



# Cat Foster Handbook

Welcome to the **Friends of the Animals Foster Program!** Thanks so much for providing a temporary home between homes. You are saving lives!

This handbook contains helpful information about fostering animals. Be sure to read over this information (with the whole family) and ask questions. We included tried-and-true techniques tested by our veteran foster volunteers; from successful foster programs at other shelters; and from medical journals and publications. There is a lot of information out there from books, internet, experts, etc., and we encourage you to learn as much as possible. Supplemental literature about young kitten care is available upon request.

By becoming a foster parent, you are joining a team of dedicated volunteers who support each other in their efforts to help those animals that need special care. Please take advantage of their experience by asking for advice and developing friendships with other foster parents. Many experienced foster volunteers are willing to come to your home to help with any issues you may have, (e.g., health, training, animal proofing) – please ask! A list of **Cat Foster Mentors** is in the “Contacts” section. You can choose the mentor that covers your area if one was not been assigned to you when you picked up your fosters.

We strongly encourage you to use the emergency contacts if you believe there is a health emergency with one of your foster animals. There are no “stupid questions,” and the people on that list are more than happy to help. Most of them have experienced the things you are going through, and they know the answers because they were once in your shoes.

Please be aware that your fosters may experience some common health issues when coming from a shelter. Due to stress and change of diet, diarrhea may be a common symptom during the first few days. If it persists for more than a week, contact the mentor or FOTAS staff. We do try to de-flea, de-tick, de-worm, clean ears for ear mites, and other common parasites before releasing a foster animal into your care. This is not always 100% effective, so your own pets may be exposed. Therefore, it is very important for you to keep your own pets up to date on shots and treatments, such as flea and tick prevention.

**As foster volunteers, you give the animals you have love, care and a safe place to stay – a second chance at a full and wonderful life.**

Again, thank you for joining our program. We hope this will be an enjoyable and educational experience for you. The animals thank you for your help!

## Pet Fostering Guardian Agreement (Foster Volunteer copy)

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- 1) I accept full responsibility for all foster pets placed in my care. I acknowledge that I must comply with all County and State Laws. I understand that I am responsible under the law as guardian of the foster pet.
- 2) I agree to always keep adequate identification and/or a Jackson County license on the pet.
- 3) I agree to take full responsibility for any damage caused by the foster pet to my property or to the property of others. I understand that FOTAS shall not be held responsible for any damages caused by the foster pet.
- 4) I agree to keep the pet with me as much as possible, and to provide basic training, socializing and potty training, as needed. I also agree to provide a safe room or kennel with adequate shelter for the pet when left alone.
- 5) I agree to keep cats or kittens indoors.
- 6) I agree to notify FOTAS immediately if the foster pet develops any health concerns, sustains injuries, becomes lost, or if I am no longer able to care for the pet.
- 7) I agree to take responsibility for the pet's basic health care needs and daily feeding. I also agree to provide transportation for all vaccinations, as outlined at the time of foster placement, and to receive veterinary care for medical treatments or spay/neuter appointments, if needed, and approved by FOTAS staff.
- 8) I understand that for the protection of my personal pets, as well as the foster pet, my own animals must be current on basic vaccinations, and rabies vaccination. I understand that FOTAS recommends vaccination against kennel cough for my personal dogs, and feline leukemia protection for my personal cats. I understand FOTAS will not be responsible for any illness or injury my personal pets may contract due to contact with a foster pet.
- 9) I agree that I may help in finding the foster pet a permanent home as needed and understand that the adoption or placement of the foster pet in any other home must be approved by FOTAS staff.
- 10) I agree to make the pet available for viewing by a prospective adopter upon reasonable notice. I also agree to return the pet to FOTAS at any time I am instructed to do so and that I will not be reimbursed for any unapproved cost incurred for fostering the pet.
- 11) I give FOTAS the right and permission to use any photo of me and the foster pet for promotion or publicity purposes.
- 12) I understand that FOTAS shall collect all fees at the time of permanent adoption.
- 13) I understand that if I choose to adopt the foster pet myself that I must pay the full adoption fees. I also understand that this could affect my eligibility as a foster care provider.
- 14) I have conferred with all members of my household and have their complete support and agreement for the foster program.
- 15) I will immediately notify FOTAS of any changes in my address, phone number, or other pets entering the home.

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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## Contact Information

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Maya Ryall, Cat Foster Coordinator .....(541) 205-8204  
Friends of the Animals Office, [fotas@fotas.org](mailto:fotas@fotas.org) .....(541) 708-0090  
Friends of the Animal After hours emergency: Rogue Valley Veterinary Emergency..... (541) 393-9960

*Please note: You need pre-authorization from FOTAS or Foster Coordinator to take an animal to any veterinarian if you want the costs covered by Friends of the Animals.*

### Non-Emergency Question:

Maya Ryall: [Maya@fotas.org](mailto:Maya@fotas.org)

Terri Frazier: [alterfrazier@gmail.com](mailto:alterfrazier@gmail.com)

### *Foster Mentors for Bottle-feeding Kittens, Weaned Kittens and Cats*

Terri Frazier	Phoenix/Talent & South Medford	(541) 690-5655 <a href="mailto:alterfrazier@gmail.com">alterfrazier@gmail.com</a>
Bunnie Harmon	North Medford & Central Point	(541) 423-5593 <a href="mailto:gypsyharmon@outlook.com">gypsyharmon@outlook.com</a>

## Online Resources

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The Kitten Lady (Hannah Shaw) is a knowledgeable kitten foster expert known around the world. Her website, [www.kittenlady.org](http://www.kittenlady.org), has fabulous videos for learning how to foster kittens, from newborn to adoption! We highly recommend you spend a few hours, with your family, viewing her extremely helpful videos.

