

# All About Kittens



## Humane Educational Society **Foster Manual**

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# ABOUT HES

Our mission is to provide a safe haven for homeless, abused and neglected animals in our community and advocate on their behalf.

Humane Educational Society was incorporated in 1910 by Ethel Hardy who was known for picking up stray cats and dogs while driving her carriage through the streets of Chattanooga. Since then, we have grown to serve Hamilton County and take in four to five thousand homeless pets each year. We are an open-door facility to residents of our service area that provides adoption services, animal protection, cruelty investigation, pet licenses, and essential care for homeless pets. Humane Educational Society is committed to finding each and every treatable, adoptable, trainable animal in our facility a loving home to make Hamilton County a better place for pets.

## FOSTER PROGRAM



Thank you for opening your home and your heart to a kitten or cat in need. Whether you foster a kitten who needs some time to grow, or an adult cat who needs a little extra TLC, you make it possible for us to provide the very best care possible for all of our residents at the Humane Educational Society. Fostering is messy, rewarding, stinky, adorable, and sometimes a heartbreaking job. We certainly could not provide the level of care we do without valuable foster homes like yours.



**FROM ALL OUR CATS AND KITTENS:  
THANK MEOW!**

# Greetings, Foster Parents!

Thank you for participating in the Humane Educational Society Foster Care Program. We appreciate your willingness to open your heart and home to homeless mother cats and kittens. Your dedication allows our organization to rescue cats and kittens and keep them healthy before adoption.

The guiding mission of the Kitten Foster Care Program is to give mother cats and kittens the individualized care and socialization they need to prepare them for adoption. Information gathered during the foster process helps us place cats and kittens in homes and with families who can best meet their needs. Specific goals of the program include:

- ☐ Providing a safe, healthy, nurturing environment for mother cats to raise their kittens.
- ☐ Socializing shy or timid cats and kittens.
- ☐ Allowing mother cats to recover in a relaxing, uplifting environment.

This manual outlines the responsibilities and expectations of the Humane Educational Society foster volunteers. This should serve as a resource throughout your foster care experience.

Before taking your assigned foster cats/kittens home, please:

- ☐ Review the foster manual and reach out with questions
- ☐ Be familiar with the key responsibilities and policies
- ☐ Complete a foster family information sheet
- ☐ Read and understand the foster care agreement





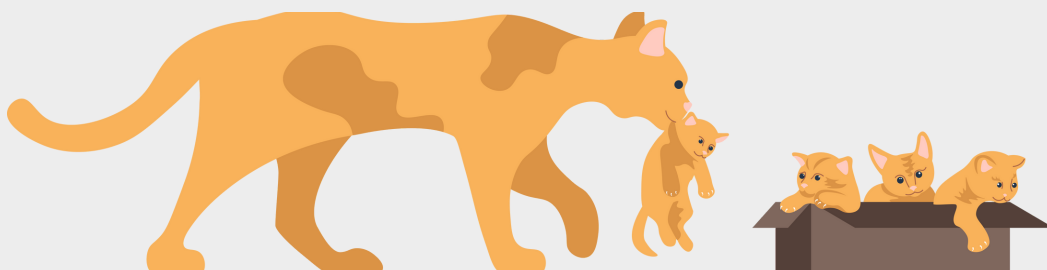
# Key Responsibilities AND POLICIES

To ensure a successful foster program, we ask that you follow our general policy guidelines to ensure that each foster home is responsibly providing a wonderful home for these kittens to grow up and explore the world in. To this effect, you will want to keep in mind the following:

1. Keep cats/kittens inside at all times. Pay attention to dog doors and ensure those are locked.
2. Cats/kittens should be in a carrier at all times when leaving the house for medical appointments, etc. We provide you with a pet carrier.
3. Keep doors/windows closed at all times, unless covered with a screen that is securely in place. The window should only be open no more than 1 inch with a support in place so the window cannot be opened any further. A frightened cat/kitten can escape through the tiniest holes! Air conditioner window units are also an escape route.
4. If a cat/kitten does manage to get outside, you must attempt to get the cat/kitten back inside immediately. If you delay, the cat/kitten may get frightened and run away, decreasing your chances of getting the kitty back inside. Do not chase the cat/kitten as this may make him/her run further away from your home.

The easiest way to get your mother cat back to your home is to put her kittens in a secure carrier by the door or window that she went out. The kittens should cry for her, and her maternal instincts will kick in bringing her back to them. Often mother cats will come back in to the house or foster room to be with the kittens. Most mother cats were strays and are familiar with being outside, but that does not mean that they all have 'street smarts.' Some will hide and be scared as soon as they get out. Look under bushes, decks, foundations, etc. If the mother cat is injured, she may be silently hiding as to not attract predators.

If you cannot get the kitty yourself within 1-2 hours, call your foster coordinator to determine a strategy to recapture the kitty. Humane Educational Society has humane traps available for this purpose.



# Key Responsibilities AND POLICIES CONT.

5. When fostering a cat who tested positive for FIV (Feline Infectious Virus) or FeLV (Feline leukemia virus) the cat must remain segregated from the other animals in your home for the duration of the stay.

## 6. Quarantine Period

- When fostering a mother cat who has not tested positive for FIV or FeLV, it is important to keep her and kittens separated from your other animals for at least two weeks to ensure they are healthy.
- A seemingly fine cat can become ill due to stress from a move.
- Foster kittens must **not** be introduced to your resident cats unless your resident cats are indoor only cats.
- Kittens must have at least two vaccines for more than 5 days before they can meet any of your household pets and these visits should be limited and supervised. Food dishes, water bowls, and litter boxes should be picked up so they do not use each other's boxes or bowls, or they should meet in an area where litter boxes and food/water dishes are not present.

7. For everyone's protection and safety, your resident pets are required to be current on vaccines. You should contact your veterinarian to find out if your animals are current on vaccines when fostering kittens. Some veterinarians will recommend annual vaccines and others may recommend longer. It is best to check before you bring kittens home.

However, we do recognize that cross contamination can happen. If your cat(s) get sick, it is your responsibility to seek veterinary treatment. Remember, there is always an inherent risk of disease when you bring new animals into your home. This is why we require all residents in the home to be current on vaccinations.



# Kitty-Proofing Your Foster Room and Home

Cat-proofing and especially kitten-proofing your home is much the same as child-proofing it! That means hiding or removing cords, removing small items that kittens can choke on, etc.

To begin, your foster room should be COMPLETELY cleared out and only consist of basic cat necessities (i.e bed, food, water, litterbox, and toys). This means removing all toiletries and decorative items from the bathtub, counters, or any other surface the kittens can access. Kittens love to play with anything they can get their paws on and could be injured by heavy or sharp items.

Once your kittens are vaccinated, have completed a two-week quarantine, and are clear of any illness, you may decide to have them visit other areas of your home or interact with your resident pets. These visits should be short and well supervised. DO NOT give the kittens free reign of your home unsupervised. They can get injured, lost, have accidents outside the litter box, etc.

Before introducing your kittens to other areas of your home, please do a thorough walkthrough, and keep the following concerns in mind:

- ☐ Kittens might chew on electrical cords resulting in burns or even death. Protect your electrical cords with plastic tubing or by spraying them with "Bitter Apple," a bitter tasting deterrent that you can find at pet stores.
- ☐ Kittens can choke on small items. Keep rubber bands, paper clips, needles – anything kitty can swallow – out of reach.
- ☐ Keep plastic bags, which can cause suffocation, out of reach.
- ☐ Secure any heavy items that could fall and potentially injure them.
- ☐ Refrain from using any hot appliances while the kittens are out. Kittens are naturally curious and could get burned.
- ☐ If the kittens are in a bathroom, make sure the toilet lid is closed. Kittens are curious and could jump in and drown.



**Review the toxic houseplant list at [www.asPCA.org/pet-care/poison-control/plants](http://www.asPCA.org/pet-care/poison-control/plants) and remove all poisonous plants from your household**



# Mentors

Each foster parent will be assigned a mentor if we have enough mentors available. A mentor has at least one year of experience fostering kittens. The mentor can answer questions for you regarding kitten-proofing your foster space, behavioral and dietary concerns, and basic health and medical questions.

