



Pet Haven



Queen & Kitten Foster Manual 2024

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Greetings and Contact Info

Assuming you've gone through all of the kitten steps, this manual is going to be specific to pregnant mama cats, mamas and their newborn babies or orphaned kittens. Refer to the Cat Foster Manual for other basic information as needed.

Things I need our Mama & Young kitten fosters to have at all times:

- ☐ **Fully stocked Kitten Care Kit**
- ☐ **Access and confirmation that you've logged into Weight & Deworming Spreadsheet and found your personalized tab (used daily to record weights) this was sent to you via email**
- ☐ **Fecal Scoring Chart (sent via email)**
- ☐ **Pet Haven Deworming Chart (sent via email)**

Email: kittencare@pethavenmn.org

IF YOU ARE EXPERIENCING AN EMERGENCY OR ANY TROUBLE CALL VET CARE CELL AT 651-206-2856

Communication with Mentors & Vetting Team

Each foster parent will be assigned a mentor but when you are fostering Queens & kittens you will also work with me. Please include your mentor on our emails to keep them in the loop.

You should contact me 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/email: kittencare@pethavenmn.org

- How long have the symptoms been going on?
- Is kitty eating, drinking, pooping, peeing, playing?
- Any vomiting?
- Diarrhea? What does it look like/smell like? Take pictures if possible! Use the score chart to identify consistency.
- What is the kitty's temperature? Normal temperature is 100.0-102.5 F. If you are worried but you aren't sure about the symptoms mentioned above, contact us.

The Kitten Care Kit

- ☐ Baby shampoo/Blue Dawn Dish Soap
- ☐ Thermometer
- ☐ Lubricant jelly for thermometer
- ☐ Baby bottles
- ☐ KMR Formula
- ☐ Flea comb
- ☐ FortiFlora Probiotic Powder
- ☐ Miracle Nipples
- ☐ Scale
- ☐ Syringes
- ☐ Cuddle safe warming disc with cover
- ☐ Prescription Recovery wet food
- ☐ Prescription bland food/GI wet food (Purina EN or Hills i/d)
- ☐ Prescription high calorie food (recovery or a/d)
- ☐ Pyrantel Dewormer
- ☐ Panacur Dewormer
- ☐ Karo Syrup

Please make sure to keep a fully stocked Kitten Care Kit and when your supplies are low replenish as needed at the Pet Haven office in St Paul.

FortiFlora-FortiFlora is a powdered probiotic that helps with gut health. Adults get 1 full packet once daily & kittens $\frac{1}{3}$ packet once daily mixed into food.

Baby Shampoo and Washcloths-Ideally mama cat will take care of all bathing and grooming of her babies. If you have a foster without a mama cat they may get messy and need some help with keeping clean. Wet wipes and waterless shampoo are amazing to have on hand and will allow you to do spot cleaning.

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, like your bath water. Try not to do full immersion baths unless you have to. If you can get away with just a bottom or a face, or a leg, do that. Imitating as best you can the firm licking motion of a mom cat's tongue will help the kitten feel more comfortable about the whole thing. And, remember a little shampoo goes a long way! A general rule of thumb is once you have rinsed them off really well, rinse once more. Make sure they have a place to dry

off that is toasty warm and not drafty, and keep them there until they are completely dry. Call your mentor with any questions.

Thermometer and Lubricant-Thoroughly clean the end of the thermometer with rubbing alcohol, dawn dish soap, and water. Then, put a little lubricant (vaseline or personal lubrication jelly) on the end. Have a friend hold the kitten for you or wrap him in a towel like a burrito to keep him still. Support the hind end while the thermometer is inserted in the rectum. Insert the thermometer ½ inch into the kitten's rectum, enough to cover the metal tip. Keep the thermometer in until it starts beeping, then remove and clean with alcohol. Normal kitten temperatures are as follows: newborns 97-98F, 2-4 weeks 98-100F, 4+ weeks 99-102.5. Use distractions – kittens will almost always struggle while their temperature is taken.

- ☐ Bob their heads.
- ☐ Blow on their head or face.
- ☐ Tap on a glass or metal object.
- ☐ Feed canned food or a churu lickable treat

Flea Comb-If you suspect that your foster has fleas, please gently comb them first with flea comb. Check the comb for debris & wipe debris on a wet paper towel to test for "flea dirt" (dried flea poop aka blood). If the debris smears red/rust/brown color on the wet paper towel they more than likely have fleas. Live fleas can be difficult to find. Cats are meticulous groomers and will ingest them. If you find any of the above we need to treat all animals in the house for at least 3 consecutive months. Alert your mentor and Vetting.

Syringes-These are for mixing and administering medications if needed, and for syringe feeding if required.

