



I. Fostering Cats

- A. Kittens
- B. Nursing Momma Cats
- C. Itty Bitty Kitty Care
- D. Feline Upper
Respiratory Infection
- E. Tummy Trouble
- F. Behavior Problems



Town Lake Animal Center

1156 W. Cesar Chavez St.

Hours: 11:30 a.m. – 7 p.m. Everyday

Closed City Holidays

Receiving Office Open 11:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Everyday

Kittens!

- Introduction
- Supplies
- Getting Started
- Feeding
- Eliminating
- Socialization
- Kitten Growth and Development



Introduction

Thank you for fostering! You are about to impart on a great journey, molding young life, nurturing those in need and providing a safe, loving home for underage kittens. When kittens come to our shelter weighing less than 2 pounds and we feel they are good adoption candidates, we need to find foster homes willing to take them, help them grow and thrive and keep them until they are big enough and old enough for adoption into their forever home. The veterinary staff draws blood on the kittens (or their mother) to ensure they are free of feline leukemia and feline AIDS. They weigh the kittens and give them two dewormers. They are now ready to go to their foster home!

Supplies

- Towels, wash cloths, blankets, unscented baby wipes
- Litter boxes and litter
- Canned and dry kitten food (AUSTIN ANIMAL)
- Bowls for food and water
- Scale
- Toys (cat “mice”, balls, wand toys, etc.)
- Scratching Post(s)
- Humidifier (optional)
- Plain yogurt (with live cultures) (optional)
- Heating pad (optional)



Getting Started

We recommend using a “Starter Room” for the first several days (to a week, depending on the sociability of the kittens). This can be a bathroom, kitchen, spare room or even a large crate if you have one available. Young kittens have accidents so consider that you pick your “Starter Room” in terms of being easy to clean and disinfect as needed. Kittens should always have easy access to food, fresh water and a litter box. Set up a warm soft place for them to sleep that is free of drafts. Make sure they have somewhere to hide that is easily accessible to you (NOT under a king sized bed I found out the hard way!) like a small crate or a cardboard box on its side. An inexpensive cardboard scratcher is a terrific way to get getting used to scratching in appropriate places. The kittens should remain in their starter room while you are not available to supervise and over night. While you are available to watch and play with the kittens, let them explore more and more parts of your home as the kittens become braver and braver. Separating the kittens from your own personal pets for 7-10 days is a good idea, while the kittens are screened before leaving the shelter, they could be incubating illnesses that are contagious to you or your pets. No fostered animals should be allowed to mingle with your own pets or outside in your yard for the first two weeks after you bring them home. This is to protect both the foster pets and your own pets from any infectious agents they may bring from the shelter.

Feeding

Young kittens need to eat at least 3 to 4 times a day. Hard food can be left out all the time if it is in an area where other pets in the house do not have access to it – it is important to make sure all kittens are eating regularly. We provide Royal Canin “Baby Cat” formula hard kibble and Purina Pro Plan Kitten formula canned food. Only offer your fosters kitten formula, high quality foods. Never give foster kittens cow’s milk, they cannot digest it. If the kittens do not seem to be eating, try warming up and watering down soft food. You can use commercially produced kitten formula to add calories to wet food. For picky eaters, you can also try canned tuna, chicken or salmon or meat flavored baby food. Occasionally kittens may need to be force fed with a syringe. A kitten that is not eating will deteriorate very rapidly; please arrange to bring the kitten in to AUSTIN ANIMAL CENTER ASAP for veterinary attention.

Eliminating

Most kittens are very eager to go to the bathroom in a litter box. Make sure the litter box has low sides to make it easy for them to get in and out. Your own personal preference for litter type is fine. Young kittens may have accidents. Sometimes they just forget where the litter box is or they have diarrhea that makes it very difficult for them to get to the litter box in time. Like small children new to potty training, they may be so involved in play time that they simply are not willing to stop and find the litter box. These accidents should be cleaned up promptly with an enzyme based cleaner designed for cleaning pet accidents. If not properly cleaned, the area will remain an “alternate bathroom” for the duration of their stay and possibly for any future fosters who enter your home.

Socialization

Kittens are in your home for a reason – **SOCIALIZATION!!!** Handle them several times a day and especially while they are eating. As they become more acclimated to your home, you can carefully let them explore more areas while you are available to supervise. If you are comfortable with introducing the kittens to your other pets, this can be done now.



Get them used to all over handling – check their paws, ears and teeth regularly. Introduce them to brushing, ear cleaning and nail clipping.