You should contact your mentor with ANY questions or concerns you may have about your kitten's health or well-being. If you are worried that one of your kittens may be sick, try to get some information together before you call:

- How long have the symptoms been going on?
- Is kitty eating, drinking, pooping, peeing, playing?
- Any vomiting?
- Diarrhea?
- What is the kitty's temperature? Normal temperature is 100.0-102.6 F. If you are worried but you aren't sure about the symptoms mentioned above, call your mentor anyway – that is what they are here for.



If you do not have a mentor assigned to you at the time you collect your kittens, the foster coordinator will be your mentor until one is assigned. We are building our mentor program so we may not give you a mentor, but if you specifically would like one, we will put you on the list!

## Mentor Contact Information

If you have any questions, problems, or issues while fostering, please contact your assigned mentor, which will be sent in an email.

## On-Call Foster Team Member

A foster team member will be on call Monday-Sunday after hours for if you have a foster kitten related emergency. Please reserve calls after 6 pm for emergencies. The shared number is 423-290-2908.

# Housing for Kittens

## Clean, Safe Environment

You must provide a clean, safe environment for your foster cats/kittens. Humane Educational Society ALWAYS recommends starting your kittens in a non-carpeted, easily sanitized room in the unlikely event that your kittens have a contagious illness that cannot be removed from carpeting. If you end up with a contagious illness in a carpeted room, you will either have to remove the carpeting or not use that room for fostering ever again. Kittens can be moved to a carpeted room after a two-week quarantine period if they are not showing signs of illness. HES recommends a bathroom or an unused bedroom as your foster room. We also have pop up pens available to borrow.

If you are fostering a nursing cat or young kittens, keep the following tips in mind:

- Consider protecting your furniture and carpet with sheets or plastic covers, like painter's tarps. Kittens can be messy, especially when they're learning to use the litter box! Make sure sheets/covers are securely tacked down so kittens can't get under them. Some foster parents like to use interlocking foam mats or plastic coated painter's paper to cover their carpets or other types of porous flooring. The mats can be sanitized between groups, and the paper can be thrown away. You find these items online or at a home improvement store.
- Until the age of three to four weeks, the mother cat will clean the genitals of her young to stimulate the bowels and bladder. As the kittens start showing interest in the litter box, provide them with an easily accessible box – such as a shoebox lid, cardboard tray, cookie sheet, or cake pan. Once the kittens are more mobile, you should give them a larger litter box. Dollar stores have many inexpensive options, and we can provide you with a litter box as well.



## Safety First!

- Kittens should not have free roam unattended in your home. They need to be contained to a small room or in a pop up play pen. Kittens can easily be accidentally stepped on or put into other dangerous situations if left alone. Keep toilet lids shut!
- You must be able to control the temperature of the room to ensure there are no drafts. Young kittens cannot regulate their temperature and need a warm environment.



# Litter Box

Kittens should be introduced to the litter box when they start eating solid foods. They need a box with shallow sides: a cookie sheet or cake pan is perfect. After they have eaten, place them in the box. They will learn how to use the litter box very quickly. Sometimes they learn how to use the litter box without any help from us, as they have been watching Mom use her box.

Observe how the kittens watch all of Mom's actions: they find her quite fascinating and are learning how to act like cats by observing her.

Orphans may need a little more assistance from you. Simply pick them up and place them on the litter after each meal. When you bring home your foster kittens, show them where you placed their litter box. Keeping the box clean is very important...daily cleaning is necessary. HES recommends cleaning the litter box at least two or three times a day. No cat or kitten wants to use or smell a dirty litter box. Make sure the litter box is as far away from the food and water as possible. Place the bed near the food, not the litter box.

When first learning to use a litter box, kittens do best with pine pellet litter or clay litter. Once the kittens are older (around eight weeks old) you can give them clumping litter. Please do not use clumping litter with kittens under six weeks. We use pellet litter at HES so that is preferred so if they come back to the shelter they are not confused; however, we do have clumping litter available if they do not like the pellet.

Litter box issues are not uncommon. If your kittens aren't using their litter box reliably, consider these options:

- Are kittens having diarrhea or soft stool? If so, take a fecal sample using the provided fecal collection tube.
- Keep the kittens contained to a small territory. If kittens have too much space, they may not make it to the litter box in time to eliminate.
- Add additional litter boxes. If kittens are eliminating in particular spots, add litter boxes there.
- If urine and fecal matter gets outside the box, clean the area well with an enzyme cleaner such as Nature's Miracle.
- Never yell at or punish a kitten for urinating or defecating outside the box. If you've tried these options and your kittens still don't use the litter box reliably, please contact the foster team for further advice.



**Pine pellet litter as  
provided by HES**

# Expenses and Donations

Humane Educational Society covers all medical care expenses for foster cats if performed at Humane Educational Society on-site veterinary clinic, or at other veterinary clinics approved in advance. HES will not reimburse any personal expenses incurred by foster parents for unauthorized veterinary care; seeking veterinary care for your foster cat or kittens at a clinic other than at HES is not permitted without explicit HES approval.

Expenses that you incur during your term as foster parent, whether for supplies or medical care on your own cannot be reimbursed. These expenses, however, may be considered a tax-deductible donation.

Humane Educational Society will provide you with food, litter, litter boxes, food bowls, etc. We try to provide you with everything you need. Please keep track and return anything that you are not using. It is best to keep the foster kittens on the same type of food so they do not get stomach upset. Some kitties are picky so we have several brands on hand to try, but cannot guarantee stock. We feed Hill's Science Diet at the shelter.



**Always consult a tax professional to determine whether your foster expenses are tax-deductible.**

## **Items to keep track of:**

- Playpens
- Kitchen Scales
- Heating Pad
- Litter box
- Nebulizer
- Thermometer
- Medication

# Supplies for Kittens

*The Humane Educational Society wants you to know how much we appreciate you, and we want you to feel supported. To that end, we loan you some supplies with each foster group to use during your fostering experience, and we want to be sure you have the following information to answer frequently asked questions.*

## YOU SHOULD HAVE THE FOLLOWING SUPPLIES

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gloves                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Blankets/Towels         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Baby shampoo/Dawn Soap                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Kitten Aquarium         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Washcloths                                | <input type="checkbox"/> Pop-Up Play Pen         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Thermometer                               | <input type="checkbox"/> Litter Box              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Alcohol                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Cat Litter              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lubricant                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Canned Kitten Food      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Formula (if applicable)                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Dry Kitten Food         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Flea comb                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Goat Milk               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Syringes                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Puppy Pads              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Probiotic Powder                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Nebulizer if applicable |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Karo syrup                                |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Miracle Nipples if applicable             |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nail trimmers                             |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fecal sample container                    |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gerber Baby Food                          |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Scale                                     |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bottle feeding kit (if applicable)        |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Snuggle Safe warming disc (if applicable) |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Heating Pad                               |  |



# Description of Supplies

THE FOLLOWING SECTIONS WILL PROVIDE MORE INFORMATION ON EACH OF THESE SUPPLIES, INCLUDING THEIR INTENDED USE AND WHEN TO USE EACH ITEM.

## Baby Shampoo and Washcloths

If you have to bathe your kitten, be aware that water temperature is really important! A cat's normal body temperature is between 100-102.6° F, so the water needs to be pretty warm (think bath water warm). Try not to do full immersion baths unless absolutely necessary. If possible, try just to bathe a face, bottom, or leg. In order to make the kitten feel more comfortable, use firm stroking motions while you wash them to imitate the firm licking motion of a mom cat's tongue. And remember, a little shampoo goes a long way! Once you've finished shampooing them, rinse them twice to get off all of the shampoo. Place them in a toasty place to dry (free of drafts), and keep them there until they are completely dry. Call your mentor with any questions.

## Thermometer, Alcohol, and Lubricant

Quick tips on temperature taking:



Thoroughly clean the end of the thermometer with alcohol or use a thermometer cover. Next, put a small amount of lubricant on the end. Have a friend/family member hold the kitten for you, or wrap them in a towel like a burrito to keep them still. Support their hind end while inserting the thermometer a 1/2 inch into their rectum or just enough to cover the metal tip. Keep the thermometer in until it starts beeping. Remove the thermometer, and clean it with alcohol. Normal kitten temperatures are as follows: **newborns 96-98 F, 2-4 weeks 98-100 F, 4+ weeks 99-102.5 F.** Text/Call your mentor or coordinator with problems or questions.