Kitty-Proofing & Preparing Your Foster Room and Home

IF YOU HAVE VACATION PLANS WITHIN AN 8 WEEK SPAN, DO NOT TAG A PREGNANT MOM/NURSING MOM/BABIES UNDER 10 WEEKS. We do NOT have respite for these fragile stages and we do not move them from your home unless it is an urgent situation. If something comes up and you must leave town, reach out to your mentor, Stephanie and Vetting. Respite for kittens isn't approved until they've had their first round of vaccinations and deworming.

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. We recommend that you kitten proof their space prior to arrival.

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 and 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.

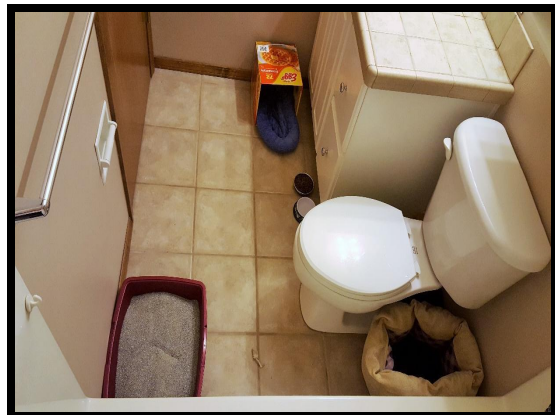
Before introducing your kittens to other areas of your home, please do a thorough walkthrough, and keep the following concerns in mind:

- ☐ 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, hair ties, 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.
- ☐ Review the toxic houseplant list at www.asPCA.org/pet-care/poison-control/plants and remove all poisonous plants from your household. Or, to deter kitties from munching on poisonous and non-poisonous plants, you should spray the plants with a product sold at pet stores for this very purpose.
- ☐ Kittens will climb and knock things over. Put breakable items out of reach, tie curtains up and avoid blind cords hanging.
- ☐ Do not leave wand toys or string toys on the floor. Kittens can easily get themselves tangled or chew the string and risk intestinal blockage.
- ☐ Keep food bags closed and in a safe locked container or food bin if possible. Kittens can suffocate if they get trapped in a bag or container.

You must provide a clean, safe environment for your foster cats/kittens. Pet Haven recommends to start your kittens preferably in a non-carpeted, easily sanitized room in the unlikely event that your kittens have a contagious illness. Pet Haven recommends a bathroom or an unused bedroom as your foster room. If you are using a room that has a cold floor, such as a bathroom, make sure to lay down plenty of blankets or towels to help keep the space cozy and warm.

Keep the following tips in mind:

- Consider protecting your furniture and carpet with sheets or plastic table covers. 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.



- Until the age of 3-4 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, cookie sheet, or cake pan. Once the kittens are more mobile, you should give them a larger litter box. Dollar stores have lots of inexpensive options.

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 and **NON-Clumping litter**. The reason that we use non-clumping litter is because young kittens explore with their mouths if they ingest, clumping litter can expand once in their stomach. 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 a must. Pet Haven 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 store-bought recycled paper litter or non clumping clay litter. Once the kittens are older (around 8 weeks old) you can give them clumping litter. Please do not use clumping litter with kittens under 8 weeks.



Maternity Foster Home Guidelines

We hope that this experience will be as rewarding for you as it is beneficial to the health and well-being of mom and her kittens. The majority of births and newborn litters are trouble-free and require only your quiet supervision. The information here will help you prepare for any complications that can, although rarely do, arise. If you have any questions or concerns not addressed in these guidelines, please call your mentor. Keep in mind that these are only guidelines and are not meant to replace expert advice.

Preparing for Birth

It is imperative that you have a quiet, out-of-the-way place in your home that will be warm, safe and available for the entire time you are fostering. This means that this space will only be used for mom and her kittens for the time you have them in your care. Inaccessibility from other family pets like dogs, or your resident cats, must be strictly enforced. This is absolutely necessary for the health and safety of not only the litter, but for your resident animals as well.

New mother cats have been known to abandon or even resort to cannibalism if they feel that other animals or people threaten the well-being of their babies. This is especially true with mothers who are not well socialized.

New kittens are very susceptible to disease and can pick up illnesses from your seemingly healthy pets. Also, the stress of pregnancy and birth can cause the mom cat to become ill from something that has been dormant in her system, so do not put your resident pets at risk by exposing them.

A kitting or nesting box must be provided for the expectant mother. This can usually be a cardboard box without a lid and a hole cut out of the side for the mom cat to enter and exit. It can be helpful to provide more than one option for mama (covered, uncovered, hidden in closet). Please take note if mama is gravitating towards a specific area like a bedroom closet. Fill the nesting box with clean towels, puppy pads and let her make her own nest. Change this bedding immediately after the birth and then on a frequent basis because it will become soiled – so don't use the "good" towels.

What to Expect When She's Expecting

A cat can be in heat from 6-20 days. The typical gestation period for a cat is 63 days. A cat may gain 2-3 pounds during pregnancy, depending on how many kittens she is carrying. She will require more and more food as her pregnancy progresses.