The ASPCA has a marvelous downloadable guide for fostering:  
[www.aspcapro.org/download-feline-foster-care-guide](http://www.aspcapro.org/download-feline-foster-care-guide).

## Frequently Asked Questions

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### *Now that I am approved, when do I get a foster animal?*

After FOTAS staff determines that an animal needs a foster home, a group email will be sent by the Foster Coordinator or Shelter staff. To ensure that the animal is placed quickly, we ask that e-mails be replied to (or call) as soon as possible, if you are interested in fostering. Timing is often critical. If you are not interested, currently fostering, or have a “full house,” you do NOT need to respond to emailed appeals.

### *Why am I not getting the opportunity to foster very often?*

The demand for foster homes depends on the time of year, number of foster families, and the number of animals in need at any given time.

Cats, kittens, and mother cats with kittens are most in need of fostering. Seasons of the year dictate the breeding seasons for cats. Typically, we will see “kitten season” begin in late spring and continue through the late fall. Not only do kittens need fostering at this time of year, but sometimes adult cats without kittens need foster care to recover from an illness or injury.

### *What kind of financial responsibility do I have for my foster animals?*

Food and other supplies will be available from FOTAS (see “Fostering Supplies”).

At times, FOTAS may be able to send donated toys, litter boxes, food, dog/cat beds, special kitten formulas, or litter home with foster parents. However, you are more than welcome to purchase these items yourself, in order to save the supplies for those who truly need them.

Purchases made for foster care are considered donations to Friends of the Animals and are tax-deductible. Collect your receipts (for anything foster related - food, litter, toys, etc.) and submit them to FOTAS office. They will issue you a donation receipt for tax purposes. In some cases, such as a special diet, you may be reimbursed. Ask for a reimbursement form and attach a receipt.

Veterinary visits cannot be reimbursed without prior authorization from FOTAS staff. Unfortunately, medical funds are limited and must be allocated on a case-by-case basis. If you have a medical emergency with your foster animal(s) you are welcome to take them to your veterinarian, or Southern Oregon Veterinary Specialty Center, but it will be **at your own expense if you do not have pre-authorization.**

Friends of the Animals are not responsible for damages to your personal property made by foster animals.

### *When can I pick up my foster critter(s)? How long will it take?*

We recommend that you communicate through the Foster Coordinator with FOTAS Staff prior to arrange picking up your new fosters. Plan to for it to take one hour to pick up your foster animal(s). Paperwork needs to be filled out by FOTAS Staff and supplies provided. FOTAS may be busy with other activities, and sometimes the foster animal may need to be vaccinated and/or treated, so your patience is always appreciated.

## *How do I schedule vaccinations / treatments for my foster animal(s)?*

See “*Vaccinations Guidelines.*”

## *What should I do if my foster animal(s) becomes ill?*

See “*What to do if your foster animal gets hurt or becomes ill.*”

## *What if I need to go out of town and I still have my foster animal(s)?*

1. Often the Foster Coordinator can find a temporary placement in another foster home. Please notify the Foster Coordinator two weeks prior to your departure, if possible, so that she can try to make other arrangements. Compose and send an email to her with the details (and pics) of the foster’s needs and the time you will be gone.
2. If you have a trusted pet-care provider for your own pets, he/she would most likely be approved to also take care of your foster animal(s). Please keep the Foster Coordinator informed and clear it with her prior to your trip.
3. You may return the animal to FOTAS if there is room. This would need to be pre-arranged with FOTAS Staff.

## *Are there any “Foster Mentors” I can talk to?*

Yes, we have experienced foster parents who would be happy to talk with you about getting started or if you have questions. See “*Contact Information*” on page 4 of this document.

## **Fostering Supplies**

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### *Food (dry and wet – make sure it’s appropriate for age of foster animals)*

FOTAS usually has supplies of cat and, occasionally kitten, food for foster families. Litter is often available as well. Please remember to ask for a supply when you pick up your foster kittens/cats, and come back to the Shelter to replenish your supply as needed.

- Purina, Science Diet, Wellness, and Blue Buffalo are recommended.
- Check for red dye on the list of ingredients – no animal should have red dye!
- Kitten food is good for nursing mothers, so there is no need to have separate food bowls.

### *Food/Water Bowls*

- Food and water dishes should be shallow and heavy enough so that they will not tip over.
- Ceramic or stainless-steel dishes are best.
- Glass pie dishes work well for a litter of kittens. They are shallow, heavy, and large enough to accommodate a lot of eaters at once.