**Use distractions – kittens will almost always struggle while their temperature is taken.**

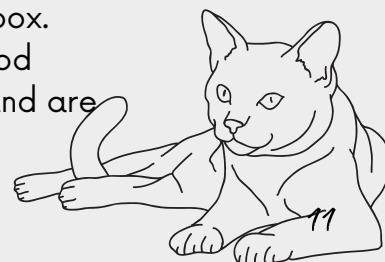
- Offer a tasty treat like wet food or baby food
- Have your assistant gently tap on another part of their body, like the top of their head or the bottom of their foot
- Have your assistant gently stroke their face, chin, ears, and head in a massage-like manner

## Flea Comb

We can not give kittens flea meds until 6 weeks of age. If they have a mom, she will ingest it while washing the kittens, which will cause her to foam at the mouth and salivate profusely. We will usually treat the mom with Revolution, knowing that it will rub onto the kittens because they are always near/on her. If the kittens have fleas, comb them daily with the flea comb until the fleas are gone, usually between 12-36 hours. Likewise, if the kittens are dirty, groom them first with a flea comb before attempting to bathe them as the comb can remove a lot of debris.

## Probiotics

Any kittens four weeks or older will receive a probiotic daily for first five days of foster care. Sprinkle it over their wet food once a day using the chart on the box. This is a preventative measure to help with diarrhea that may occur due to food changes, medications, etc. If your kittens have had probiotics for three days and are still experiencing diarrhea, please contact us.





# Description of Supplies Cont.

## Syringes

There should be five 1 ml syringes and three 3 ml syringe in your supply kit. These are for mixing and administering medications if needed and for syringe feeding if required. Your mentor will help you if you have to administer medication or syringe feed.

## Scale

We try to provide all foster homes with a kitchen scale to weigh their kittens. You are also welcome to purchase your own to use for fostering. Our scales have a large surface for weighing kittens and the ability to weigh in grams (for newborns) and pounds/ounces (for larger kittens). We prefer to weigh in grams so we can notice if there is any slight change in weight. For a kitten who will not sit still, you can place a bowl on top, zero the scale, and place your kitten inside the bowl to weigh them.

## Baby Bottles. Miracle Nipples, Formula

Bottle feeding supplies will only be in your baby bag if you take home kittens under five weeks. Please contact your mentor before bottle-feeding kittens as the process can be tricky. Once opened, KMR must be stored in the fridge.

Breeders Edge is shelf stable. ALL FORMULA IS TO BE IN FRIDGE ONCE MIXED. Lasts 24 hours.

## Fecal Sample Container

Please use to collect a stool sample at least the size of a milk dud. Put in fridge if you cannot get the sample to the shelter within an hour.



## Snuggle Safe Warming Disc and Heating Pad

We will provide you with a warming disc if you take home kittens under five weeks old. The snuggle safe provides portable heat for the kittens. Kittens under five weeks cannot maintain their body temperature well on their own. Therefore, if you have orphans under five weeks, you should keep the disc warm and with the kittens. However, if the disc starts to cool off it will pull heat from kittens. You can put the snuggle safe on top of a heating pad or just use a heating pad. Heating pad must be on the lowest setting and no auto shut off.

If you have a mom with young kittens, keep the disc or heating pad in the nest so that it remains warm for the kittens when mom is not warming them. To warm the disc, place it in the microwave, and follow the heating instructions on the disc label. You must ALWAYS cover the disc with the sleeve provided or another cloth in order to prevent scalding the kittens. Likewise, you should never place your kittens directly on the disc, and you should always provide them an escape from the disc if they get too hot. The disc will stay warm for about eight hours.





## Active Foster

# RESOURCE PAGE

HES has a web page specifically for current fosters. Bookmark this on your web browser: [www.heschatt.org/activefoster](http://www.heschatt.org/activefoster). This is where you will schedule different types of appointments as well as filling out forms, watching webinars, and viewing other resources. Each category is described on the web page. We have plenty of resources to help you when you have questions!

### Types of appointment scheduling:

- Foster Routine Care
- Foster Medical Appointment
- Supply Pick Up
- Prescription Refill Request
- Foster Return
- Dog and Cat Potential Adopter Meeting

### Important Forms

- Foster Availability
- Foster Relief
- Pet Personality



## FACEBOOK GROUP



You will also get an invite to join "HES Fosters" Facebook group. This is a closed group for you to socialize with other foster parents, share stories, photos, and videos of your foster kittens, and learn from each other. Please read the provided guidelines before you join and remember that your mentor or foster coordinator will still be your main contact for most questions you have about your foster kittens or the foster program.

# Procedure for taking home kittens

When you arrive to pick up your kittens on the arranged day and time, please go to the admissions lobby and let the front desk know you are here. You can also text the foster phone. The foster coordinator or another staff member will be there to check the kittens out to you. You can park your vehicle near this entrance so you can load up all the wonderful supplies we send with you!

Make sure each of these steps is completed before taking home your kittens:

- ☐ You are given a bag full of needed supplies, a carrier, and your kittens
- ☐ You are given dry kitten food, wet kitten food, and litter
- ☐ Dewormer for the kittens if applicable
- ☐ You are given a packet of paperwork that includes: medical history and any additional handouts pertaining to your foster
- ☐ You have signed the Foster Agreement



## Naming Your Kittens



If you are taking home a mom with kittens, your kittens may be named Kitten 1, Kitten 2, etc. If you would like to name them please pick names within a week. You can then email the foster coordinator at [foster@heschatt.org](mailto:foster@heschatt.org) when you have chosen names. Please use names that are friendly, non-offensive, and not too difficult to pronounce or spell. Try to make them unique so that we don't have 10 Fluffies or Bellas.

If you are taking home kittens without a mom, your kittens will be named for you so we can keep track. We can potentially rename them but need those changes to be made quickly.



**Quick tips on naming your kittens:** Theme your kittens' names for easier marketing. These kittens were named Cheddar, Biscuit, and Bacon.



# Socializing Your Foster Cats and Kittens

First and foremost, we ask that you treat your foster cats/kittens with the same love and care that you give to your own companion animals. Daily attention (at least one full hour a day) from you and other family members or friends makes them more people-oriented, and more adoptable. This includes petting, playing, cuddling, trimming nails, and grooming.

By spending time with your foster cats on a regular basis, you will not only increase their chances of being adopted quickly, but you will also be able to determine their likes and dislikes – this helps us place them in homes with families that best meet their needs.

You should also monitor your foster cats for behavior problems, such as inappropriate urination or scratching furniture. If problems arise, contact your mentor to discuss behavior modification strategies. HES is not responsible for damages that might occur to yourself, others in your household, or your personal property as a result of feline behavior problems while in foster care.

If you have “cat-friendly” dogs in your household, please consult with your foster contact about proper introductions with your foster cats/kittens. Felines who have been raised with dogs, and adult cats who enjoy (or at least tolerate) the company of canines, often have an advantage on adoption days!



## Undersocialized Kittens

We occasionally take in kittens between the ages of four and 16 weeks who are under socialized or fearful of humans. These kittens may have been born outside to a feral mom and have had limited interactions with humans. They may avoid, hiss, spit, swat, or attempt to bite when approached or handled by people.



# More on Socializing

## Socialization Techniques

- Petting - with a paintbrush, then your hand
- Motivate with Food - baby food or Churu, on a spoon, then your finger
- Play therapy - wand toys, get them to run over your legs
- Pick up - start while eating, progress to carrying
- Taco of Trust - use bed to wrap and hold until they relax
- Novel changes - people, noises, rooms of your home

## Essential Supplies

- Small room - block off hiding spaces
- Hide box - big enough to stand and lay out, not deep enough to defend
- Paintbrush - soft long handled brush to "paint" your kitten
- Dowel/spoon - to feed high value food from a distance
- Feliway stuffy - calming stuffed animal for them to cuddle
- High value food - wet food, baby food, Inaba Churu treats
- Wand toy or shoelace - make it "hop" over your legs

## Important Concepts

- You are either training or un-training your kitten!
- Start on day one!
- Routine - short (5-10 min) sessions at least 3x per day, no skipping sessions or days
- Repetition - always ending on a positive note or a "win"
- Gentle Persuasion - you are the leader, try to make progress each session

## Cat Bites

A bite is considered any event in which an animal's teeth break human skin and their saliva comes into contact with blood, regardless of their intent.