After the birthing is over, remove the towels and replace them with fleece blankets, or fleece beds. Some kittens cannot retract their claws and get caught in the loops of towels, making it difficult for them to crawl around. You can also put several layers of bedding in the nest

prior to the birth; after the birth, you can roll the dirty upper layer off and gently move the kittens onto the clean layer underneath.

Provide a litter box, food, and water. During the last week or so of pregnancy, and during the nursing weeks, dry and wet canned kitten food should be fed to the mom cat. Kitten food is recommended for lactating females, as it has extra calories and nutrients and will help support mom cat during this very exhausting time in her life. Let mom eat as much as she wants—after all, she is feeding a brood herself!

The Birth

A week or less before the event, mom cat may start to move about furtively, root about in the nest, and may possibly attempt to escape the room you have designated for her in hopes of finding a linen closet or soft bedspread for her delivery. Be sure to keep your eye on her to ensure she stays in her room!

About 24 hours before delivery, you may notice her belly drop to form a “pear” shape and her nipples start to swell with milk.

A small amount of discharge from the vagina is also normal. This is usually the first sign of labor and can last up to six hours. Mom will start to breath heavily, pant, or purr during this time. Some moms-to-be will give you clues that it is time—others will not. Some will not eat until the deliveries are finished and some will snack in between. Some will be vocal while delivering and some will be silent. Some will want you in the room, others will not. Let mom tell you what she needs. After all, having kittens is a natural and normal experience and cats have been doing it for thousands of years! When you notice these signs and believe your mom is ready to go into labor, please reach out via text or email to your mentor and Stephanie so that they are aware and can provide you with support during this process.



Most feline births are routine and trouble free, so try not to disturb her during the process. Make sure she has access to food and water, and replace her regular litter with shredded paper in the litter box before delivery begins. She will start the second stage of labor, straining a few hours before the first kitten is born. If, however, she has been heavily straining, for an hour without producing a kitten, or three or more hours pass between kittens, call or text Stephanie at 651-491-8525. We would rather have you err on the side of caution.

Occasionally, first time moms will not quite “get it.” If this is the case and she delivers a kitten, and just walks away, she might not realize that it is alive and needs her care. The membrane covering the kitten's face must be removed immediately so the kitten can

breathe. If mom doesn't do this, gently tear open the sac covering the head so the kitten can breathe. After the first kitten, mom usually figures it out and carries on as she should. Most moms will eat the afterbirth (placental sacs) as it contains nutrients and hormones she will need to recover from the birth. She will also bite through the umbilical cord and clean the babies. After she has cleaned the kitten, she will take a rest. This rest could last 30-60 minutes before she starts labor again to give birth to the next kitten.

Signs of a Difficult Delivery

Most births proceed without incident, and your role as a foster parent is to quietly monitor the birthing process. However, call Stephanie immediately if any of the following happens during delivery:

- ☐ The mother cat seems to be straining or having strong contractions for a period of 1 hour without delivering a kitten.
- ☐ There is unusual discharge from the vulva under the tail. Normal discharge is green; abnormal can be black, cloudy, or foul-smelling.
- ☐ The mother is not cleaning the kittens after delivery. If this occurs, use a piece of sterile gauze and remove any fluid from the nose and mouth. Then dry the kitten using a clean towel and a gentle rubbing action.
- ☐ A kitten is not breathing. If this occurs, rub him vigorously with a towel for several minutes all over his body to stimulate breathing. You can also use a syringe to gently clear the nostrils and mouth of any liquid material.
- ☐ Occasionally the umbilical cord will not separate from the mother and kitten. If this occurs, take a thread or floss (unwaxed, unminted) and tie a knot ½ inch from the kitten's belly and another knot 1 inch towards Mom, and then cut the cord with the scissors between the two knots. This will prevent bleeding if the cord tears. Don't be surprised if the cord retracts back inside mom during a contraction. The cord and placenta will be delivered in time. Never pull on the cord to try and get it out.
- ☐ You observe any excessive bleeding (more than approximately two teaspoons).

Post-Delivery

After the delivery of the litter is finished, try to observe the family to make sure that the kittens are nursing, and that mom is not bleeding excessively from the vagina. If things are not as they should be, call your mentor. Once the event is concluded, and mom and kittens are resting comfortably, replace the soiled towels with clean fleece or cloth and let the new family rest in peace and quiet. Empty the paper out of the litter box and replace it with regular kitty litter.

The temperature in the foster room should be kept a little warmer, especially for the first two weeks after birth. This is even more important if the kittens are orphans - ideally the temperature should be around 80F for the first two weeks. If you aren't able to heat your whole room to that temperature, you can use Snuggle Safe warming discs (these should never come into direct contact with skin, put under layers of bedding) and make sure the

nesting box is well insulated. Be sure that the mom and kittens have the option to get away from the warming disks if desired.