Help them learn appropriate ways to play and appropriate things to play with – not your fingers! Rough play (scratching and biting) should NOT be tolerated. If a kitten does become over stimulated, give the kitten an old stuffed toy he can sink his teeth into and kick as much as he likes, but teach them that it is not appropriate to do this to any part of a human's body! There are so many fabulous toys designed for cats – wand toys, laser pointers, balls and stuffed mice are all appreciated. Be careful with any sort of string – kittens can digest it and cause serious bowel obstructions.

No fostered cats should be allowed to mingle with your own for the first two weeks after you bring them home. This is to protect both the foster cats and your own pets from any infectious agents they may bring from the shelter.

This is also a great time to introduce the concept of the scratching post, if they go for the furniture, feel free to squirt them with a water bottle and then move them to the scratching post – the kitten's new owner will appreciate it! Try "Squirt Therapy" when a kitten does anything "bad" – tries to get outside, plays too rough, scratches on the furniture, etc



Kitten Growth and Development

Kittens should follow the growth chart below. Of course there will always be slight variations, but keep in mind 1 pound equals 1 month, so by the time they are 8 weeks old, they should be 2 pounds in weight. The kitten needs to be at least two pounds for vaccinations, a microchip and to be spayed. Occasionally we come across a very petite kitten that despite our best efforts, does not reach 2 pounds as soon as we were hoping. If the overall health of the kitten is good, we still make the kitten available for adoption.

Developmental Stages

At birth (3 - 4.5 ounces)

- the kitten is born both blind and deaf.
- the eyes are closed and the ears are folded.
- the kitten uses its sense of smell to find its mother's teat.
- a kitten finds its own particular teat on the mother's breast that it uses until it is weaned.
- each teat has its own characteristic scent that the kitten can recognize.
- The mother has to lick the kitten's bottom to stimulate it to eliminate.
- a newborn kitten cannot regulate its own body temperature and it is extremely sensitive to cold.
- a newborn kitten that gets separated from the mother and its siblings can die quickly of hypothermia.



Day 4

- hearing develops but the ear canals are not open completely until the end of the 2nd week.

Day 5

- the remains of the umbilical cord dries up and falls off

Day 11

- eyes begin to open and continue to open until the 13th day.
- all kittens are born with blue eyes but the eye color can change later.

2.5 weeks

- the kitten begins to crawl and starts to stand.

3 weeks

- the kitten is steadier on its feet
- the sense of smell is mature.
- sight is still poor but he can interpret visual information sufficiently in order to locate his mother.
- milk teeth begin to develop.
- can eliminate without the aid of his mother.

4 weeks (~1 pound)

- the kitten's sight has improved enough so that it can negotiate obstacles
- developing motor skills – running climbing
- beginning to eat solid (canned) food
- active play with littermates
- it will not be fully sighted until 2 months of age

4 - 5 weeks

- the kitten weighs about one pound.
- it will be moving quite well
- they learn to play with one another
- groom themselves.

5 to 7 weeks

- the mother begins to wean the kittens
- they can lap up kitten formula food from a shallow dish.
- first signs of predatory behavior occur
- very important social development occurs in relation to humans and other animals, very important for foster homes to provide variety of social experiences

8 weeks (~2 pounds)

- a kitten will have a full set of teeth
- should be fully weaned
- will still nurse if the mother will let it
- should be eating hard cat food as well as canned food
- play should be highly active, chasing, climbing and tumbling with littermates



Nursing Mothers and Their Kittens

- Introduction
- Getting Started
- Feeding
- Eliminating
- Socialization
- Mom's Care of Her Kittens
- Problem Behaviors in Mother Cats



Introduction

Fostering a mom cat with kittens is a very exciting and rewarding job. You will get to see intimately how a mom cat cares for her kittens, and the stages of development in their relationship. The foster home's job is to be the supportive foster parent, providing a calm, safe, nurturing environment. Instinct tells mom cats to keep their kittens safe, and in order to feel safe, they need privacy, quiet, and minimal activity. Stress can cause cats to become aggressive, and to not take care of their babies properly, and in some instances even causes extreme behaviors such as cannibalism. Your role is to give the mom cat the type of environment where she can feel comfortable raising her young.

No fostered animals should be allowed to mingle with your own pets or outside in your yard for the first two weeks after you bring them home. This is to protect both the foster pets and your own pets from any infectious agents they may bring from the shelter.