### *Litter*

- **Do not use strongly-clumping litter for kittens.** Young kittens like to taste things and will eat litter. Eating strongly-clumping litter can cause intestinal blockage. Use lightly-clumping corn litter, non-clumping litter, or wood pellets for young kittens. They may be switched over to strongly-clumping litter when they are older.

## *Shallow litter boxes (for young kittens)*

- Kittens should be able to climb in and out of litter boxes easily.
- Suggestions: For tiny kittens, shallow tin foil baking trays, plastic-lined cardboard box trays, shallow Tupperware – something that can be washed and sanitized or thrown away is best.
- Once the kittens get bigger, they can climb in and out of a standard litter box.
- A covered litter box may be helpful for some mothers who are vigorous diggers.

## *Entertainment*

- Any toy that can be torn into smaller pieces and eaten should not be used. Especially avoid plastic bags, yarn, and string. Use age-appropriate climbing toys – very young kittens cannot judge how far it is to the floor.
- Try not to use your hands when playing with a kitten– this will teach the kitten that it is ok to swat or bite at people – cute now, not so cute later. You can use a stuffed animal instead.

## *Towels/Bedding*

- Bedding doesn't have to be fancy. Old towels and fleece throws work well, if they don't have unraveling thread that could be ingested, and can be easily laundered.

## *Identification*

- Every animal at FOTAS is assigned an “A” (Animal) number. You will need that number to identify your foster kitty when interacting with FOTAS staff.
- Please make sure you are given a “Foster Animal Tracking Form” when you pick up your animal. **This form must accompany the kitty every time it is brought to FOTAS for vaccinations, medical care and spay/neuter appointments.**
- You should also get a “kennel card” sheet that has a picture of the animal being picked up. Many litters of kittens have siblings that are hard to tell apart. In this case, those kittens can be given a temporary paper collar with the animal's ID “A” number on it.
- When you have chosen a name for your fosters, please let the Foster Coordinator know through an email. It's much easier for us all to refer and remember a kitten by its name rather than its ID number.
  - Email should read, “A#####’s name is now YYYYYY.”

## *Love*

- Last, but certainly not least, shower your foster pet with love! Be patient and understanding. Some of the kitties may have had had a rough past, whether they came in off the street or were surrendered to FOTAS by the only home they've ever known. Try to accommodate their individual quirks and work with them to make them even more adoptable by training and socializing them.

## Vaccines for Kittens and Cats

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- All felines are generally given a distemper combo vaccine shot within the first day they arrive at FOTAS, unless they are too young or ill. A follow-up booster is usually given 2 weeks later.
- Kittens start getting shots at 4 weeks and then every 2 weeks until they have had 3-4 vaccinations. Kittens older than 16 weeks that come in with no vaccination record normally get one vaccination when they first come in and one 2 weeks later.
- At each visit they will be weighed, de-wormed if necessary, nails clipped, and examined. Please have the sex of the kitten confirmed at one of these later visits.
- When foster kittens are picked up to be fostered, staff will inform the foster parent when the next shot is due (or the foster parent should ask).
- Foster families can make an appointment by calling the mentor or coordinator.
- Once a kitten is adopted, it is the responsibility of the new owner to continue with any remaining vaccines required, including a rabies vaccination, once they turn 4 months old.

## Foster Spay/Neuter Process

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### *When are kittens ready to be spayed/neutered?*

- Kittens must be a minimum of 2.5 pounds and the male's testicles need to have descended (can be determined by FOTAS staff or Foster Mentor).
- An accurate weight of each foster needs to be kept so we can determine when they will be ready for surgery. Kitten Weight Logs and scales are available from FOTAS or Cat Foster Coordinator. See "Appendix A – Weight Chart."

### *Making spay/neuter appointments for foster pets*

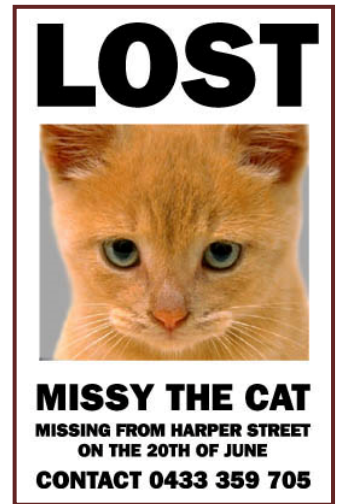
Please be sure to confirm with the Cat Foster Coordinator) that the animal you are fostering is cleared for surgery.

- Have the animal's "A" # and name available. Call or email the Cat Foster Coordinator when your foster is a week or so from being ready for surgery (at least 2.5 pounds).
- FOTAS will schedule the surgery at the spay and neuter clinic, You will be notified of the appointment date. It could be 1 to 4 weeks, depending on availability.
- Instructions for surgery dropoff and pickup will be emailed to each foster.