<https://snugglesafe.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/heatpad-instructions.pdf>

With clean hands, handle newborns gently, but make sure to check on them several times daily and if possible set up a nanny cam to check from your phone. Are they nursing? Hanging out with mom? Crying a lot (this could be an indication that they are cold or not getting enough milk). Make sure to count each time you check on them. Sometimes a mother cat will take a kitten out of the nest and leave it somewhere else in the room. Put kitten back into the nest and make sure to check on litter more frequently. If mom continues to remove kitten make sure to alert me.. **Make sure to log into the "Weight & Deworming" spreadsheet that you have been sent via email. You will find a tab dedicated to your litter. It is required for all fosters with young kittens to weigh your kittens & record their weight once daily. Weighing approximately the same time each day and once eating on their own-being consistent with weighing prior to feeding if possible, will help to track trends in gain or loss. The Weight & Deworming spreadsheet is an important tool for our Vetting team. If you have any questions or trouble logging in, please reach out to me within 24 hours of the kittens being birthed/entering your home.**



Be careful! Mother cats can be very protective of their young and become overly aggressive toward resident pets. This means watchful attention when entering or leaving the area you have set aside for mom and her babies.

Umbilical Cord Care

Mom will take care of the umbilical cord. If mom does not chew the cord to disconnect placental sac, **please contact the vet team at 651-206-2856**



IMPORTANT: If you see any signs of swelling, discharge, pain, or redness at the umbilical cord site, please contact the vet team right away!



Post-birth Care and Signs to watch for

Watchful supervision and daily weighing of the babies is required. Those daily weights will need to be entered into our Weight & Deworming spreadsheet. If kittens are not gaining appropriately you will be asked to weigh twice daily until weight gain becomes appropriate. Mom will need kitten food and water at all times. During labor and post she may need food and water moved closer to her nesting box & litterbox moved closer. She may not want to venture too far from her nest. Contact Stephanie immediately if you observe any of the following in the mother cat:

- ☐ Acts lethargic, or as if she is in pain or continues to strain
- ☐ Ignores her kittens
- ☐ Continues bleeding from the vulva for more than two days
- ☐ Has painful, hard, or swollen mammary glands

Kittens should be nursing up to 3 times an hour. The mother cat should be grooming each kitten after feeding, and licking their bottoms to stimulate elimination. Contact your mentor if you observe any of the following in the kittens:

- ☐ Constant crying and failure to stay at the nipple.
- ☐ Refusal to nurse.
- ☐ Feels cold to the touch.
- ☐ Withdrawing from the other kittens.
- ☐ Rejected or ignored by the mother.



Be careful! Children love to play with kittens, but they may not understand how to properly handle them. Please keep in mind that children should not handle kittens under three weeks of age and you must not allow unsupervised handling of any kitten by children under the age of 10.

Feeding and Growth of your kittens

Kittens with Mom:

First thing, moms (pregnant or nursing) should be provided unlimited access to food.

The recommended diet for pregnant or nursing cats and their kittens is a premium diet of canned and dry kitten food. Kittens generally start showing interest in "real" food around 4 or 5 weeks of age. At that time start creating mush or slurry of canned food (warm water and mashed canned food, applesauce consistency) should be fed 3-4 times a day in small amounts (one quarter of a 3 oz. wet food can). Dry food should be left out all day for them.

Kittens without Mom:

Newborn to four weeks: Rarely, unweaned kittens are brought to Pet Haven without their mother. As a foster parent you will have the double responsibility of bottle-feeding and socialization. Currently we do not have a neonatal program. Often we try to place those kittens with Itty Bitty Kitty Rescue when possible

Bottle Feeding

Before attempting bottle feeding on your own, please reach out to me

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 for a 48 hour period, even if it is still nursing on mom. In this case, you will only be "topping off" the kitten after it nurses.

How to bottle feed a kitten:

Warmth first! Warm 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, place them on a towel that is resting on a Snuggle Safe disc, or tuck a kitten under your shirt and use your own body heat. 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. 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 cardboard box.

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
2 weeks	8 oz	227 g	45 kcal	61 ml	9 ml	7
	9 oz	255 g	51 kcal	69 ml	10 ml	7
	10 oz	283 g	57 kcal	77 ml	11 ml	7
3 weeks*	11 oz	312 g	62 kcal	84 ml	12 ml	6-7
	12 oz	340 g	68 kcal	92 ml	14 ml	6-7
	13 oz	369 g	74 kcal	100 ml	15 ml	6
4 weeks*	14 oz	397 g	79 kcal	107 ml	16 ml	5
	15 oz	425 g	85 kcal	115 ml	17 ml	5
	16 oz (1 lb)	454 g	91 kcal	123 ml	18 ml	5
5 weeks*	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
	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 your kitten.

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.