Getting Started

Every home which intends to foster a mom cat with kittens should have a separate room, away from the hub of daily activity. A home with no other pets is ideal, but if you do have pets, you should be able to prevent your pet from going up to the door of the private room. Mom cat fosters are not recommended if you have a dog, unless it is a very mellow and quiet dog. *If your home environment is loud and/or active, such as with young children, you may want to consider a different type of foster.* You will need to set up the room for your foster mom and babies before you let any of them out of the carrier. Ideally, you should do this before you get the kitties from AUSTIN ANIMAL CENTER. The room should have one or two larger "safe spaces" or nests, boxes on their sides, or an empty litter box lined with towels, etc. Mom will want to choose somewhere to keep her kittens. The AUSTIN ANIMAL CENTER may also provide you with a kennel, which, once you take the door off, can make a nice cubby for mom and babies. When you first let mom out, do not pet her or make too many advances. Leave her alone with the kittens, with the door closed, to explore her new home. Adult cats can take a while to adjust to new places, and mom cats are no exception. They may take a few days or more to come out of hiding.

Feeding

Make sure mom has access to plenty of wet and dry food. Nursing mother cats need to eat a high quality kitten formula food. If she is a picky eater, do not hesitate to try feeding her canned tuna, chicken or salmon. Do not give cow's milk to cats, despite popular belief, it is impossible for cat's to digest and often causes serious stomach upset. Her calorie intact needs to remain very high to maintain nursing her kittens. Make sure she always has access to fresh water.

Eliminating

Ideally, the litter box will be as far away from the food and water as possible. Litter preference is up to the foster home but the box should be scooped at least 2 times a day, and dumped out once weekly. Once the kittens start using the litter box, you will likely need to add low-sided boxes that are easy for the kittens to get in and out of, and/or clean more frequently.



Socialization

Proceed slowly with any adult cat you do not know - let her come to you, pet her only as much as she is comfortable with, stop petting at the first signs of discomfort. These signs may include: swishing tail, ears laid back or to the sides, head jerk towards your hand or the area which you were petting her, tensing up, cranky overdrawn meow, moving away, hissing, or growling. Even a momma cat needs playtime. Make sure to have solo-play toys as well as interactive play sessions with mom, after kittens are 2-3 weeks old she may show more interest in play.

No fostered cats should be allowed to mingle with your own pets for the first two weeks after you bring them home. This is to protect both the foster pets and your own pets from any infectious agents they may bring from the shelter.



Mom's Care of the Kittens



For the first few weeks of life, mom should do everything necessary for the kittens. After that, you can start sharing some of the kitten care duties with her, if she is willing! Below is an explanation of the normal care a mom cat gives to her kittens, with an approximate timeline, so you will know what behaviors to expect. All cats are slightly different, with some being more attentive moms than others, but if a mom cat fails to care for her babies in any of these important functions, let us know as soon as possible so they can all be evaluated by medical staff.

Nursing: Kittens begin to nurse 1-2 hours after birth. Though born with their eyes closed, they can find their mother by her warmth, and she should make this easier by lying near them on her side. The nursing/suckling relationship occurs over 3 stages. In the beginning, mom initiates each nursing episode, waking the kittens by licking them and then encircling them with her body. After a little searching, kittens quickly latch on. The second stage occurs after the second or third week, when the kitten's eyes and ears are functioning and they can interact with the mother both inside and outside the nest. At this stage, the kittens also initiate some of the nursing episodes. The mother generally cooperates by lying down and taking up the nursing position. In the third stage, starting at about 5 weeks postpartum, the kittens initiate virtually all nursing. The mother becomes gradually more evasive and uncooperative. Near the end of this stage, the mother begins to wean her kittens by becoming less and less available. In wild cats, this is the time when the mom would begin to provide them with fresh killed prey. You can help in the weaning process by encouraging the babies to eat canned and later dry food.

Grooming: Kittens receive a lot of grooming and licking from their mothers during their first 2-4 weeks. This anogenital grooming stimulates elimination, and the fecal matter and urine are consumed by the mom. This is effective in keeping the nest and babies clean. Later, as the young are able to leave the nest area, the anogenital licking subsides, and the young deposit feces and urine nearby. At this point, providing cardboard litter boxes nearby will teach them to use the litter box. You generally do not need to intervene at this point, though there is more cleaning as things certainly get messier!



Problem Behaviors in Mother Cats

Maternal Aggression Towards People

Occasionally, mother cats have strong protective instincts against humans as well. They may hiss, growl, or strike out if you approach the kittens. AUSTIN ANIMAL CENTER attempts to screen for these behaviors, but sometimes they will develop down the line. If faced with this situation, move very slowly around the mom cat and the nest. Wear long sleeved sweatshirt to protect you as you clean around her. Try to bribe her with tasty treats such as chicken baby food. Speak in a soft, reassuring voice, and try not to react if mom cat hisses or growls. DO NOT correct the cat by spraying her with water or other types of correction. Remember, she is acting out of a natural instinct to protect her young, and if you act in a threatening manner, she will also escalate her behavior.