## What should I do if my foster cat escapes?

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- Call your mentor or the coordinator immediately.
- Call the Shelter immediately with the name and description of the cat, and location where last seen. (541) 774-6654, or if after-hours, the Cat Foster Coordinator.
- If the cat is not found quickly, go door-to-door in your neighborhood – on your side of the street, across the street and behind you. Post fliers at veterinary offices, pet stores, and around your neighborhood. Also, post it on Facebook, NextDoor, Craigslist, etc. Include a picture if possible.
- If the cat is found and is back with you, make sure your mentor and the coordinator are informed immediately, as well as the Shelter.



## What to do if your foster animal gets hurt or becomes ill

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**If illness develops, please make FOTAS staff aware within 24 hours.**

**DO NOT ADMINISTER ANY KIND OF MEDICATION, EVEN HERBAL OR NATURAL, WITHOUT THE CONSENT OF THE SHELTER STAFF OR THE PRE-APPROVED VET.**

### Emergency

- Call the Cat Foster Coordinator or Mentor. If you are unable to make contact, you have the choice of taking the animal to your personal veterinarian, or Southern Oregon Veterinary Specialty Center. (Please be aware that the after-hours vet charges a lot more.) See “*Contact Information*.” handbook.
- You will have to pay for the visit yourself if you have not received FOTAS pre-approval. If you are not able to wait to take the animal to the vet, you may ask the Foster Program Coordinator if your visit might be reimbursed. Please do not count on being reimbursed for your visit even if the visit was life threatening.

### Non-Emergency

- Send your first medical concern email to the Foster Program Coordinator or mentor in your area (unless it is life threatening, then see above for emergency). Always make sure you are cleared by FOTAS staff to take your foster to the vet. The animals in FOTAS’s care are FOTAS staff’s responsibility, so they will either examine/treat the animal, or staff will make an appointment to go to an approved vet. FOTAS has many medications, if needed.

## Kitten Care

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### *Kitten Fostering Supplies List*

See “*Appendix A – Kitten Fostering Supplies List*.”

### *Preparing Their New Home*

Place a comfortably-warmed heating disc or pad in the kitten’s secure carrier or playpen, leaving enough space for the kitten to escape the heating pad, if desired. Line the space with a soft blanket/towel. Add a plush toy. Option: spray Feliway on bedding. Change/wash bedding daily.

## Isolation

Kittens can come to your home with a variety of contagious minor and major ailments. For their safety, and the safety of other animals and people in the house, please keep the kittens isolated (either in their own room or in a play pen) for the first two weeks.

## When You Get Them Home

Check the kitties for any injuries, birth defects and fleas.

- Report any injuries or birth defects to the Shelter.
  - This could include a cleft lip or pallet, or misshapen/swollen limbs/tail.
- Check the ears for ear mites – the ear canals will look like they are clogged with black slime. Let the Cat Foster Coordinator know immediately, so that we can administer safe ear mite mitigation. **DO NOT USE EAR MITE MEDICINE.** It is too strong for kittens.
- Use a small flea comb to comb out each of the kitties. Pick off and dispose of fleas. Check every day for the first two weeks. Adolescent fleas can avoid your search until they get bigger!
- Look at their gums ... they should be pink. If they are pale, contact the Cat Foster Coordinator immediately.

## Kittens Weights

- Weigh and record weights in your kitten fostering notebook or weight log.
  - For bottle-fed kittens, weigh twice a day, before feedings.
  - For weaned kittens, weigh them every day for the first month, to ensure they are gaining weight.
- See “*Appendix B, Kitten Weight Chart.*”

## Vaccinations

Your kittens will receive a total of three (3) vaccinations while in your care, as well as being dewormed. The first (or next) vaccination/deworming date will be noted on the Foster Animal Tracking Form supplied by the Shelter when you pick up your kittens.

- It’s essential that you stick to the schedule indicated by FOTAS!
- Foster families can make an appointment for vaccinations by calling the mentor or coordinator.

## Kitten Health Concerns

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Kittens are fragile, and can harbor diseases that are undetectable when they enter FOTAS. Although FOTAS staff do a thorough wellness check, there are other underlying issues that can quickly and adversely affect kittens.

- **Keep them warm!** Even if your kittens are bigger, when they’re sick, they get cold. Offer a heating pad and make sure they have the room move off if they choose
- Keep new kittens away from your pets for at least the two weeks to monitor for illness. Make sure your pets at home are current on vaccines and flea preventative.
- If kittens become ill at any point, isolate fosters pets from resident pets.
- Symptoms to be concerned about:
  - Lethargy
  - Weakness or balance issues
  - Upper respiratory infection (URI): sneezing, watery/red eyes, coughing, discharge from eyes/nose
  - Vomiting