Be sure you sterilize the bottle and nipple before each feeding, and warm the formula to no more than 100 degrees. Test the formula on your wrist – it should feel warm, not hot.

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 onto 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 WHEN YOU FEED THEM AND ENSURE THEIR BODY IS FULLY CRADLED IN YOUR LAP OR OPPOSING HAND.**

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.

[How to Safely Bottle Feed a Kitten - YouTube](#)

Stimulating your kitten:

Kittens younger than 3 weeks of age cannot eliminate by themselves – they need your help. After feeding the kitten, take a washcloth or gauze moistened with warm water and rub gentle circles over the kitten's 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 to clean excess formula off your kittens mouth as it can dry and become very irritating.

Dietary Habits with Growth

- At four weeks, you can start introducing canned food 2-3 times daily (they usually start showing interest in what mom is eating). Mixing a little warm water or KMR milk with the canned food to create a slurry and placing it in a container with low sides (plate, small dish, etc.) will usually do the trick. Expect them to walk through it too. No one ever said kittens were neat. Placing a puppy pad or towel under the dishes is helpful to keep your space clean. After a few attempts, they will get the idea. Feed them their last meal just before bedtime. They usually eat and then go straight to sleep. You can warm the food in the microwave for about 6 seconds. Make sure to stir the food and test it with your finger. Do not give hot food to kittens.

- 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. If your kittens have not yet shown much interest in dry food, you can use warm water and soak the kibble to soften.
- 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-vomiting or diarrhea. Frequent small meals are preferred to large meals.

Please keep in mind that we want Mom and babies to stay together as long as possible. We do not separate them until kittens are weaned, doing well on their own and ready for adoption. Anticipate that Mom and her babies will be in your care for at least 3-4 months.

All cats and kittens need fresh water at all times and multiple water sources.



Photo by Barbara Pirk

Vaccine Schedule

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

FVRCP is given at 6 weeks of age or older depending on when they went through intake:

2nd FVRCP is given 3 to 4 weeks after the first FVRCP.

3rd FVRCP is given 3 to 4 weeks after the second FVRCP.

4th FVRCP is given 3 to 4 weeks after the third FVRCP.

The Rabies vaccination is given around 16 weeks of age. That vaccination is good for 1 year,

Vaccine Side Effects VS Reactions

Typical Vaccine side effects can include, but are not limited to:

- ☐ Limping usually on the side that injections were given
- ☐ Not eating or drinking the normal amounts for 1-2 days
- ☐ Lethargy
- ☐ Pain at the sight of injection
- ☐ Unwillingness to play
- ☐ Low-grade fever

If any of these symptoms do not improve by 12 to 24 hours after the injection, please contact the Queen/Kitten Care Manager Stephanie and your mentor.

Vaccination Reactions are signs that are more serious:

The kitten will need to be seen by a **Vet IMMEDIATELY** if you notice any of these signs. You'll need to **contact Pet Haven Vet Emergency Line 651-206-2856**. If you cannot reach anyone please start heading to Animal Emergency and Referral Hospital and continue to try to call the urgent numbers.

- ☐ Collapse or fainting
- ☐ Difficulty breathing
- ☐ Persistent severe coughing or trouble swallowing
- ☐ Hives, small red itchy raised bumps all over the body
- ☐ Facial swelling, swollen or puffy eyes, muzzle or face
- ☐ Persistent vomiting or diarrhea

Kitten Development:

The following is some general information about what to expect at each stage of development. Remember that these are averages. **Daily weighing is required to be entered into the Weight & Deworming Spreadsheet.**

Newborn 2-3 days	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.
7-14days	Umbilical cord falls off. Eyes begin to open – all kittens have blue eyes. Kittens huddle together for security and warmth.
	Ears unfold, hearing will develop. Can move along with belly on the ground, “paddling” limbs for movement.
	Being to play with littermates, learning how to socialize. Can stand and balance, but cannot walk easily. Teething begins. Eyes are fully open.
16-18 Days	Incisors (tiny front teeth) break through.
20-28 Days	Canine teeth break through.
	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. If born in our care they should receive first deworming of pyrantel. Ask your mentor for help with dosing and administration.
Five Weeks	Learning to hunt by pouncing on toys and each other.
Six Weeks	Adult eye color begins to appear. First vaccination for kittens. Kittens are vaccinated against common viruses that cause upper respiratory infection and feline distemper (FVRCP). Receive second deworming.
Eight Weeks and Older	Vetting-FeLV and FIV testing if not previously done, spay or neuter at 10 weeks (if weight is at least 2.5-3 pounds and kitten is healthy), microchip, treatment for fleas and ear mites as directed by the veterinarian, Third deworming is due. KITTENS WILL REMAIN WITH MAMA CAT UNTIL THEY ARE AT LEAST 10-12 WEEKS OF AGE

If not born in our care- Kittens need to be dewormed with pyrantel upon intake and every 2 weeks following until adoption

Once your cat/kittens have been given a dewormer or any medications, you must record in the [Weight & Deworming spreadsheet](#) to communicate that it was administered. This is helpful to the records and Vetting staff so that we can easily follow what each kitten has received and input that into their medical record.