- **Maternal Aggression Towards Other Animals**

Aggressive behavior towards cats or dogs is very common in mom cats, as they are trying to protect their young. Please do not try to introduce your foster cats to other animals. This can be very stressful, and offers no advantages. Please block any avenues they may have for seeing other cats or dogs, and strictly enforce separation from your resident pets. If for some reason, the mom cat sees another animal and is upset, quickly remove source of anxiety/ cover up window, etc. and leave the room. Do not attempt to comfort or reassure the mom cat or babies. Come back in 20 minutes or so to check on them.

- **Maternal Neglect**

About 8% of kittens die from inadequate maternal care. The deaths are usually due to hypothermia if the kitten strays away and is not retrieved, or improper/inadequate nursing at birth and after. Maternal neglect has several causes: some cats seem to lack maternal instincts. In some cases, it is nature's way: if kittens have birth defects or otherwise weak at birth, the mom may ignore them, or as discussed below, cannibalize them. In many cases, it seems that environmental stress plays a role, and thus it is very important that the environment be kept quiet, calm and with few visits. Except to feed, clean, and check in on the babies a few brief times a day, cats should primarily be left alone the first 2 weeks postpartum.

You will need to watch daily for signs that a mother is neglecting her young, especially in the first few weeks. Call us if:

- * the mother spends all her time away from the kittens
- *she does not groom or nurse them frequently
- *the kittens cry and she seems not to respond

- **Cannibalism**

Some queens may cannibalize one or more of their kittens. This does not appear to be a reflection of inexperience in mother cats. It may result from anxiety brought on by too much human interference, or the stresses of other cats or dogs in the immediate environment. There can also be evolutionary causes for cannibalism, such as if the kitten has some (sometimes not obvious) defect. If a mom cat is aggressive towards their kittens, you should separate them from her and call AUSTIN ANIMAL CENTER for further advice.

Fortunately, maternal neglect and cannibalism are quite rare, and often occur in the first few days after birth, so most of you will not see these behaviors, but it is important to know in any case.

Itty Bitty Kitty Care

Typically kittens weighing less than 1 pound without their mother have a very poor prognosis and a very high mortality rate. Occasionally the Queen becomes ill or is otherwise unable to care for her kittens and the foster parent has to take over the job of mothering. Kittens that cannot eat on their own have about a 50% chance of survival, even with the most diligent care. Caring for these itty bitties is a full time job and one not to be taken on lightly. If loosing a kitten is the worst thing you can imagine, do not step up to take on itty bitties – the chances of loosing one is very high.

You will need to focus on three main areas when raising your kittens. You'll want to create a warm, dry, clean and safe environment for them; you will need to feed them the most healthful nutrition you possibly can in the right amounts, and at the right times for their optimal growth and development; and, you will need to provide close attention to all the factors that contribute to giving your kittens the proper overall care. Kittens need love, and a LOT of it!! Without their mother, they look to you for that love, as well as for guidance. A kitten's mother teaches them how to groom themselves, eat from a bowl and use a litter box, without a cat mom to show them the way, you will have to "teach" them to be a cat!

SUPPLIES:

Nesting box/Crate	Syringes
Newspaper	Small bowls, plates, dishes
Paper towels	Formula or ingredients to make your own formula
Unscented baby wipes	Soft canned kitten food
Plenty of old towels and /or blankets	Pedia-lyte
Heating Pad	Meat flavored baby food
Gauze or cotton balls	Canned tuna and/or chicken
Scale	

NESTBOX

The nesting box does not need to be elaborate. It needs to be just big enough for the kittens to move around but not much bigger. Line it with paper towels, newspaper or, if you have a surplus of small receiving style blankets and don't mind doing a lot of laundry, use the blankets. Keep a heating pad under one side of the box only on its lowest setting. The nesting box should stay at about 80 degrees Fahrenheit but no higher. With one side of the box only heated the kitten will be able to crawl away from the heat source if it gets too warm. When using the heating pad, be sure to keep it on the lowest setting, and wrap it well with towels and waterproof pads. Place the box in a draft free location. Be sure the sides of the box are at least six inches tall so the kitten can not fall out. As the babies mature the temperature in the box can be gradually lowered. When the kitten reaches the end of its first month of life, it can tolerate room air of 70-75F. The nesting box should have its bedding changed everyday until the kittens start using a litter box on their own.