- Diarrhea
- Urinary Tract Infection (UTI): frequent urination, pink (blood) in the urine
- Loss of appetite
- Visible parasites (e.g., fleas or worms in poop)
- **Diarrhea** is cause for concern in kittens but is not always an emergency. Sometimes any change in your kitten's life will cause some loose stools (change in food, location, medication). So try to keep things as consistent as possible.
  - If loose stools are combined with other symptoms like vomiting, lethargy, or lack of appetite, contact the Shelter or your mentor.
  - Home remedies for diarrhea, such as pureed pumpkin or probiotics, are fine but keep portions small and be consistent. Pick one and stick to it!
  - If loose stools persist along with other symptoms... call your mentor or the coordinator immediately.
- **Dehydration** is our biggest concern in kittens with URI or diarrhea. So, if you can't reach the your mentor or the Coordinator, then start syringe feeding. Kitten Replacement Formula is great because it is specially formulated for kittens, has nutrients and hydrates. You can mix it with Pedialyte to give an extra boost (see recipe below). Also, you can offer canned food warmed up with a little hot water mixed in. They may have lost their sense of smell with URI and this will help entice them.
- Home remedies for URI (upper respiratory infections) to try until FOTAS can be contacted: steaming in a bathroom (run hot shower and sit in bathroom with kittens) or set up a humidifier in the room they are in. Wash goopy eyes and nose with a warm wash cloth and baby shampoo to help open them up.
- You will not be held responsible for any long-term disabilities, illness, or death that your foster animal may suffer as a result of not seeking medical attention. However, you must be emotionally prepared for these situations. Every effort is made to diagnose and treat injuries and/or illness before your foster pet leaves FOTAS. Unfortunately, there may be some illnesses that do not show symptoms until after you take your foster pet home. Sometimes, especially with kittens, it is simply known as, "Failure to Thrive."
- It may be necessary to get a stool sample if nothing is working. Collection vials can be provided by the mentor or FOTAS.

## Ringworm

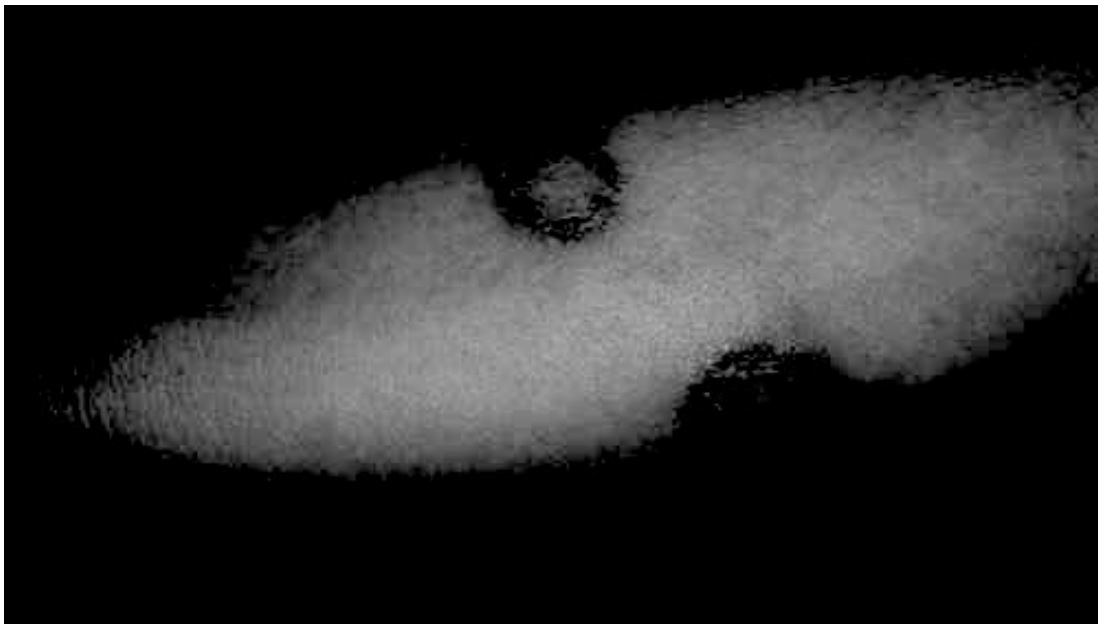
- Ringworm is a fungal skin infection, and not actually a worm. It is no different than the fungus that causes jock itch or athlete's foot. In humans, it responds well to topical treatment, but in animals it is more complicated, requiring several weeks of baths, oral medications and isolation.
- Fungal spores tend to accumulate in the fur, usually in round patches of hair loss on toes, face, ears, etc., making it easy to transfer to the environment, other animals and humans. Of note, it is one of the few conditions that a human can pass to an animal. If anyone in your household has a round itchy area; please confirm that it is not ringworm before taking an animal into your home.
- Also, if you are a FOTAS volunteer you should not be handling animals in the Shelter until the ringworm clear on the animals in your home.
- See photos on the next page as examples of what ringworm could look like on an animal or person.
- The link following link provides a more in-depth description of what to look for: [www.austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Animal\\_Services/Foster\\_Care\\_Manual/Ringworm\\_FostersFNL.pdf](http://www.austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Animal_Services/Foster_Care_Manual/Ringworm_FostersFNL.pdf)
- If you find a suspicious spot on your foster immediately contact the foster coordinator. A Woods lamp can be used to see if it fluoresces and further treatment is needed.



**Ringworm – Cats/Kittens (can appear anywhere on the body)**



**Ringworm – Dogs/Puppies (can appear anywhere on the body)**



**Ringworm – Human skin (can appear anywhere on the body)**

## Bottle Feeding

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Unweaned kittens need to be fed with a bottle and kitten formula. **Kittens should NOT be fed cow's milk or any dairy products or milk alternatives.** Use the kitten replacement formula available from FOTAS. Kitten formula is specially formulated to meet their unique needs. Mixing kitten formula with homemade Pedialyte (see recipe below) is OK.