Deworming & Litterbox Cleaning protocols

Every cat that comes into our care should be assumed to have some GI parasites. Kittens typically have parasites passed from their mom while nursing, older kittens or adults may have contracted parasites from unsanitary living conditions, predation or from having fleas.

Pyrantel (Strongid) is an oral liquid deworming medication that treats for Hookworms & Roundworms. These are the two most common parasites that we see in kittens. You might see Roundworms pass in the stool or in vomit after treatment - they will look like short spaghetti noodles. Often they are still moving and will curl up. It is helpful to notify your mentor & Stephanie (queen & kitten care manager) if you see live worms. Pyrantel/Strongid is administered at intake and needs to be repeated while in foster care every 2 weeks until adoption. Please keep a supply of this at all times in your kitten care kit.

Fenbendazole (Panacur) is an oral liquid OR granular powder deworming medication that treats for a more wide variety of parasites including: Hookworms, Roundworms, Tapeworms, Lungworms, Whipworms and Giardia. Depending on the parasite suspected or found positive on a fecal analysis we may have you use Panacur once daily for a 3 or 5 day period. Again, you may notice semi-live or mobile worms in vomit or stool post deworming with this medication. Alert your mentor & Stephanie as directed.

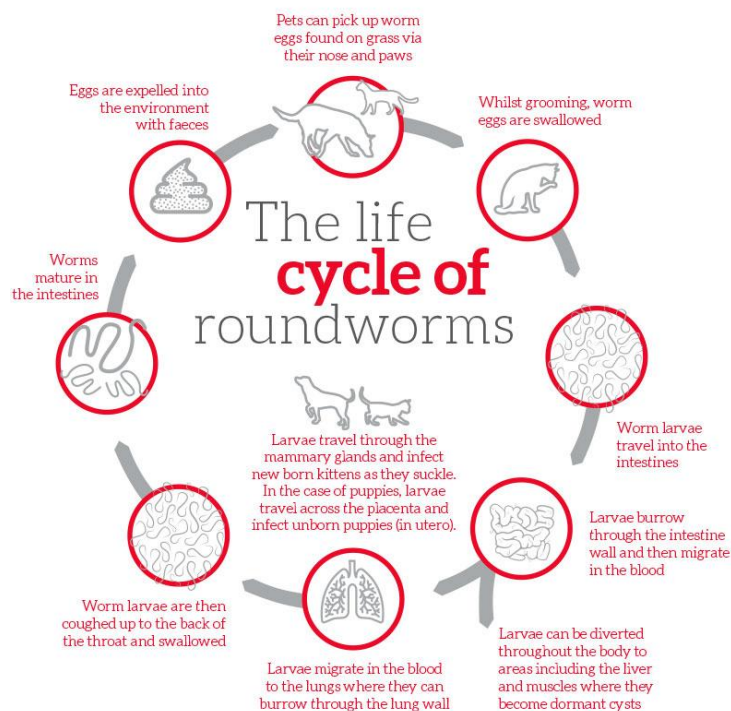
Sulfadimethoxine (Albon) is an oral liquid medication that can be prescribed by a Veterinarian when coccidia is suspected or found positive on a fecal analysis. This medication is generally used once daily for a 7 day period, but may be prescribed for longer by the Veterinarian. Coccidia is a protozoa NOT a "worm" so you would not see any live parasites when using this medication.

Selamectin (Revolution) is a topical monthly liquid that may be applied to skin between shoulder blades of your foster kitty if they are being treated for ear mites or fleas. This also has deworming properties for Hookworms and Roundworms. This is *safe to use on pregnant or nursing momma cats* & can be dosed by the Vetting Team for young kittens. **Please do not apply this product unless instructed to do so.**

Selamectin + Sarolaner (Revolution Plus) is a topical monthly liquid that may be applied to skin between shoulder blades of your foster kitty if they are being treated for ear mites, fleas or ticks. This also has deworming properties for Hookworms and Roundworms as well. This product however, has *not been approved for pregnant or nursing momma cats*. Please do not apply this product unless instructed to do so.

Praziquantel + Pyrantel (Drontal Tablets) are an oral tablet that may be prescribed by a Veterinarian if we are concerned that your foster cat has Tapeworms. Tapeworms are not contagious and they are commonly seen after a cat has come into our care with fleas. The way that tapeworms are contracted is by ingestion of live fleas. If you see small segments (looks like small grains of rice) on your cat's rear end or in the litterbox please alert mentor & Stephanie so that we can discuss the next steps.