FEEDING

- It is easier to start young kittens off using a plastic syringe (without the needle of course!) instead of a small bottle; it's easier to control the flow of the formula and measure how much formula each kitten receives.
- Cover your lap with a towel or old blanket. Take the kitten in your lap, “scruff” it (like its mother would do if she were moving him from one place to the next) and slip the end of the syringe into the kitten’s mouth. *Slowly* squeeze the food into the kitten’s mouth.
- Do NOT feed cow’s milk, kittens cannot digest it and feeding them cow’s milk can kill them.
- Do not over feed kittens, as this can bring on diarrhea as well as other problems.
- At 2 weeks old, use a 6 cc. syringe size and feed every 3 hours, and at about 3 weeks old, move them up to a 12 cc. syringe, feeding them at least every 4 hours. (Yes, even through the night)
- An average meal for a 3 week old kitten can vary from a single syringe full (12 fluid cc) to three syringes full (36 fluid cc) for a large and hungry kitten!!
- Use the KMR (Kitten Milk Replacer) formula, available in most large pet and feed supply stores. While the powdered form is more economical, it does not always reconstitute as lump-free as needed to flow through the syringes (best method is to mix a small amount with cold water first, similar to the process of making lump-free gravy, then add the mixture to the rest of the batch). If you shop around, including online, you can find the best price for purchasing the formula.
- The most economical recipe would be the one you make at home:
- At home high calorie “formula” recipes:

FORMULA #1

(avoid if diarrhea is present)

1 can Evaporated Milk

1 egg yolk

2 tablespoons Karo syrup

FORMULA #2

3oz. condensed milk

3oz. water

4oz. plain yogurt (NOT low-fat)

3 large or 4 small egg yolks

- As the kittens grow, the number of feedings and their frequency can be decreased. Also as they grow, they can let you know better when they are actually hungry. Kittens that are not getting enough nourishment may cry continuously, suck on each other or on themselves, and they may have prominent hips or backbones.
- At about 4 weeks of age, start mixing in soft canned food with the formula and offering it in a bowl to begin the weaning process. Continue to syringe feed until you are certain they are eating well on their own. Begin offering hard kitten kibble at this age as well, they may surprise you! Young animals that have been separated from their mothers too soon often lack the instinct to eat from a bowl and need some encouragement.
- Watering food down, heating it up and offering it directly to their lips with your finger or a spoon can sometimes give them the idea. Kittens at or under one pound need to be encouraged to eat at least every four hours and weighed daily to insure weight gain.
- If the kittens do not seem interested in canned kitten food, try canned chicken or tuna. Pouring the liquid from canned chicken or tuna onto other types of food will often work.

Add more water to the can, refrigerate it and you'll have more "juice" ready for next time.

- Chicken, turkey or beef flavored baby food will often be an appealing consistency and flavor to kittens.
- Nutri-Cal is an over the counter calorie supplement that can be added to any of the above recipes to add calories.
- Karo Syrup can be purchased at any grocery store and can be applied directly to the kitten's gums or food to add immediate calories and nutrients.

Feeding Guide

Age in Weeks	Average Weight of Kitten	Amount of Formula Per Day	Number of Feedings Per Day
1	4 ounces	32 cc	6
2	7 ounces	56 cc	4
3	10 ounces	80 cc	3
4	13 ounces	104 cc	3
5	1 pound	128 cc	3

Kittens should be weighed frequently to ensure that they are growing properly. You'll soon know if your orphans are thriving because they will grow at an incredible rate.

Helping the Kitten Eliminate

Kittens less than 3 weeks of age may need encouragement to eliminate. Normal kitten stools are yellowish brown with a jam-like consistency. After every feeding, gently massage the anus and urinary orifice with a cotton ball or gauze moistened with warm water until they urinate and defecate. Be very gentle when you do this and don't worry if no urine or stool is produced after every feeding. By the time the kitten is three weeks old it should be able to go without your help.

Watery yellowish or greenish stools are sometimes associated with feeding too much. If they occur, try diluting the formula 50-50 with Pedia-Lyte until the stools return to normal consistency. You can also give the kitten 2-3 drops of kapectate just prior to each feeding. Stools that are clumped and cheese-like are sometimes due to feeding the formula too concentrated. When kittens strain to defecate and pass overly hard stools increase the frequency of feeding and dilute the formula. These impacted kittens also often have a bloated abdomen. You can give them a few drops of mineral oil or cat hairball paste to help them evacuate the stool.

As early as 3 weeks you can start placing the kittens in a litter box after feedings to encourage it to go on its own.