If you are bitten by one of your foster cats/kittens, report it to the shelter as soon as possible. Tennessee state law mandates that we report all bites that break the skin and cause bleeding.

When an animal bites, they are placed on a 10-day bite quarantine. Generally, they can remain in foster care during their bite quarantine. A staff person will give you directions on how to conduct a proper quarantine in your home if you are interested in keeping your foster cats/kittens.



# Undersocialized Kitten Flowchart

## First Days

- Select a small, quiet room so that your kitten can adjust gradually.
- Set up safe hiding spots for the kitten that are easily accessible to you.
- Close off or stuff any areas into which kitten can wedge.
- Set out plenty of solo toys: ping pong balls, wine corks, mouse toys, etc.
- Sit quietly on floor.
- Speak softly to kitten.
- Handfeed wet or baby food — pairing food with hands is always encouraged.
- Use interactive toys to encourage kitten to approach you, but don't force play.
- Don't push interactions with the kitten for the first one to two days.
- Remember that any relaxation is important

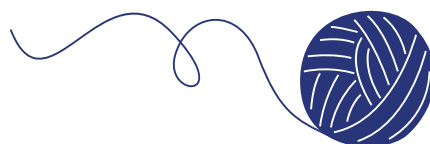


## Days 3-7

- Continue to observe behavior.
- Continue handfeeding wet and baby food.
- Encourage kitten to approach you with toys or food.
- Practice picking up and repeatedly returning kitten to a safe space.
- Create a "burrito kitten" by wrapping it in a towel, holding it close to your body, and petting in short increments.
- Use toys and food to build curiosity.
- Pet the kitten while it is eating if the kitten is comfortable.
- Be aware of its behavior and then pick up the kitten gently but firmly and hold in your lap.
- If you've seen no change in behavior, please contact the Foster team for further advice.

## Days 7 +

- Continue to observe behavior.
- Encourage kitten to approach you with food or toys.
- Remember that any relaxation or playfulness is progress.
- Continue to pair food with hands and, if kitten is relaxed, experiment pairing food with novel sounds.
- Continue short petting sessions.
- Establish a routine of play time, feeding time, and handling time.
- Increase handling time gradually.
- Work on touching the kitten's paws and ears.
- Introduce the kitten to new people using toys and food.
- Remember that some kittens will remain a bit shy.
- Congratulate yourself on doing a great job!





# Feeding and Growth

## 01 KITTENS WITH MOM

The recommended diet for pregnant or nursing cats and their kittens is a premium diet of canned and dry kitten food. HES feeds Hill's Science Diet, but we prefer Royal Canin mom and babycat for weaning kittens when available. Kittens generally start showing interest in "real" food around four or five weeks of age. **Canned food should be fed three to four times per day in small amounts (one quarter of a 3 oz. wet food can).** Dry food should be left out all day for them.



## 02 KITTENS WITHOUT MOM

Newborn to four weeks: occasionally, unweaned kittens are brought to HES without their mother. As a foster parent you will have the double responsibility of bottle feeding, training, and socialization.



## 03 BOTTLEFEEDING

### When to bottle feed a kitten:

If we receive a kitten that is too young to eat on their own, has been abandoned, refuses to eat, or if the mother cat is no longer nursing her kittens, or her milk has dried up, we then need to bottle feed the kitten. A mother cat's milk can dry up when mother cats are sick, on medications, or too stressed. (Please make sure that mom cat is getting proper care).

Supplemental bottle feeding can also be helpful when a kitten loses weight or fails to gain weight over a 24 hour period, even if it is still nursing on mom. In this case, you will only be "topping off" the kitten after it nurses. If your kitten loses weight within a 24-hour period, contact your mentor or coordinator immediately. If your kitten does not gain weight within 36 hours, contact your mentor or coordinator.



**Note:** If you think your kittens need to be bottle-fed or have supplemental feedings and you have not attended HES's bottle baby training class, please speak to your mentor or the foster coordinator before beginning bottle-feeding. This can be a tricky process!

# Bottle Feeding Continued

Foster parents will need the following supplies for bottle feeding:

- Snuggle Safe warming disc / heating pad
- Cat carrier or kitten aquarium
- Fleece blankets etc, for bedding
- Milk replacer formula/Goat milk
- Nursing bottle with nipples
- Wet wipes
- Thermometer
- Scale (weigh in grams)
- Miracle nipples

**Warmth first!** Heat kittens slowly so that you do not put them into shock. You can do this with a towel that has been heated in the dryer, or place them on a towel that is resting on a Snuggle Safe warming disc. While heating the kitten, gently massage the body and extremities to get blood flowing throughout the body.

Never let a kitten lie on a heat source without cover. Make sure that they have space to crawl off the heat source if they get too warm. Constantly check the warmth of the heat source to make sure it cannot burn the kitten and that it is staying warm enough.

Kittens cannot maintain their own body temperature. The average rectal temperature of a newborn kitten ranges between 92-97 degrees. Between 2-21 days old, a kitten's temperature will be about 96 – 100 degrees. You will need to build the kitten a nest to keep it warm. The temperature in the nest where the kitten is kept should be 86 degrees. The temperature can be lowered 5 degrees a week thereafter until a mild 75 degrees is reached. To create a good nest, place them in a carrier and put a towel or blanket over the carrier to trap in the heat. You can also do this with a plastic tub called a kitten aquarium that we try to send with bottle baby fosters



Age of Kitten or Puppy	Rectal Temperature <sup>1</sup>	Surrounding Nest Temperature <sup>2</sup>	Room Humidity <sup>2</sup>
0-1 week	95-99°F	85-90°F	55-60%
2-3 weeks	97-100°F	79-84°F	55-60%
4 weeks	99-101°F	73.5-79°F	55-60%

**A drop in temperature can greatly affect a kitten between 0-4 weeks of age!**

Temperature decrease can cause the heart rate to go down, and stomach and intestines to slow down as well.

Room Humidity can be read with a humidity meter. Inexpensive humidity meters can be found at home supply stores.

Surrounding Nest Temperature is the temperature immediately surrounding the nest where the kittens and puppies are kept. Inexpensive room thermometers can be found at home supply stores.



# Bottle Feeding Continued

Estimated Kitten Age (weeks)	Kitten Weight (lbs, oz)	Kitten Weight (grams)	Daily Caloric Requirement*	Amount of Formula Per Day (ml)**	Amount Per Feeding (ml)*	Approximate Number of Feedings Per Day***
< 1 week	2 oz	57 g	11 kcal	15 ml	2 ml	7
	3 oz	85 g	17 kcal	23 ml	3 ml	7
	4 oz	113 g	23 kcal	31 ml	5 ml	7
1 week	5 oz	142 g	28 kcal	38 ml	6 ml	7
	6 oz	170 g	34 kcal	46 ml	7 ml	7
	7 oz	198 g	40 kcal	54 ml	8 ml	7
	8 oz	227 g	45 kcal	61 ml	9 ml	7
2 weeks	9 oz	255 g	51 kcal	69 ml	10 ml	7
	10 oz	283 g	57 kcal	77 ml	11 ml	7
	11 oz	312 g	62 kcal	84 ml	12 ml	6-7
3 weeks*	12 oz	340 g	68 kcal	92 ml	14 ml	6-7
	13 oz	369 g	74 kcal	100 ml	15 ml	6
	14 oz	397 g	79 kcal	107 ml	16 ml	5
	15 oz	425 g	85 kcal	115 ml	17 ml	5
4 weeks*	16 oz (1 lb)	454 g	91 kcal	123 ml	18 ml	5
	1 lb, 1 oz	482 g	96 kcal	130 ml	19 ml	4
	1 lb, 2 oz	510 g	102 kcal	138 ml	20 ml	4
	1 lb, 3 oz	539 g	108 kcal	146 ml	22 ml	4
5 weeks*	1 lb, 4 oz	567 g	113 kcal	153 ml	23 ml	4

Table by Maddie's Fund

It is important not to overfeed or underfeed your kitten. Overfeeding can cause serious health problems that begin with diarrhea, and end with dehydration. One way to tell whether you're consistently feeding too much is the appearance of grayish stool. On the other hand, a kitten who is not fed enough will cry continuously, appear restless, and then listless. Refer to the above table for how much and how often to feed.