There are a wide variety of intestinal parasites that cats can have. Some may have a smaller parasitic burden than others and that is just one reason that it is important to deworm our foster kittens every 2 weeks with Pyrantel/Strongid. Below is an example of the lifecycle of roundworms. By treating them every 2 weeks we hope to eliminate the different stages of the lifecycle of the parasites. If we deworm them once and then never repeat it defeats the purpose all together because there could be adult worms actively producing eggs at the same time that additional eggs are turning into larvae. It is a complicated process to explain but it does account for why we can have large bellied kittens even after multiple doses of deworming. If you would like to know more about each parasitic lifecycle Stephanie is more than happy to email you about them.



Cleaning out litter boxes is a major key in helping to rid our fosters of their parasitic burden. Not only should we be scooping them at least twice daily, but after deworming with medications and loose stools clear up we should be doing a thorough dumping, scrubbing and refilling with fresh clean litter. If you know that your foster kitties are going through Giardia treatment their litter boxes should be dumped/scrubbed/refreshed every 5 days. You should also be cleaning their rear ends once daily during treatment to help eliminate as much spreading of the Giardia oocysts as possible. When you thoroughly clean your litter boxes make sure to eliminate ALL organic material (poop & pee) before using your bleach solution.

Below is a link with handy chart for diluting bleach and making a disinfectant and also our cleaning handbook

Please note that bleach disinfectants once mixed are only good for 24 hour period. Fresh bleach mixture will need to be remade daily. Also make sure when using bleach to wear gloves and clean litter boxes in a well ventilated area. Do not use bleach near kittens.

[Diluting Bleach for Disinfection | ASPCApro](#)
[Cleaning Handbook - Google Docs](#)
[My pet has Giardia...Now what do I do - Google Doc](#)

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, contact Stephanie Queen & Kitten Care Manager and your mentor immediately:

- ☐ 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 all the time
- ☐ Fever
- ☐ Paralysis
- ☐ Extreme change in attitude or behavior
- ☐ Not eating or drinking regularly
- ☐ Temperature too low (below 98°F) or too high (above 102.5°F)

Please have specifics and photos (if applicable) ready to give when contacting myself & your mentor. If able please take a temperature on your kitten so that we can help your kitten in a more timely manner. **MENTORS** if you are contacted by a mentee without Stephanie being cc'd on the email please remember to reply and cc Kitten/Queen Assistant as she is the first point of contact for Vetting team for mamas & kittens. Thank you!

Common Ailments:

Upper Respiratory Infection- (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, fever, discolored (green or yellow) nose or eye discharge, and/or a fever. Please contact your mentor and Stephanie if you suspect your kitten(s) of having an Upper Respiratory Infection. Vetting will then be contacted by Stephanie and they will advise next steps.

- 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% contact Stephanie and mentor ASAP.
- 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.
- Provide supplemental warmth, especially for young kittens (rice sock, snuggle safe warming disk, etc.) make sure to test the heat source with your own hand before placing with kittens. You may need to add layers of blankets in between heat source and kittens to protect their skin from burns.

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 then 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 in well.

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 let it sit there 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 set on the eyelid to soften the material for longer. Once everything has been cleaned around the eye you can administer eye medications. It will be helpful to the kitten if you can gently wipe the eye clean multiple times a 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. Never share between kittens either.

Vomiting-can be very dangerous for kittens because they dehydrate so quickly. Vomiting is not as common as diarrhea, so it's especially troubling, especially if the kitten is vomiting repeatedly. Contact your mentor and Stephanie right away.

Dehydration-can kill a small kitten quickly. Stephanie can advise you on how to do a skin tenting test. With smaller kittens another way to test hydration is to feel the gums. If they are sticky instead of slippery, the kitten is dehydrated. Also look at the color of the gums. If it is white with no color, please report this when you contact mentor and Stephanie.

GOT DIARRHEA?! PLAN & PROTOCOLS

- A drop or two of bright red blood on poop is not that abnormal, especially if we have been dealing with diarrhea or straining. However, they should not have this happen every single time they poop. It's usually a reaction to something that they ate, new food, stress, new location, deworming or straining.
- More than a few drops, persistent bleeding from rear end is NOT normal. Contact me immediately!

Diarrhea is probably the most common problem with kittens. Runny poop 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. **Contact me when first signs of diarrhea are noticed.**

FortiFlora probiotics, Gastrointestinal canned food & dewormer should always be in your kitten care kit.

You should be feeding only one type of canned and dry kitten food preferably the Royal Canin Mama/Baby cat, Purina ProPlan or Hills kitten food that we supply you with.

If you are asked to collect a stool sample for testing

- Obtain a fecal sample in a clean container- or tinfoil is fine.
 - The ideal sample is at least the size of a Milk Dud or a half inch round sample.
 - If the cat has diarrhea then scoop up a teaspoon worth into a ziplock baggie.
 - The sample can have litter on it, but make sure there is more feces than litter.
 - Samples should be collected SAME DAY and be as fresh as possible
 - We are shifting to in-house care at HQ, so please make sure to bring the sample to HQ and confirm that someone will be there. Samples need to be dropped off before 4:45pm as they are picked up by IDEXX Lab driver.