It can take some time for a kitten to get the hang of bottle feeding, so remain calm and be patient. And remember, there are mentors to help.

Cold kittens will not eat. Thoroughly warm them up with heat disks or incubator before attempting to feed them. Kittens should be alert when feeding, or they may not suckle. If you wake them up to feed them, they should be awake enough AFTER you stimulate them to pee/poop (see below) to start feeding.

1. Thoroughly mix the powdered kitten formula with warm water according to the product's instructions. Test the temperature on the inside of your wrist; it should be comfortably warm, made fresh every 1-2 feedings, and free of clumps.
2. Cut a small hole into the nipple of the bottle (**DO NOT CUT THE MIRACLE NIPPLES**) to allow formula to flow. Invert the bottle and fill the nipple with formula. When properly cut, formula should just barely drip out.
3. **Hold the kitten in a natural position with the belly facing downward. Do not hold the kitten like a baby with the belly up, as this could lead to aspiration.**
4. Hold the kitten's head and body steady with your non-dominant hand, placing one finger on the throat to allow you to feel for swallowing. Gently introduce the tip of the nipple into the mouth with the dominant hand.
5. The kitten should roll her tongue like a taco and latch onto the tip of the nipple.
  - Position the bottle so that the kitten is not sucking air. This can happen when the bottle is half full.
  - Loosen the bottle top a little to let air in.
  - You should see air bubbles coming from the nipple as the kitten drinks.
6. Do not flood the mouth with formula; let the kitten drink at her own pace.
7. Allow the kitten to drink until she is full, or until she drinks an acceptable volume based on her weight.
  - See "*Kitten Feeding Chart*."
  - Supplement bottle feeding with syringe-feeding, if needed.

### Tips for Tricky Bottle Feeders:

- May need to pee/poop. Try stimulating.
- Make sure the flow is correct. If a nipple is too small or big, the kitten may not get a good latch. If the hole is too small, make it a little bigger.
- Make sure the formula is a comfortable temperature and has no clumps.
- Try gently holding the head in place and covering one eye. This helps the kitten focus and provides the comforting feeling of being nuzzled into their mother's belly.
- If a kitten is being fussy, you can try gently wrapping her in a blanket while feeding.
- Don't be discouraged if it takes you a while to become comfortable with bottle feeding—take it slow, relax and remember to be patient with their tiny bodies.

**Aspiration** occurs when a kitten inhales formula into the lungs, which can lead to respiratory distress, pneumonia, and even death.

- To prevent aspiration, feed in the proper posture, and never squeeze formula forcefully down a kitten's throat. If aspiration does happen, stop feeding and help the kitten sneeze out the formula.
- Consult FOTAS immediately if respiratory symptoms arise.



## Development Milestones

AGE	ATTRIBUTES
Newborn	Pink in color and umbilical cord attached 97° and can't regulate their own temperature Can neither see, nor hear
1 Week	Eyes closed and ears folded (eyes should open at 8 – 12 days) Umbilical cord detached
2 Weeks	Eyes open (blue!) Wobbly on their feet, and will stumble around!
3 Weeks	Incisors emerge Ears unfold Introduce canned food into the bottle
4 Weeks	Canines emerging Walking more confidently & exploring their surroundings Good time to move into a larger space and introduce a litter box
5 Weeks	Premolars emerging Wean slowly onto wet kitten food in a bowl with milk
6 Weeks	Molars emerging Much more coordinated, but still hysterical to watch! Transitioning more to wet kitten food and try a little kibble
7 Weeks	All milk (deciduous) teeth have emerged Eye color will start changing
8 Weeks	Should be approaching 2 lbs. – Time to schedule spay/neuter!

## Kitten Feeding Chart

The stomach capacity of a kitten determines how much formula they can take in at any given feeding. This enables you to see if they are eating enough, and if you are syringe-feeding, how much to feed them.

**IMPORTANT: Don't over-feed a kitten manually ... it can cause a lot of digestive issues.**

ESTIMATED AGE	WEIGHT (OUNCES)	WEIGHT (GRAMS)	DAILY TOTAL VOLUME (ML)	STOMACH CAPACITY (ML)	FREQUENCY
Newborn	1.8	50	13.5	2	Every 2 hours
	2.6	75	20	3	
	3.5	100	27	4	
	4.4	125	34	5	
~ 1 Week	5.3	150	40	6	Every 2 – 3 hours
	6.2	175	47	7	
	7.0	200	54	8	
	8	225	61	9	
~ 2 Weeks	8.8	250	68	10	Every 3 – 4 hours
	9.7	275	74	11	
	10.6	300	81	12	
	11.5	325	88	13	
~ 3 Weeks	12.3	350	95	14	Every 4 – 5 hours
	13.2	375	101	15	
	14.1	400	108	16	
	15	425	105	17	
~ 4 Weeks	15.9	450	122	18	Every 5 – 6 hours
	16.8	475	128	19	
	17.6	500	135	20	
	18.5	525	142	21	
~ 5 Weeks	19.4	550	148	22	Every 6 hours

## Recipes and Kitten Ages

Introducing solid food is a slow process. Their little tummies can only handle a little bit of change at a time. So using the table below is a good guideline.