Check your bottle's nipple to see if formula drips from its tip. If it does not, you will need to widen the hole. You can do this by using a hot needle to poke a larger hole, or use a razor blade to make a small "x" in the top. Do not make it too wide though. You only want the formula to drip slowly, not pour, out of the nipple. We often send you with miracle nipples and those already have holes cut into them.

Be sure to sterilize the bottle and nipple before each feeding (in a boiling water bath for five minutes), and warm the formula to no more than 100 degrees. Test the formula on your wrist – it should feel warm, not hot. Miracle nipples can be reused.



# Bottle Feeding Continued

## Start feeding:

Place your kitten on its stomach on a towel so they can grip the towel with their nails. Lift their head to a 45 degree angle. Squeeze a small drop of formula on to the tip of the nipple. Insert the nipple into their mouth (you may have to open their mouth for them). The angle will help keep air from entering their stomach and will keep milk at the front of the nipple. NEVER HOLD THE KITTEN ON THEIR BACK OR IN THE AIR WHEN YOU FEED THEM.

When your kitten is full, their tummy will be slightly rounded and bubbles will form around their mouth. If the kitten has not finished the bottle, do not force the kitten to swallow the rest of the milk.

If the kitten is not drinking well, you can use a toothbrush to brush down their sides. This mimics a mother's tongue and will often soothe them. They should nurse from the bottle better using this technique.

## Burping your kitten:

Just like human babies, kittens need to be burped. Hold the kitten up against your shoulder, pat and rub them gently on their back. Not all kittens will burp every time. If the kitten did not finish her bottle, you can offer it to them again.

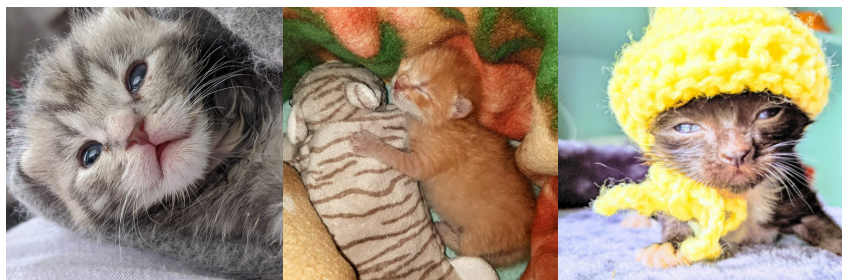
## Stimulating your kitten:

Kittens younger than 3 weeks of age cannot eliminate by themselves – they need your help. After feeding and burping the kitten, take a washcloth or gauze moistened with warm water and rub over the kitten's stomach and bottom. The action mimics a mother cat's licking and stimulates the kitten to relieve themselves. Kittens need to be stimulated to eliminate after every meal. Rub until you see evidence of urine and/or stool. A kitten should urinate with every feeding, but it may only defecate 2-3 times daily.

## Washing your kitten after the meal:

Make sure you wash your kitten(s) after every meal. Kittens are messy and will need the simulation of the mother's tongue. To mimic this, you will need to get a damp warm washcloth and stroke the kitten from head to tail with short "licks" like mom would. Make sure you gently towel dry the kitten when you are done. Never submerge your kitten in water.

\*For video instructions on bottle feeding, please check out the following websites: Kitten Lady and Maddie's Fund.





# Dietary Habits with Growth

## FOUR WEEKS



- At four weeks, you can start introducing canned food (they usually start showing interest in what mom is eating). Mixing a little warm water/ kitten formula with the canned food and placing it in a container with low sides (plate, small dish, etc.) will usually do the trick. You can also try gerber baby food. Expect them to walk through it too. No one ever said kittens were neat. After a few attempts, they will get the idea. Feed them their last meal just before your bedtime. They usually eat and then go straight to sleep. You can warm the food in the microwave for about six seconds. Make sure to stir the food and test it with your finger. Do not give hot food to kittens.

## 5-6 WEEKS



- 5-6 weeks old: three small (approximately one quarter of a three ounce can) meals of canned food per day per kitten. If that is too much food in the beginning you can adjust accordingly. Always leave plenty of dry food out for them to eat during the day.

## 6-8 WEEKS



- 6-8 weeks of age: three meals a day (about one quarter of a can) per kitten, and free feed dry food. Always keep dry kibble out at all times for the kittens to eat.

Overfeeding can cause digestive problems. Frequent small meals are preferred to large meals.

All cats and kittens need fresh water at all times.



# What Type of Setting Does a Mom Cat Need?

- In one word: CALM. 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 or not take care of their babies properly.
- Every household that 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 pets from going up to the door of the fostering 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 or active, you may want to consider a different type of foster.



## Home Introduction

- 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 them from HES
- The room should have one or two larger "safe spaces," which can be nests, boxes on their sides, or an empty litter box lined with towels. Mom will want to choose somewhere to keep her kittens. HES may provide you with a vari-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 to explore their 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 to come out of hiding.



# Kittens and Vaccinations

When a kitten is born and first nurses on the mother, the kitten receives a dose of colostrum from the mother. The colostrum is filled with good immune cells, also known as Maternally Derived Antibodies (MDA), to protect the kitten from common feline illnesses. However, MDA will interfere with the kitten's ability to make their own protective immune cells. Between four to eight weeks of age, the kitten starts to lose the protection from the MDA in the colostrum. However, the protection can last in the kitten up to 16 weeks. Therefore, it's difficult to predict for each kitten the exact timing of the complete loss of protection provided by the MDA.



The idea of using a Modified Live Vaccine (MLV) is to stimulate the kitten's own immune system into making more protective immune cells as the MDA disappears. By giving the dose of vaccine every two weeks, we are able to minimize the "window of susceptibility," which is the time when the MDA disappears and when the kitten starts to make their own immune cells to fight infectious disease. Kittens who did not receive any colostrum who are vaccinated at four weeks may benefit from the vaccine immediately. On the contrary, kittens who received a large dose of colostrum, or MDA, may not respond to the vaccine until they are 18 weeks old. Therefore, the best strategy for all kittens is to give the dose of vaccine every two weeks until the kittens are 18 weeks old.

## Vaccine Reactions

Vaccine reactions can include, but are not limited to:

- ☐ Limping
- ☐ Not eating or drinking the normal amounts for one to two days
- ☐ Lethargy
- ☐ Pain at the injection site
- ☐ Unwillingness to play
- ☐ Low-grade fever



If any of these symptoms do not improve by 48 hours after the injection, please contact your mentor or foster team member.

**A more serious reaction happens fairly instantaneously and includes; severe vomiting, diarrhea, facial swelling, and difficulty breathing. The kitten will need to be seen by a vet IMMEDIATELY.**

# Kitten Development and Vaccine Schedule:

The following is general information about what to expect at each stage of kitten development. Remember these are averages. Please weigh your kittens regularly to keep an eye on development. We recommend weighing your kittens daily in grams for the first three weeks or any time they are sick. Otherwise, it's fine to weigh them every two to three days. Kittens should gain about four ounces per week, on average.

Newborn: Completely dependent on mother. Eyelids closed, ears folded forward – cannot see, or hear. Sense of smell is the first to develop completely and is the most developed sense of birth.

2-3 Days : Umbilical cord falls off.

One Week : Eyes begin to open – all kittens have blue eyes. Kittens huddle together for security and warmth.

10 Days: Ears unfold, hearing will develop. Can move along with belly on the ground, “paddling” limbs for movement.

Two Weeks: Being to play with littermates, learning how to socialize. Can stand and balance, but cannot walk easily. Teething begins. Eyes are fully open. Will receive first deworming Strongid and Toltrazuril

16-18 Days: Incisors (tiny front teeth) break through.

20-24 Days: Canine teeth break through

Three Weeks: Mobile and eager to explore, making mock-aggressive rushes and stalking littermates. Cannot retract claws. Weigh the kittens regularly to keep an eye on development. Should be played with and handled at least 1 hour every day for good socialization.

24-28 Days: Molars begin to break through.

Four Weeks: Introduce solid food in 3-4 small meals per day. Begin litter box training. Will begin wrestling with littermates. Will receive first fvrpc vaccine. Kittens are vaccinated against common viruses that cause upper respiratory infection and feline distemper (FVRCP). Receive second strongid deworming.

Five Weeks: Learning to hunt by pouncing on toys and each other.

Six Weeks: Adult eye color begins to appear. Receive last strongid deworming and second FVRCP. Kittens can receive flea meds of selarid.

