment times fill up quickly.

Picking up and returning your foster kittens

To pick up and return kittens, simply schedule an appointment with the volunteer/foster coordinator. This is typically done straight through our foster Facebook page when you comment on the status of a group waiting for foster. Fort Wayne Animal Care & Control does have the right to assist foster families in selecting kittens that are best suited for their lifestyle and experience.

Scheduling vaccines for your kittens

When you pick up your foster kittens, you will receive the dates that your foster kittens' vaccines are due and any pertinent medical or behavioral information that you need for that group of kittens. Vaccination appointments are scheduled at the time of pick up.

Scheduling vet appointments for your kittens

Fort Wayne Animal Care & Control provides all medical care for our foster animals through our shelter veterinarian. Because we are ultimately responsible for your foster kitten's well-being, our staff must authorize any and all treatment for foster kittens.

If your foster kitten needs to see the shelter veterinarian, please notify the volunteer/foster coordinator by email or phone. The volunteer/foster coordinator will schedule the appointment and notify you of the date/time.

Remember, foster parents will be responsible for payment of any medical care if they take their foster animal to a veterinarian without authorization from the volunteer/foster coordinator.

Picking up supplies

If you need additional supplies for your foster kittens please help yourself to our foster supply pantry. If you do not see what you are looking for please find volunteer/foster department staff as they can assist you.

Scheduling your kittens for spay/neuter

Once your kittens reach two pounds you will contact the volunteer/foster department so they can be scheduled for their spay/neuter surgeries. You will drop the kittens off at the shelter the afternoon before the surgery date between 4-6pm or between 7-7:30am the day of surgery. There is no need to withhold food or water for kittens. If you are bringing a mom cat in for surgery please withhold food and water after 10pm the evening before surgery. The day after surgery kittens will come into the adoption program. As you would expect, kittens are usually adopted quickly.

Cleaning up between litters

Once you've returned your group of kittens to Fort Wayne Animal Care & Control for adoption, you must sanitize your fostering room or area before you can take home a new batch of kittens. Remove anything the kittens touched and clean it with a weak bleach solution, consisting of one part bleach to 32 parts cold water.

If you have items that can be washed in the dishwasher, please do so since the heat will disinfect those items. Plastic or metal items that need to be sterilized, such as litter boxes or plastic toys, should be soaked in the bleach solution for 10 minutes and then rinsed off. Wash all bedding with bleach and hot water and throw away any toys that cannot be sterilized. Being conscientious about sterilization will help ensure that your next foster group will not catch any illnesses from the previous group of kittens.

Breaks

We understand bringing your foster kittens back may be an emotional time for many fosters. A one to two week break between foster assignments is generally enforced for reasons of sanitation and mental health.

Volunteering in the animal welfare field often times put you at a greater risk of developing compassion fatigue. When your emotions build up you may feel exhausted, angry, sad, etc. A combination of these symptoms can lead to burnout and is often responsible for the loss of many talented foster volunteers. In order to maintain your emotional and physical health, take frequent breaks and reach out if you are struggling with anything, we are here to help!

Modified from the Best Friends Animal Society's Kitten Foster Care Manual

Thanks again for opening your home for cats/kittens in need. Please reach out to the volunteer/foster department for any additional questions/concerns.

Additional Resources

Maddie's Fund How to Bottle Feed Kittens and Puppies

https://www.maddiesfund.org/how-to-bottle-feed-kittens-and-puppies/presentation_html5.html

Maddie's Fund Kitten and Puppy Bottle Feeding Problems and Solutions

https://www.maddiesfund.org/kitten-and-puppy-bottle-feeding-problems-and-solutions/presentation_html5.html

Maddie's Fund Transitioning Kittens and Puppies to Solid Food

https://www.maddiesfund.org/transitioning-kittens-and-puppies-to-solid-food/presentation_html5.html

Maddie's Fund How to Stimulate an Orphaned Kitten or Puppy to Pee and Poop

https://www.maddiesfund.org/how-to-stimulate-an-orphaned-kitten-or-puppy-to-pee-and-poop/presentation_html5.html

Maddie's Fund Taking the Temperature in a Kitten or Puppy

https://www.maddiesfund.org/Taking-the-Temperature-in-a-Kitten-or-Puppy/presentation_html5.html

National Kitten Coalition

<https://kittencoalition.org/>

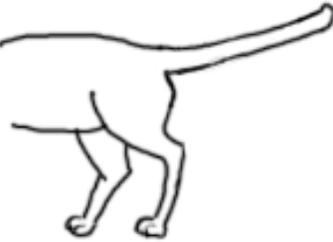
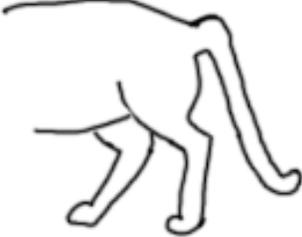
Kitten Lady