Please remember to give kittens medication AFTER they have eaten. Do NOT put medication IN their food.

AGE	RECIPE
Newborn to 3 weeks	Kitten replacement formula only <b>Powders:</b> 2 parts filtered water to 1 part powder <b>Kitten Pedialyte:</b> 1 cup water (boiled) 2 tsp sugar 1/8 tsp salt 1/8 tsp baking soda
3 – 4 weeks	<b>Light goop with a bottle:</b> 2.5 parts filtered water to 1 part powder .25 part canned food (pate) (if it's too goopy, it won't flow through the nipple)
4 – 5 weeks	<b>Heavy goop, without a bottle:</b> 2.5 parts filtered water to 1 part powder .5 - 1 part canned food (pate) Sprinkle a few hard kitten kibbles to see if they can handle the crunch!
5 weeks+	<b>Heavy goop, and more hard kitten kibble</b>

Use a blender!

## Bathroom Business

Neonatal kittens under 4 weeks old must be stimulated to go to the bathroom. Mama cats will use their tongues to lick the kittens' genitals, stimulating them to urinate or defecate, and to keep them clean.

As a foster parent, you'll need to replicate this behavior with a soft, absorbent material like tissues, toilet paper, or baby wipes. Gently rub the kitten's genitals in a circular motion, continuing to do so until they are completely finished. Kittens should pee at every feeding, but may poop only once or twice a day.

Stimulate kittens BEFORE and AFTER every feeding cycle, and make sure you keep the area clean to avoid scalding and bacterial buildup on their sensitive skin.

If you want to wash off their backsides, use baby shampoo and warm water. Thoroughly dry the kitten, so that they don't get a chill.

Also wash their cute little faces, to get milk residue off!

## What does Healthy Poop Look Like?

Healthy bottle baby poop will be mustard yellow in color, and will change to brown as they wean. Good kitten poop should have a solid form—if it looks the shape of a miniature cat poop, it's a good poop!

It sounds gross, but poop is an incredibly important indicator of the health of the kitten, so monitor it closely. The color, form, frequency, and even smell can all be signs of disease, parasites, or other health problems. Collect a stool sample and take to a vet for a fecal analysis if concerned.

By the way, some kittens SCREAM when they are pooping! Don't be too concerned, unless it looks like they are impacted/constipated. It's OK to help them get a poop out (pull gently), if it's hard.

## Diarrhea Dangers

Diarrhea is very serious, and can be fatal for neonatal kittens. Diarrhea can be brought on by parasites, viruses, infections, change in diet, stress, or many other causes.

- Seek diagnostic support from staff so that you can treat the cause of the diarrhea. Always ensure kitten is fully treated for parasites.
- Try adding a probiotic such as FORTI-FLORA or BENE-BAC® PLUS to their bottle or wet food.
- Add flavorless Pedialyte to food to keep them hydrated.
- If diarrhea continues for more than 24 hours, consult the Shelter. They can prescribe small doses of drugs to help stop the diarrhea, and subcutaneous fluids that contain electrolytes and proteins and can help save the kitten.

## Litter Training

Around 3 weeks of age, introduce a shallow litter pan with a fragrance-free, non-clumping litter. Place the kitten in the pan frequently to help them remember to use it.

It may help to stimulate them over the litter pan while they are learning, letting the pee and poop drop into the box.

Kittens naturally understand the litter box, but it's up to you to make sure it's kitten-safe and easy to access.

One trick is NOT to change the litter very often, and leaving a little pee/poop in the box. The kittens will recognize the smell and use the box more readily.

You can also try **PRECIOUS CAT ULTRA LITTER ATTRACTANT**. It smells like the great outdoors, and kittens seem to like the smell.

## Spay/Neuter

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- When kittens approach 2.5 lbs, it's time to contact FOTAS to schedule their spay/neuter appointment(s).
- No food for 10 hours before surgery.
- You may keep kittens for another week to ensure there are not post-surgery issues.
- Then it's adoption time!

**Remember that “good-bye” is the goal of fostering, and that your care has given these kittens an incredible opportunity to live a long and full life in a forever home!**

**And, it means you have room to foster more kittens! Yay! THANK YOU!**

## Adoption of Foster Animals

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- When your foster animal has been spayed/neutered, socialized and ready for adoption, contact the Cat Foster Coordinator to discuss options, such as scheduling a time to bring the kitten to FOTAS spay and neuter clinic for meet and greet with potential adopter, or keeping the kitties and inviting potential adopters into your home (see below). It's up to you!
- High-quality, well-lit photographs are ALWAYS appreciated. A close-up and a full-body photo are essential.

### *Adopting Foster Animals from Your Home*

Foster parents are encouraged to facilitate visits with potential adopters in their home or at FOTAS. If a good match is found, interested adopters should be informed that they **must** complete the standard adoption process **at FOTAS** before being allowed to adopt a foster animal. FOTAS requires potential adopters to complete an Adoption Application, pay fees, and speak with adoption counselors. Special arrangements can be made with FOTAS staff to facilitate adoptions off-site if needed.