Eight Weeks and Older: Mom and kittens need to be brought to the shelter for their scheduled surgery appointment. The exam will include: FeLV and FIV testing if not previously done for mom, deworming if needed, spay or neuter (if weight is at least 2 pounds and kitten is healthy), microchip, treatment for fleas and ear mites as directed by the veterinarian, and possibly another vaccine.

*Please let the foster coordinator know when you give dewormer so we can keep track! [foster@heschatt.org](mailto:foster@heschatt.org)*

# Scheduling APPOINTMENTS

## Vaccine Scheduling

FVRCP is the vaccine for Feline Viral Rhinotracheitis, Calicivirus, and Panleukopenia (URI and Distemper)

All HES kittens are on a **two-week** vaccine schedule. We start as early as 4 weeks of age and continue every two weeks until 18-20 weeks old. They have a seven-day window from the time vaccines are due to receive vaccines. Vaccines **CANNOT** be given before the two-week period. Adult cats will receive two fvrpc (cat) vaccines.

When you pick up foster animals, the foster team will let you know when their next vaccine is due. You are responsible for remembering to make appointments. Please refer to your kennel card with their medical history and check your email for Maddie's Pet assistant reminders. The foster team will try their best to send out reminders but we appreciate it if you keep track of when an animal is due for vaccines.



Foster animals may need more than one vaccine during their foster period with you.

- o To schedule a vaccine appointment, please visit [www.heschatt.org/activefoster](http://www.heschatt.org/activefoster) and choose "Routine Care"

- o A "Routine Care" appointment is NOT a medical appointment. If you have health concerns, please schedule a separate appointment.

Foster animals will also receive routine preventatives and dewormers during their appointment if due. They also may be sent with them to give at a later date. Please make sure to note this on your calendar and follow through as scheduled.

- o Toltrazuril (kittens & puppies)- the first round is given three days in a row then to be repeated ten days after the first dose is given another three days in a row. Starting as early as 2 weeks of age. Treats coccidia.

- o Strongid (light sensitive) - Kittens receive meds by mouth every 14 days for 6 weeks starting as early as 2 weeks of age. Treats pinworm, roundworm, hookworm. Strongid is for roundworms and hookworms. You might see the roundworms pass in the stool after treatment - they will look like spaghetti.

- o Selarid- (light sensitive) Flea and heartworm medication for cats, kittens, and puppies. Also treats ear mites, roundworms, and hookworms. Given once a month and can start at 6 weeks of age.

- o Praziquantel is for tapeworms. You will see rice-looking segments in their stools. We will administer if tapeworms are seen.

*Vaccines Versus  
Medical Apps*



# General and Emergency Veterinary Care

- HES covers all approved medical expenses for the cats and kittens in the shelter's foster program. General medical care for HES foster cats is provided at the direction of the veterinarian and medical supervisor at HES on-site hospital. You should inform your foster contact before scheduling an appointment.
- Once a foster cat or kitten is in your care, you are responsible for transporting him or her to the shelter veterinarian for necessary medical care. Always use a secure carrier (the one we provide) designed specifically for companion animals when transporting cats. Never carry a kitten without a carrier.
- Should foster cats require care from veterinary specialists; HES will arrange appointments with approved veterinarians in the Chattanooga area.
- Foster parents must not medicate or shave any cats in their care without prior approval from the HES medical team.
- If the onsite veterinarian is not available then you may be able to seek emergency medical care. Emergency care must be approved PRIOR to the vet visit. Call your foster team member for guidance and approval. Otherwise, HES will not reimburse the veterinary expenses. On approval, you will be directed to one of the following emergency clinics. Upon arrival at an emergency vet clinic, you MUST tell the veterinary staff that you cannot approve any treatment or charges. All treatments will be authorized by the on call manager over the phone.

## EMERGENCY CLINICS

**Animal Emergency and  
Specialty Center  
(AESC)**  
6393 Lee Hwy.,  
Chattanooga, TN 37421  
423-822-8304

**Veterinary Care and  
Specialty Group (VCSG)**  
3201 Broad Street,  
Chattanooga, TN 37408  
423-591-0270

**VCA Regional Institute for  
Veterinary Emergencies  
and Referrals (RIVER)**  
2132 Amnicola Hwy,  
Chattanooga, TN 37406  
423-698-4612



# Medical Scheduling

Please refer to the Medical Appointment level of urgency infographic to determine what type of appointment needs to be scheduled. Program our cell number into your phone: **423-290-2908**. This is the number you will call after hours with any emergencies. The foster team member on call will be available to direct you.

## Scheduling & Preparation

- Foster Caretakers will select their own appointment time through our scheduling software at [www.heschatt.org/activefoster](http://www.heschatt.org/activefoster).
- Foster Caretakers will use the Red/Yellow/Green urgency scale to determine the urgency level of their foster pet's health issue
- Foster Caretakers will complete the "Foster Medical Appointment & History" form prior to being seen by the Medical Team
- Foster Caretakers that have not completed the history form prior to arrival will be asked to complete all required forms in the HES lobby before handing their foster pet over to the Medical Team
- If other Foster Caretakers have completed forms and are waiting in the lobby, their animal will be seen first in an effort to keep later appointments on-schedule.
- Foster caretaker will inform the front desk staff when they arrive and then the front desk will radio a medical team member. If no one from the front desk is available, they may call a foster team member.

While every effort will be made to stay on schedule, Foster Caretakers may experience a delay in their appointment if the Medical Team is presented with a different animal whose health issue supersedes the urgency of their pet's appointment

## Follow-Up

Foster Caretakers will receive instructions for isolation, activity restriction, diet, and/or medication instructions directly from a medical staff member at the close of each appointment

Foster Caretakers will follow all medical instructions as directed, and in accordance with the HES Foster Manual.

Do not give your foster animals medication that has not been prescribed by the HES medical team unless you have permission.



# Health Concerns

The following is a list of common medical issues you may encounter as a foster parent with your mother cat and/or kittens. This information is not meant to be extensive, just to give you an idea of what common ailments may look like and how they might be resolved. This is not a substitute for the expert advice of a trained medical professional. If your foster kitten displays any of these symptoms, follow the urgency level handout:

- ☐ Sneezing and/or congestion with green or yellow discharge from the nose and/or eyes
- ☐ Coughing, wheezing, or heavy breathing
- ☐ Diarrhea or vomiting – this can be life threatening to kittens!
- ☐ Straining to urinate or defecate – this can be life threatening, especially for male cats!
- ☐ Bleeding from any part of the body
- ☐ Lethargy – kitten seems sleepy/cuddly all the time
- ☐ Fever
- ☐ Weight loss
- ☐ Paralysis
- ☐ Extreme change in attitude or behavior
- ☐ Not eating or drinking regularly
- ☐ Temperature too low (below 98°F) or too high (above 104°F)

**Please have specifics ready to give when contacting your mentor or foster team member. You may need to take your kitten's temperature before you call if you are trained; if not we can teach you.**





# HUMANE EDUCATIONAL SOCIETY

## FOSTER ANIMAL EMERGENCY INFO

Daytime Hours: Tuesday-Saturday 9-6 Emilee 423-290-2908

Sunday-Monday 9-6 Shelby or Chasity 423-290-2908

After Hours Emergencies: 423-290-2908 or if no answer from foster team: 423-624-8353.