Feline Upper Respiratory Infection (URI)

URI is similar to the common cold in humans. It is especially common in cats that have been exposed to a lot of other cats, such as in an animal shelter. URI is rarely fatal and usually resolves in one to three weeks. Treatment generally consists of supportive care. In addition, antibiotics are sometimes given to treat possible bacterial infections. However, although secondary bacterial infections can make the problem worse, the underlying cause is often a viral infection. Viral infections are not cured by antibiotics – as with the common cold, there is no completely effective treatment besides time and allowing the cat's own immune system to do its job.

What are the signs of URI?

- Clear or colored nasal discharge (snot)
- Sneezing
- Red inflamed conjunctiva (lining of the eyes)
- Fever, lethargy, loss of appetite

What can I do to make my foster cat feel better?

What makes you feel better when you have a cold? A warm, quiet, comfy place to rest, chicken soup, orange juice and TLC! Your cat needs the same, with some slight modifications for felines!

- Make sure the cat is eating. When cats get stuffy noses, they can't smell their food very well and may not want to eat. Offer canned food, canned chicken, tuna or salmon, or meat flavored baby food.
- If the cat is producing discharge from eyes or nose, gently clean the cat's nose and eyes with a soft cloth wet with warm water.
- If the cat is very congested, use a humidifier or put the cat in the bathroom and run hot water in the shower for a few minutes a couple of times a day. For a more concentrated steam treatment, put the cat in a carrier next to the sink, cover the carrier and the faucet with a thick towel and run the water on hot for 5-10 minutes. The steam should remain trapped under the towel. I couple of drops of eucalyptus oil in the sink can help as well.
- "Little Noses" is an over the counter decongestant designed for infants that can help kittens too! A drop in each nostril 2 times a day can help.

When do I contact the shelter for veterinary attention?

- Not eating for more than 24 hours.
- Green or yellow discharge from the nose or eyes
- Difficulty breathing, especially panting or breathing through an open mouth
- Depressed or unresponsive cat: a slight decrease in activity is expected, but if the cat is much less active than you would expect, contact the shelter
- Vomiting or diarrhea that lasts more than 24 hours
- Little or no improvement after a week of home supportive care

What can I expect the veterinarian to prescribe?

- If an infection is indicated by fever or green or yellow discharge or other symptoms, the vet may prescribe an antibiotic. Give the antibiotic as directed, until it is gone. Do not stop giving the antibiotic if the cat seems to be getting better, continue as prescribed.

How to give medicine to a cat

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cJh_zLpFF88

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-no3nP-PicA&feature=related>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tnrXzuUshnA&feature=related>

- If eyes are affected by the URI, eye ointment may be prescribed, administer as directed.

How to administer eye medicine to a cat:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cH9QgVAM53w&feature=fvw>

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bS_ZD8Sgle0&feature=related

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rrVgQsvskGg&feature=related>

- If the cat is especially congested, you may be given a “Nebulization Set Up”. This is a box and a nebulizer with a special nebulizing solution. The cats should be “nebbed” at least twice a day for 10 to 20 minutes. If this is prescribed, you will be given special instructions to assist you.

How to nebulize a cat:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x61dYiFQ-Aw>



Kittens getting a breathing treatment called nebulizing to help cure upper respiratory infections.

How do I know my fosters are improving?

- Increased appetite
- Increased activity
- Sneezing almost never
- No ocular or nasal discharge

If you do not see an improvement in 3-5 days, or if the cats become MORE ill than when seen by the shelter veterinarian, arrange for them to come in and be seen again by shelter veterinarian staff. Just because they are 'on treatment' does not mean they will get better, careful monitoring of eating habits, energy levels, and symptoms is VERY important. If you are concerned, please bring them to the shelter for evaluation.

How do I know when to return my kittens to the shelter for adoption?

- Cats have completed all prescribed medication
- Cats have been symptom free for 5 to 7 days. No sneezing, no watery eyes, no boogery noses.
- Cats are eating regularly and have a normal activity level.
- Contact the foster coordinator to arrange for a drop off time!

Tummy Troubles

There are always risks when fostering young kittens, daily monitoring of their overall health and well being is very important. Tummy Troubles are one of the most common issues we see with underage kittens.

Tummy Troubles include not eating, diarrhea, vomiting, blood in stool and not using the litter boxes. Of then the cause of Tummy Troubles is simply an immature digestive track but can also be caused by intestinal parasites or bacterial infections.

Not Eating

Young animals that have been separated from their mothers too soon often lack the instinct to eat from a bowl and need some encouragement.