See “Ways to Help Your Foster Pet Get Adopted” below.

### *Return of Foster Animals*

We recognize that returning a foster animal to FOTAS can be very emotional, even under the best of circumstances. It can also be a very rewarding experience when an animal finds a good permanent home.

Many staff members are also foster volunteers and are always available to offer emotional support to you. **You are not alone.** Our [FOTAS Four-Legged Friend Fosters](#) Facebook page is also a wonderful community to share.

If both parties are agreeable, you may exchange phone numbers with adopters to find out how your foster animal is settling in to their new surroundings. This also gives the new parents a chance to ask questions and the foster parents to give advice to ensure this match lasts forever.

We strongly encourage foster parents to call adopters in a week to check in. On-going updates and pictures from foster animals that have been adopted are so heartwarming for both parties. Trained volunteers also make follow-up calls to recent adopters to see how the animals are doing.

## *Ways to Help Your Foster Pets Get Adopted*

### ***Photographs***

High-quality, well-lit photographs are ALWAYS appreciated. A close-up and a full-body photo are essential. Contact the Cat Foster Coordinator to inquire about one of our volunteer photographers visiting your home. Submit your “best” pictures of your foster to go along with the promotional material.

### ***Flyers***

Make flyers to put up at the Dog Parks, work, school, wherever you go, including on your car window! See the last page of this booklet for a sample poster. Please make sure to include the following information:

- Animal’s picture and name
- Description (personality, spayed/neutered, compatibility with other animals, etc.)

### ***Suggestions for Writing Foster Animal Resumes***

The following excerpts are some of the positive ways that behavior traits can be addressed.

#### **If the cat is not good with young children:**

- Don’t say: "He cannot go to a home with children.”
- Say:
  - “... would do best in a mature home.”

#### **If the cat needs to be a single pet**

- Don’t say: "He doesn’t like other animals."
- Say:
  - “looking to be the top cat in a one-cat home”
  - “can’t wait for your full attention and will do best if she is the only cat”
  - “enjoys the status of being the only cat in the home”

#### **If the animal is nervous:**

- Don’t say: "He is nervous."
- Say:
  - “He is eager to find a quiet household.”
  - “She is looking for a patient person who can help her become more self-confident.”
  - “She will do best in an adult household.”

### ***Word of Mouth***

Talk to everyone you know and everyone you meet about your foster animal. Sometimes it helps to carry a picture of your current foster animal with you.

### ***Online***

Utilizing online resources is essential in finding homes for foster animals, as they don't get the same exposure as animals in the kennels. Please make sure to email pictures and bio description to your Foster Coordinator. She will then pass them on to appropriate staff.

You may also create and post your own ads at other online resources. For example, Craigslist and NextDoor are free, easy, and effective.

### ***Community Outreach Events***

You may bring your foster pet to any of our Outreach and special events that might be appropriate. Please check with the Volunteer Services Manager before attending any Outreach events with your foster animal(s), and approval is needed from Shelter staff first to ensure your foster animal is appropriate for the venue.

Foster pets can be dropped off for a couple of hours, or the Foster parent can stay at the outreach event with their animal(s).

## Appendix A – Kitten Fostering Supplies List

Supply needs change, depending on the age/size of the kittens:

	ITEM	SUPPLIED BY:
	Notepad for keeping good notes re: weight, meds, etc.	You
	Calendar for vaccinations/Release Form	You/FOTAS
	Digital kitchen scale (ounces and grams)	You or FOTAS (return after fostering)
	SnuggleSafe Warming disc	FOTAS (return after fostering)
	Washable bed	You
	Washable towels/blankets	You or FOTAS
	Washable wash clothes for stimulating or unscented baby wipes	You or FOTAS
	Washable plush toys	You
	Top-loading carrier (for tiny kittens)	You or FOTAS (return after fostering)
	Kitty play pen	FOTAS (return after fostering)
	Blender for mixing/pureeing food	You
	Kitten Replacement Formula (powder)	FOTAS – only use powder supplied at FOTAS; do not use KMR or other brands
	Canned Food	FOTAS
	Kitten Kibble	FOTAS, if they have any You, and submit receipts for reimbursement
	Shallow food bowls	You
	Bottles (1 per kitten)	FOTAS
	Kitten Nipples (2 per kitten)	FOTAS
	Liquid Syringes (1 per kitten)	FOTAS
	Flea comb	FOTAS
	Shallow litter boxes	FOTAS
	Non-clumping litter (paper or corn-based)	FOTAS, if they have any You, and submit receipts for reimbursement
	Precious Cat Ultra Litter Attractant	FOTAS, if they have any
	Fragrance-free baby shampoo	FOTAS, if they have any You, and submit receipts for reimbursement
	Pee pads	FOTAS, if they have any You, and submit receipts for reimbursement
	Old shirts/sheets (if you don't want to throw away pee pads and can wash cloth)	You
	Feliway spray	FOTAS, if they have any