Appointments can be scheduled at [www.heschatt.org/activefoster](http://www.heschatt.org/activefoster)

### LESS URGENT Email [foster@heschatt.org](mailto:foster@heschatt.org) or text and if an appointment is needed

someone will be in touch within 24 hours. Please text or call if no response within that time or condition worsens

- One episode of vomiting or diarrhea
- Reverse sneezing or regular sneezing
- Itchy skin
- Watery/ goopy eyes
- Dirty/stinky ears
- Hot spot/ skin irritation/hair loss
- Visible worms in poop
- Coughing (urgent if heartworm + dog)
- Fleas on foster pet



### URGENT Send a text to foster coordinator and schedule an appointment

- Incident of aggression
- Cut or puncture wound
- NEW limping
- Losing weight
- Constipation: hasn't pooped for 48 hours
- Vomiting / diarrhea for more than 24 hours or more than once a day
- Lethargy and low appetite/ not eating
- Colored nasal or eye discharge with severe congestion
- Straining to urinate/ blood in urine



### EMERGENCY Immediate phone call

- Lost foster animal
- Bite/ Broken skin
- Bleeding profusely
- Unable to stand or walk
- Unresponsive
- Hit by a car or otherwise seriously injured
- Having trouble breathing
- Seizure/ disoriented/ drunk walking/ ataxia
- Ingested a dangerous/ poisonous substance
- Male cat unable to urinate, straining, crying out



\*severe diarrhea, weight loss, or vomiting is considered an emergency for neonatal fosters

### CHATTANOOGA AREA EMERGENCY CLINICS (MUST HAVE APPROVAL FROM FOSTER TEAM):

Animal Emergency and  
Specialty Center (AESC)  
6393 Lee Hwy.,  
Chattanooga, TN 37421  
423-822-8304

Veterinary Care and Specialty  
Group (VCSG)  
3201 Broad Street,  
Chattanooga, TN 37408  
423-591-0270

VCA Regional Institute for Veterinary  
Emergencies and Referrals (RIVER)  
2132 Amnicola Hwy, Chattanooga, TN 37406  
423-698-4612



# Common Ailments

## Upper Respiratory Infection

Upper respiratory tract infections (URI) or “kitty colds” are common occurrences in shelters. The majority are caused by one of two viruses, although they can have some bacterial components. Signs of URI include congestion, excessive sneezing, discolored (green or yellow) nose or eye discharge, and/or a fever.

Please contact your foster team member if you suspect your kitten(s) of having an Upper Respiratory Infection. If symptoms do not resolve after seven days of medication, please contact us for a follow up appointment.

If your foster cat/kitten is showing signs of URI, please do the following:

- Make sure the cat/kitten is eating. Cats that are congested often won't eat because they can't smell the food. If they are not eating well, warm up a strong-smelling canned food, and offer it to them. You can also provide them several different options to ensure there is one they like.

Cats and kittens should be eating at least 50% of the food offered to them

After 24 hours of not eating or eating less than 50%, please give SQ fluids (you or your mentor).

Continue this daily until the appetite resumes to more than 50%.

If a kitten does not eat for the next meal after the initial SQ fluids, you or your mentor should begin supplemental force feeding and schedule an appointment with the shelter clinic. Only force feed if you have been trained.

- If the cat/kitten has eye or nose discharge, clean their nose/eyes at least twice daily with a wet, warm washcloth. Gently wipe the eye from the nose side out to the side of the face.
- If the cat/kitten is congested, place them in a room with a humidifier, or in a carrier in a bathroom with the hot shower running (steam) to aid congestion. You can also hold the kitten on your lap. Nothing should ever be added to the water like Vic's Vapor Rub or similar products. Also, never leave a kitten alone in a bathroom with the hot shower running unless it is in the carrier.

# Upper Respiratory Infection Cont.

Place nasal saline drops in the cat/kitten's nose to aid congestion (1 drop per nostril, 2-3 times daily).

A product called "Little Noses" can also be used on URI kittens. Please use Little Noses without decongestant (saline-only solution). This product can be used as long as needed, and can be used in both nostrils up to three times daily.

We also have nebulizers available for fosters to use with either saline or a medicated solution. Please return them when you are done using them.

Provide supplemental warmth, especially for young kittens (rice sock, Snuggle Safe warming disc, etc.).



## Conjunctivitis

Conjunctivitis is characterized by swelling and/or yellow or green discharge around the eyes. An eye ointment or drops are typically prescribed to treat the infection. **DO NOT ADMINISTER WITHOUT BEING ADVISED TO DO SO.** To administer the ointment, hold the kitten's eye open and squeeze the ointment into the eye moving across the eye without touching the tip of the tube to the eye. To administer eye drops, hold the kitten's eye open and let the drop fall into the inside corner of the eye near the tear duct. Open and close the eye a few times to get ointment or drops worked into the eye.

To clean the kitten's eyes, use a cotton ball or gauze that is clean with warm water. If the eye is sealed shut, you will need to use the warm cotton ball as a compress and hold it against the eyelid for a few minutes. This will soften the crusted material around the eye. Once it is soft and pliable, you can wipe it from the eye. Start at the area closest to the nose and wipe outward. Don't force the material off of the eye. You may need to continue to let the cotton ball sit on the eyelid to soften the material. Once you clean the discharge from around the eye, you can administer eye medications. It is helpful to the kitten if you can gently wipe the eye clean multiple times per day. If you do not have a cotton ball or gauze square, you can use a soft washcloth. Make sure that you use a clean washcloth each time, and never share washcloths between kittens.

# Vomiting

Vomiting can be very dangerous for kittens because they dehydrate so quickly. Vomiting is not as common as diarrhea, so it is troubling, especially if the kitten is vomiting repeatedly. If a kitten is gagging when being offered food, that is also a concern. Contact your foster team member.

# Dehydration

Dehydration can kill a small kitten quickly. A foster team member should train you on how to test for dehydration by skin tenting. On smaller kittens, you may need to feel their gums to test for dehydration. If their gums feel sticky instead of slippery, they are dehydrated. You also should note the color of their gums. If they appear white with no color, you should report this observation to your contact.

# Diarrhea

A few things too keep in mind when examining your kitten's stool:

It is okay to see a little bit of bright red blood on the kitten's stool and bottom as it usually indicates a reaction to something the kitten ate, a new food, stress, and/or a new location, etc.

A lot of blood is NOT okay.

Diarrhea is probably the most common problem with kittens. Runny stool seems to be a kitten's preferred response to almost all stress or illness. It can be dangerous for kittens because the water lost in the stool tends to dehydrate them rapidly.

If your kittens are vomiting or dehydrated, have liquid (not forming) diarrhea, diarrhea dripping from their bottoms, refuse to eat for more than eight hours, or act lethargic, you should immediately alert your foster team contact.

SCORE	SPECIMEN EXAMPLE	CHARACTERISTICS
1		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>· Very hard and dry</li><li>· Often expelled as individual pellets</li><li>· Requires much effort to expel from body</li><li>· Leaves no residue on ground when picked up</li></ul>
2		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>· Firm, but not hard, pliable</li><li>· Segmented in appearance</li><li>· Little or no residue on ground when picked up</li></ul>
3		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>· Log shaped, moist surface</li><li>· Little or no visible segmentation</li><li>· Leaves residue on ground, but holds form when picked up</li></ul>
4		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>· Very moist and soggy</li><li>· Log shaped</li><li>· Leaves residue on ground and loses form when picked up</li></ul>
5		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>· Very moist but has a distinct shape</li><li>· Present in piles rather than logs</li><li>· Leaves residue on ground and loses form when picked up</li></ul>
6		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>· Has texture, but no defined shape</li><li>· Present as piles or spots</li><li>· Leaves residue on ground when picked up</li></ul>
7		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>· Watery</li><li>· No texture</li><li>· Present in flat puddles</li></ul>

# Parasites

## Coccidia

- Most prevalent in kittens, but occasionally found in adult cats.
- Causes diarrhea in kittens, which can cause them to get dehydrated quickly—dehydration is a serious medical issue and can be fatal to underage kittens.
- Diagnosed through a fecal test—if positive, you must make an appointment to bring your kittens in so the doctor can prescribe medications.

## Roundworms and Tapeworms

- Both are common in kittens, despite regular deworming while at HES.
- Roundworms look like spaghetti and will come out in vomit or stool.
- Tapeworms are white and segmented, and most often look like dried rice or sesame seeds stuck to the kittens' hindquarters.
- Worms can be easily treated. If you see any, please make a medical appointment.

## Ringworm

- The fur around a kitten's lips, eyelids, and ears is a little thin and is nothing to worry about.
- If you notice hair is thinning or coming out in patches, please make a medical appointment—fur loss is the first indicator of ringworm, which is a fungus that can spread to humans and other household pets.
- While not fatal, ringworm causes itching and is hard to get out of your home—the young, the elderly, and people and animals with suppressed immune systems are most susceptible.
- If kittens are diagnosed with ringworm while you are fostering them, you can return the kittens to HES for treatment, which takes six to eight weeks to complete.
- You can also treat the kittens in your home for the duration of their treatment and the Foster team will provide protective gowns, gloves, booties, and heaps of support!