****Please note that there are multiple tests that can be performed on stool samples. We start with the basics and if needed may have you bring in additional samples for more advanced diagnostics.**

- Results (usually turn around time is 24-72 hours depending on the test)
 - The Kitten/Queen coordinator will contact you if any parasites are found in the fecal test and to prescribe any additional medications.
 - If your foster kittens need medication, you will need to get this from the clinic or HQ.
 - If it will be impossible for you to return for necessary medications in the next few days, please contact your mentor for assistance.

If there are no parasites found on the fecal test and still no improvement in diarrhea, then:

- Contact me and I will help start process of scheduling an appointment with a Veterinarian.
- If the kittens are eating well, gaining weight, active, and not dehydrated, the diarrhea may not need treatment and may be something the kittens just need to outgrow as their immune system matures. This is one very important reason to keep FortiFlora probiotics and GI food on hand in your kitten care kit. We often use those while navigating tummy troubles!

Please note that any time during this protocol, if your kittens are vomiting or dehydrated, have liquid (not forming) diarrhea, diarrhea dripping from their bottoms, refusing to eat for more than 8 hours, or acting lethargic, you should immediately alert me and include your mentor.

General and Emergency Veterinary Care

- Pet Haven covers all approved medical expenses for the cats and kittens in the foster program. General medical care for Pet Haven foster cats is provided at the direction of the Vetting team and Veterinarians at partnering clinics. You will receive emails in regards to when your preferred Vet Clinic has been notified that a new foster is in your care & when care has been approved. If you have concerns about your kittens or mama cat please address those concerns with me in advance to your scheduled appointment. If we do not know in advance those issues may not get addressed at the time of the appointment.
- Once a foster cat or kitten is in your care, you are responsible for transporting him or her for necessary medical care. Always use a secure carrier, designed specifically for companion animals, when transporting cats. Make sure that all locks and door is in correct placement. If you need assistance with transportation please contact your mentor. Please note that we are shifting all basic care to HQ. We have transport people who are able to help if we have advanced notice when you are contacted by the Vet Care Manager to set up your appointments.
- Should foster cats require care from veterinary specialists, Pet Haven will arrange appointments with approved veterinarians in the MSP area.
- Foster parents must not medicate or shave any cats in their care without prior approval from their mentor. If it is medically related please contact me- example bad diarrhea and long haired cat that you are having difficulty keeping clean.
- Emergency care must be approved PRIOR to the vet visit. **The steps are to reach out to Stephanie first via CELL PHONE 651.491.8525 then if you cannot reach me, the Vetting CELL PHONE 651.206.2856.** 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 or myself.. Partnering ER Clinic will need to contact Pet Haven before care can be provided.
- ***IF YOUR FOSTER IS HAVING TROUBLE BREATHING, TONGUE OR GUMS BLUE/PALE/NON-PINK START HEADING TO NEAREST EMERGENCY VET CLINIC***

Cleaning Between Your Foster Groups

The joy of letting go of one foster group is knowing that they will be going to loving homes while you are able to take in another that may not otherwise be able to find shelter to grow in such a loving environment. Please consider the following guidelines when transitioning between groups.

Once kittens are adopted it is time to clean and prepare your kitten room for your next foster group. You will need to remove all bedding, and wash it in hot water with bleach added. Follow your 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 with hot soapy water. Rinse well and then fill with hot water, add one cup of bleach and let it sit for at least 10 minutes. Rinse and dry well.



For food and water dishes you can run them through the dishwasher and they will be cleaned for your next group. Or, you can clean them as you did the litter box if you don't have a dishwasher.

If you have carpeted floors you will need to vacuum well and spot clean any areas that need it. 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 again with a bleach water solution (1 cup of bleach to 1 gallon of water) and let it sit for ten minutes. Afterwards you will want to rinse with clear water and then let it dry.

You will need to wipe down all surfaces with a bleach water solution or Clorox Cleanup that can sit on surfaces for 10-15 minutes. You should also wipe the walls down. You do not have to do all of the wall but at least the bottom 3 feet.

If you have a bed in the room, change the covering on it. If you have a chair or couch in the room you will need to vacuum it and spot clean if needed. Ideally, your foster room will be void of anything covered in material like a chair or couch unless it is covered with a plastic sheet designed to protect them.

If your fosters were treated for viruses, fungus, parasites or illness DEEP CLEANING and depending on the illness periods of waiting time in between fosters may be required. If you are ready to tag your next fosters (and previous fosters were sick in your home) it is important that you inquire whether or not your home will be ready and Vetting team will advise.

If needed, reference page 21 for making at home diluted Bleach solution & other cleaning recommendations in our cleaning handbook. :)