- Watering food down, heating it up and offering it directly to their lips with your finger or a spoon can sometimes give them the idea. *Kittens at or under one pound need to be encouraged to eat at least every four hours and weighed daily to insure weight gain.*
- If the kittens do not seem interested in the food provided by the shelter, try canned chicken or tuna. Pouring the liquid from canned chicken or tuna onto other types of food will often work. Add more water to the can, refrigerate it and you'll have more "juice" ready for next time.
- Chicken, turkey or beef flavored baby food will often be an appealing consistency and flavor to kittens.
- Kitten Formula is available over the counter. It is generally not needed but can be added to any of the above recipes to add fluid and calories. *Do not give kittens cow's milk – it will make tummy trouble worse since they lack the necessary enzymes to digest it.*
- Nutri-Cal is an over the counter calorie supplement that can be added to any of the above recipes to add calories.
- At home high calorie "formula" recipes:

FORMULA #1

(avoid if diarrhea is present)

- 1 can Evaporated Milk
- 1 egg yolk
- 2 tablespoons Karo syrup

FORMULA #2

- 3oz. condensed milk
- 3oz. water
- 4oz. plain yogurt (NOT low-fat)
- 3 large or 4 small egg yolks

- Force Feeding: If kittens are not eating on their own, either due to illness or immaturity, you may need to "force feed" them. Take any of the recipes above and add enough liquid to make it very soupy. Suck up about 5ccs in a syringe. Cover your lap with a towel or old blanket. Take the kitten in your lap, "scruff" it (like its mother would do if she were moving him from one place to the next) and slip the end of the syringe into the kitten's mouth. Slowly squeeze the food into the kitten's mouth. The kitten should get at least 5 ccs every 4-6 hours.

Diarrhea

Loose, watery stools are very common in underage kittens. There are many causes but the most frequent cause is simply an immature digestive track that lacks the proper enzymes to digest commercial cat food.

- Yogurt – yogurt contains pro-biotics and enzymes that can help a kitten’s digestive track mature. You can either add it to the food or give it to them straight.
- Pumpkin – canned organic pumpkin is extremely high in fiber and some kittens LOVE it.

Very watery diarrhea for more than 24 hours can be an emergency situation for a very small kitten. Make sure the kitten is drinking, check for dehydration several times a day and consult the shelter ASAP if you feel the kitten is fading.

When do I contact the shelter for veterinary attention?

Any one isolated symptom of tummy trouble is usually nothing to worry about, however, if there is more than one symptom or any one symptom is accompanied by lethargy, weight loss or signs of dehydration, veterinary intervention may be needed. If your foster pets display any of the following symptoms – make arrangements to bring them to the shelter ASAP.

- Not eating for more than 24 hours.
- Depressed or unresponsive cat: a slight decrease in activity is expected, but if the cat is much less active than you would expect, contact the shelter
- Vomiting or diarrhea that lasts more than 24 hours

What can I expect the veterinarian to prescribe?

While the cat(s) is at the shelter, a variety of tests and exams may be performed. Once the vet determines the cause of the tummy troubles, appropriate treatments will be prescribed.

- Forti-Flora – a powdered form of probiotics and enzymes that can be sprinkled directly on the cat’s food.
- Antibiotics – if an infection is suspected, antibiotics will be prescribed
- De-wormers – if an intestinal parasite is suspected, anti-parasitic will be prescribed
- Prescription Diet – a special high fiber, probiotic formula of cat food may be prescribed

How do I know my foster cats are improving?

- Increased appetite
- Increased activity
- Formed stool
- No vomiting

*If you do not see an improvement in 3-5 days, or if the cats become **MORE** ill than when seen by the shelter veterinarian, arrange for them to come in and be seen again by shelter veterinarian staff.*

Behavior Problems

Most kittens adjust very quickly and easily to live in their new foster home. After a few days of cautiousness and a few hisses and spits at the family dog, the majority of kittens become outgoing, playful and affectionate. If after a few days, the kitten does not seem to be coming out of its shell; more proactive care must be taken.