# Adoption Procedures for Cats/Kittens in Foster Care

- Kittens are available for adoption after eight weeks of age as long as they are at least 2 pounds, healthy, and spayed/neutered.
- Foster parents may send a letter with their email in case adopters want to send updates or can join the foster alumni group on facebook to see updates.
- Foster parents who wish to adopt their foster cats are required to go through the adoption process. Please inform us as soon as you want to adopt.

## Pre-Adoption Procedure

- Kittens must be AT LEAST SIX WEEKS old before they can be viewed by a potential adopter. Adopters must complete an adoption application and adoption counseling. A kitten is not considered pre-adopted until the adopter completes paperwork and gets approved by adoption staff.
- Please only show a kitten to one interested party at a time. If they complete the pre-adoption, the front desk staff will notify you via email. If you don't receive confirmation the pre-adoption occurred, you may show the kitten to the next interested person.

## Adoption Policies

- Be sure your potential adopters are aware of these before they come to visit your foster kittens!
- HES typically adopts to indoor-only homes. Because we believe cats live longer, safer lives indoors – and because we believe cats can live happy, active lives indoors – we adopt to indoor-only homes unless a cat has been deemed an indoor-outdoor candidate by the shelter.
- All cats and kittens must be spayed or neutered before they go home. No exceptions.



## HES Adoption Fees

Kittens are usually \$50, but will occasionally have adoption specials. Adult cat's adoption fees are also \$50. Before adoption, they are spayed/neutered, microchipped, given flea meds, dewormed, and more.



# A "Free" Kitty is NEVER Free!

## A "FREE" KITTEN

*- Average Costs -*

- ☒ New Patient Vet Exam - \$45-60
- ☒ Spay/Neuter - \$200/\$300
- ☒ FeLV and FIV Testing - \$41
- ☒ Microchip (and Registration) - \$50
- ☒ FVRCP Vaccinations - \$18-25
- ☒ Treatment for Parasites \$50

**TOTAL:**  
**\$350 - \$450**

## A KITTEN FROM HES:

*- Included in the Adoption Fee -*

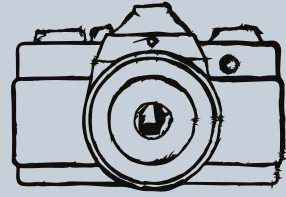
- ☒ Health Exam
- ☒ All Medical Care Prior to Adoption
- ☒ Spay/Neuter Surgery
- ☒ Microchip, including registration
- ☒ FVRCP Vaccinations
- ☒ Rabies Vaccination\*
- ☒ Treatment for Parasites
- ☒ Sample of Food
- ☒ Free Vet Exam Certificate

\*For cats over 16 weeks of age

**TOTAL:**  
**CATS &**  
**KITTENS: \$50**



# Marketing Your Kitten For adoption



## What type of information?

Here's the information needed for each kitten in the litter. Please email each kitten's bio and pictures separately to [www.heschatt.org/activefoster](http://www.heschatt.org/activefoster) and choose Personality Form.

Bio: Tell us about your kitten. What does he like or not like? Is he dog friendly? Kid friendly? Other cats friendly? Highlight the best and most unique aspects of your kitten's personality.

We cannot post kittens without all of the information above.

## What kind of pictures?

Please make sure the background is free of clutter. You don't need posed shots, but they help. It's also great to show kittens with a resident dog or being held by a child. This helps adopters immediately identify which animals are most compatible with their own families. Please send the pictures as attachments in an email or attach to your pet personality form at [www.heschatt.org/activefoster](http://www.heschatt.org/activefoster).

## Social Media Marketing

Many of our foster parents are active on social media sites like Instagram and Facebook. They often have accounts dedicated entirely to their fostering activities where they post photos, videos, and keep their followers updated on their foster kittens' lives. They also promote their kittens for adoption using these platforms. In the height of "kitten season" with all the competition from other adoptable kittens, those with active social media accounts are the most likely to get their kittens pre-adopted. We highly recommend starting your own account and tagging @heschatt and @hesfoster in your posts.



## Photographers

If you do not have a good camera or need help, we may be able to find a volunteer or another foster to help with photos. Please email the foster coordinator for assistance or post to the Facebook group.



Sibling Photo



Face Shot



Body Shot

# Returning Your Foster Cat/Kittens

When your foster cats and kittens are ready for adoption, a foster team member will schedule your kitten for surgery. You will get email and text reminders. You can bring them back to the shelter to stay until they are adopted. The following describes what steps to take for either scenario. It is most common to have them stay at the shelter for adoption after surgery if they are not pre-adopted.

## Bringing Them in for Surgery

☐ Spay/neuter appointments are made Monday-Friday depending on what works for the surgery team. The foster coordinator will contact you with some suggested surgery dates when your kittens turn seven weeks old. If your kittens are all over 2 lbs, and you do not have a surgery date set yet, please email the foster coordinator to request one. If you need to cancel an appointment, please email the foster coordinator with as much notice as possible.

☐ Adoption staff will let potential adopters for your kittens know when they are scheduled for their spay/neuter surgery. Adopters will be scheduled to pick up their kitten between 12-4:30 the day after surgery. If a pre-adopter cannot pick up the day of surgery, we can arrange a next day pick up, but the front desk or foster coordinator must be notified ahead of time to ensure there is space for the kitten to stay overnight.

☐ Kittens can have a half meal the morning of surgery, but adult cats need to have food withheld the night before. You can keep water in the room.

☐ Bring your kittens to the shelter in a secure carrier between 7:30-8:00 am the morning of their surgery. You will arrive at the back door. If you cannot make the appointed time, please arrange with the foster coordinator ahead of time to drop off your kittens the afternoon before their surgery. If you will be late it can put us behind on surgeries.

☐ Please complete the Personality Profile sheet online for each of the kittens. Your information and recommendations are a big help in finding them the perfect forever homes.

☐ You can return your foster items the morning of surgery if you do not plan to foster for awhile.

## Bringing Them Back to the Shelter (previously altered)

☐ Please notify the foster coordinator that you will need to return the foster animal. You can go to [www.heschatt.org/activefoster](http://www.heschatt.org/activefoster) and select Return Foster.

☐ Please complete and turn in the Personality Profile online for each of your kittens.

☐ Hand in any supplies you do not need any longer or if you won't be fostering for a while.





# Cleaning Between Foster GROUPS

## TIME TO CLEAN

Once you have taken the kittens back to the shelter for surgery, it is time to clean and prepare your kitten room for your next foster group. You will need to remove all bedding and fabric toys, and wash them in hot water with bleach added. Follow your washing machine's guidelines for adding bleach to the wash load.

You will also need to clean the litter box. Empty all of the contents, and wash it with hot soapy water. Rinse it well, spray it with a bleach water solution, (1 part bleach to 32 parts water) and let it sit for 10 minutes. Rinse and dry well. If the litter box has been well-used (with grooves in the plastic from scratching), you need to throw it away to prevent possible disease transmission.

Place food and water dishes in the dishwasher to clean. If you don't have a dishwasher, clean them as you would a litter box, following the above instructions. If you use plastic dishes, you will need to throw them away if they no longer have a smooth surface in order to prevent possible disease transmission.



## CONTINUED

If you have carpeted floors, you will need to vacuum them well and spot clean any soiled or dirty areas. If you have a carpet cleaner, you should use it between groups. If you do not have carpet, sweep and mop the floor. Once the floor is dry, mop it again with a bleach water solution (1 cup of bleach to 1 gallon of water), and let it sit for ten minutes. Rinse it with water, and let it air dry.

You will need to wipe down all other surfaces with a bleach water solution. You should also wipe the bottom three feet of your foster room walls.

If you have a bed in the room, change the covering on it. If you have a chair or couch in the room, vacuum it and spot clean it if necessary. Ideally, your foster room will be void of anything upholstered unless it is covered with a protective plastic covering.

\*Note: if you prefer not to use bleach, you can also order a product called "Rescue/Accel" online. This is the disinfectant we use at the shelter. It is a bit more effective because it doesn't require that all of the organic material is removed, but it also more expensive. If you decide to go this route, contact the foster coordinator for information on how to dilute it properly.  
1 part Accel 64 parts water  
1 part Accel to 16 part water for panleukopenia and other common viruses.

## Do NOT combine bleach and accel!





# Sources

Thank you  
Cat Adoption Team  
San Francisco SPCA  
Maddie's Fund  
Kitten Lady