<http://www.kittenlady.org/>

Jackson Galaxy

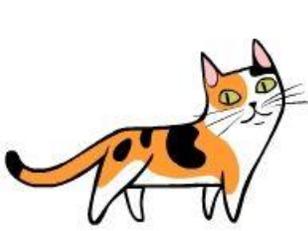
<https://www.jacksongalaxy.com/>

The Telltale Tail

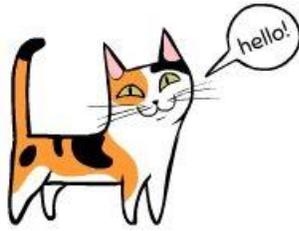
<p>friendly and content</p> 	<p>non-threatening, unsure</p> 	<p>derisive</p> 
<p>friendly, but unsure</p> 	<p>amicable, not fearful or aggressive</p> 	<p>defensive aggression</p> 
<p>angry</p> 	<p>potentially aggressive</p> 	<p>submissive</p> 
<p>very happy to see you</p> 	<p>excited, angry or irritable</p> 	<p>alert, interested</p> 

catsmeowblog.com

CAT LANGUAGE



INTERESTED



FRIENDLY



ATTENTIVE



RELAXED



TRUSTING



FRIENDLY, RELAXED



CONTENT



CONFLICTED, CAUTIOUS



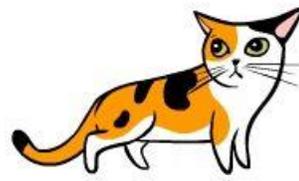
PLAYFUL



EXCITED



"THIS IS MINE"



ANXIOUS



PREDATORY



WORRIED



FRIGHTENED



THREATENED



TERRIFIED



SUPER TERRIFIED



IRRITATED



DISGUSTED



Fast Facts

Top Bottle Feeding Hints

1. Formula should be fresh: less than 24 hours old, preferably less than 12 hours old.
2. Formula should be the correct temperature (warm) — bottle nipple also.
3. Nipple opening should be large enough (use scissors) and appropriately sized for kitten's age (formula should drip out slowly when held upside down).
4. Loosen bottle cap slightly.
5. Place fingers lightly on cheeks and chin.
6. Feed in prone position, and do not force the formula into the kitten's mouth.
7. Assure that kittens are alert. Very small kittens are more likely to nurse when 'asleep,' but kittens older than 2 weeks need to be fully awake.
8. Burp kittens after feeding.
9. If medicating, give after feeding unless otherwise indicated (easier on the kitten's stomach).
10. Use toilet paper for stimulation.
11. Use a warm, damp washcloth to simulate mother's licking to clean several times a day, especially around the mouth and anal areas.
12. Keep accurate records — particularly of the kitten's weight, food intake and elimination habits.
13. Keep **ALL** supplies and the environment meticulously clean.
14. Formula can be used as a vehicle for supplements, (i.e. Nutri-Cal, L-lysine, BeneBac, FortiFlora, etc.), but NOT medications.
15. Patience, observation and determination are key.



Why Won't My Kitten Nurse?

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Cold or dehydrated (Do not feed until stable – warm and hydrated!) | 6. Not fully awake |
| 2. Not hungry, especially with new intakes of healthy kittens older than 2 weeks | 7. Nipple opening too small |
| 3. Formula/bottle/nipple too cold or hot | 8. Physical deformity (i.e. cleft palate, etc.) — should be seen during intake exam |
| 4. Formula bad (taste) | 9. Illness (i.e. URI, panleukopenia, etc.) — RED FLAG! |
| 5. Need to urinate/defecate | 10. Old enough to eat solid food |



Fast Facts

Kitten Feeding Chart

General feeding guidelines:

- Kittens are individuals, and feedings should be tailored to each specific situation.
- “Daily” means feedings evenly spaced over a 24-hour period.
- Avoid “homemade” formulas (only use in an emergency, over a very short term until a quality kitten milk replacer can be obtained).
- Do **not** use cow’s milk or confuse ‘Cat Milk’ with kitten milk replacement formula. ‘Cat Milk’ is meant as a treat for older cats and does not contain the nutrients necessary to support kittens.



Age in weeks	Weight	mL per day	Daily feedings
1	4 oz.	32 mL	6 - 8
2	7 oz.	56 mL	4 - 6
3	10 oz.	80 mL	3 - 4
4	13 oz.	104 mL	3
5	1 pound	128 mL	3
6+	Solids, may still nurse	Variable	3

FYI: 15 mL = approximately 3 teaspoons or ½ ounce



FECAL SCORE CHART

Fecal consistency is primarily a function of the amount of moisture in the stool and can be used to identify changes in colonic health and other problems. Ideally, in a healthy animal, stools should be firm but not hard, pliable and segmented, and easy to pick up (Score 2).



Score 1

Very hard and dry; requires much effort to expel from the body; no residue left on ground when picked up. Often expelled as individual pellets.



Score 2

Firm, but not hard; should be pliable; segmented in appearance; little or no residue left on ground when picked up.



Score 3

Log-like; little or no segmentation visible; moist surface; leaves residue, but holds firm when picked up.



Score 4

Very moist (soggy); distinct log shape visible; leaves residue and loses form when picked up.



Score 5

Very moist but has distinct shape (piles rather than distinct logs); leaves residue and loses form when picked up.



Score 6

Has texture, but no defined shape; occurs as piles or as spots; leaves residue when picked up.



Score 7

Watery, no texture, flat; occurs as puddles. Leaves residue.