Socializing Shy Kittens

- Food is the key to taming. Make dry kitten food available at all times and give the kitten a small amount of wet food at least twice a day. The kitten may hesitate to eat in your presence at first, but be patient. Eventually the kitten will associate your presence with food.
- Chicken-flavored baby food is a special treat that almost no kitten can resist (make sure it doesn't contain onion!).
- Wrap the kitten in a towel, allowing her head to stick out. Offer baby food or wet food on a spoon. If she does not respond, dab a tiny bit on the end of her nose. Once she tastes it, she will soon want more.
- Gently begin to pet the kitten's face, chin, and behind the ears while talking gently. Try to have several feeding/petting sessions (15-20 minutes) with each kitten as many times a day as you can.
- Progress will depend on the kitten's age and temperament. Each day you will notice improvement- falling asleep in your lap, coming towards you for food, meowing at you, purring, and playing are all great signs. Once the kitten no longer runs away from you but instead comes toward you seeking to be fed, held and pet, you can confine her to a small, kitten-proofed room rather than a cage.
- Expose the kittens to a variety of people. Everyone should use low voices at first, and approach the kittens in a non-threatening manner.
- If you do not notice signs of taming after a couple of days, kittens should be separated from each other to facilitate taming. Left together, one kitten can become outgoing and playful while another remains shy and withdrawn. If you cannot separate them, the kittens can be housed together, but be sure to spend time alone with each one. Siblings can be reunited when they have begun to show regular signs of socialization.
- Once the kitten is willing to play, offer toys and use a string (not yarn) or a cat dancier for him to chase. Do not let the kitten bite, scratch or play with your hand.
- If the kittens are staying awake at night, try to play and socialize with them more during the day and cover their cage(s) at night with a towel or blanket.
- Leave a television or radio on (not too loud) during the day so the kittens get used to human voices.
- If you are confining the kittens in a kennel, try to keep it in the most active part of your house (family room, kitchen, etc.) This way, the kittens can get used to the regular noises and activities of a household, which will help with socialization.

Rough Play

- Provide a variety of toys for your kittens so you can determine their preferences. In general, cats seem to enjoy batting at small toys, like balls and fake mice. They also like to stalk, chase and pounce on things that move like prey, such as toys with feathers attached to flexible rods that you can dangle and move about.
- Frequently give your kittens new objects to investigate, such as paper bags or cardboard boxes.
- If your kittens tend to grab your feet as you go up and down the stairs or hide under things and ambush your ankles or legs as you walk by, carry toys with you and toss them ahead of you to redirect his attention. Try to get him to focus on chasing the toys instead of attacking you.
- Consistently give a too rough kitten “time-outs” when he plays too roughly. The instant he starts to bite or scratch you, end the game by leaving the room. Don’t attempt to pick up your cat and put him in another room for the time-out as this could provoke more bites.

What NOT to Do

- Never encourage your kitten to play with your hands, feet or any other body part. While it may be fun when you have a tiny kitten, it becomes painful and dangerous as the kitten grows up.
- Do not use toys that teach your cat to play with your hands, such as gloves with balls hanging from the fingers. If you do, your cat will be encouraged to direct his play at your hands and won’t understand that it’s only okay to attack your hands when you’re wearing the toy gloves.
- Do not physically punish your cat for rough play. If you hit or slap your cat, he may perceive your actions as play and become even rougher. Alternatively, he might become fearful of your hands and respond by avoiding you or changing from play to real aggression.
- Never run from your cat or try to block his movements with your feet. These actions can cause your cat to intensify his play or become aggressive.



Destructive Scratching

The best tactic when dealing with scratching is not to try to stop your cat from scratching, but instead to teach her where and what to scratch. An excellent approach is to provide her with appropriate, cat-attractive surfaces and objects to scratch, such as scratching posts. The following steps will help you encourage your cat to scratch where you want her to.

- Provide a variety of scratching posts with different qualities and surfaces. Try posts made of cardboard, carpeting, wood, sisal and upholstery. Some cats prefer horizontal posts. Others like vertical posts or slanted posts. Some prefer a vertical grain for raking, while others favor a horizontal grain for picking. Once you figure out your cat's preference for scratching, provide additional posts of that kind in various locations. Keep in mind that all cats want a sturdy post that won't shift or collapse when used. Most cats also like a post that's tall enough that they can stretch fully. (This may be why cats seem to like drapes so much!)
- Encourage your cat to investigate her posts by scenting them with catnip, hanging toys on them and placing them in areas where she'll be inclined to climb on them.
- Discourage inappropriate scratching by removing or covering other desirable objects. Turn speakers toward the wall. Put plastic, double-sided sticky tape, sandpaper or upside-down vinyl carpet runner (knobby parts up) on furniture or on the floor where your cat would stand to scratch your furniture. Place scratching posts next to these objects, as "legal" alternatives.
- If you catch your cat *in the act* of scratching an inappropriate object, you can try startling him by clapping your hands or squirting him with water. Use this procedure only as a last resort, because your cat may associate you with the startling event (clapping or squirting) and learn to fear you.

