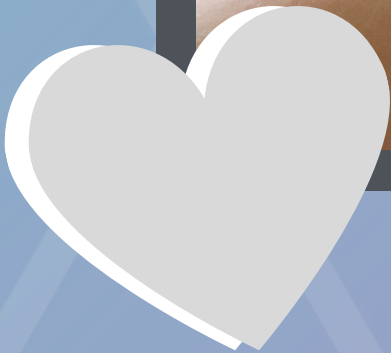
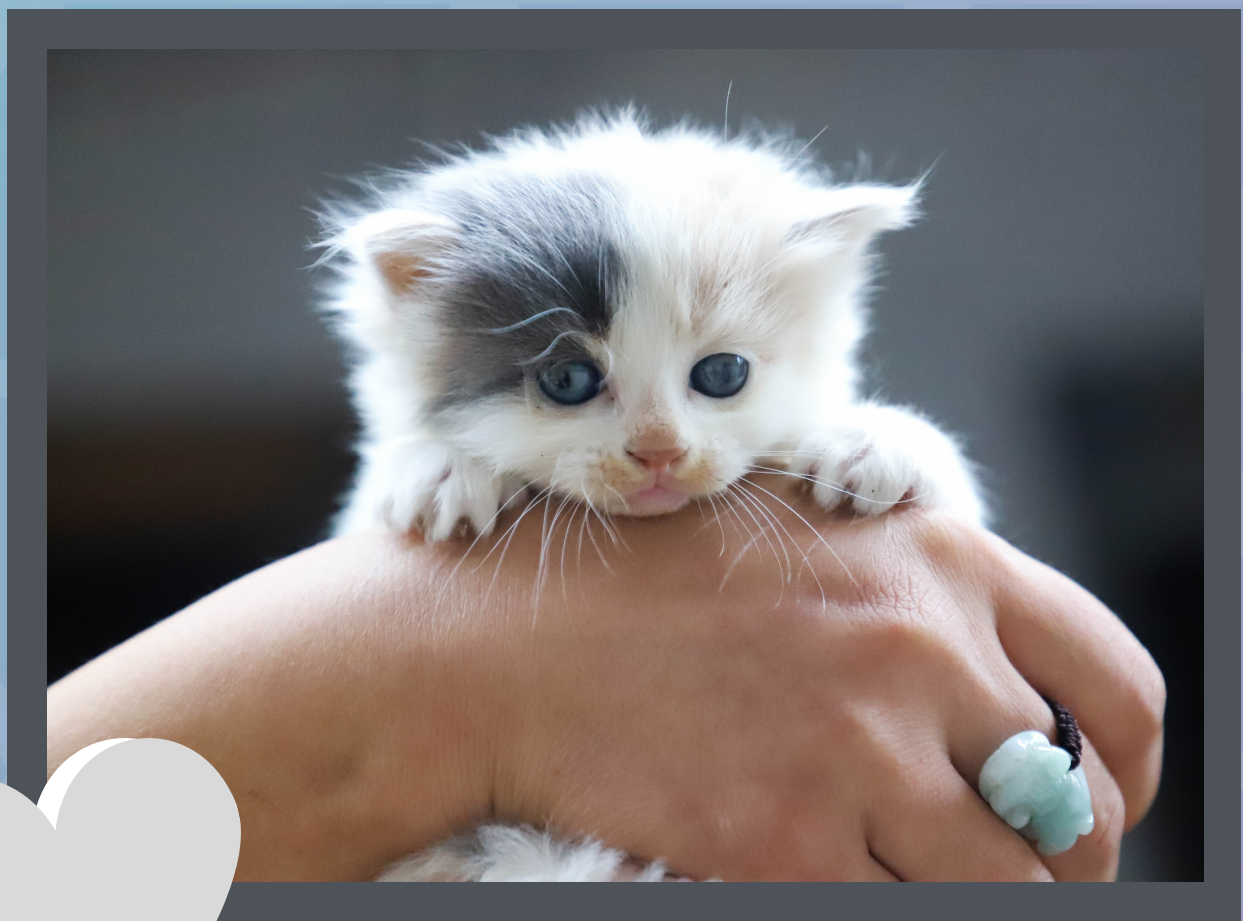


YOUR GUIDE TO *Kitten Fostering*

IT'S GOING TO BE FUN!



FIRST...THANK YOU!

You are about to take home a bundle or bundles of joy that we promise will steal a part of your heart. Thank you SO much for this! You are saving the lives of these sweet kittens and making it so we can continue to bring more into our care.

Let this guide be there to help you get started and to answer questions when you aren't sure what to do. Please, also know you are supported by this kitten saving team. Should you ever need anything, don't hesitate to reach out.

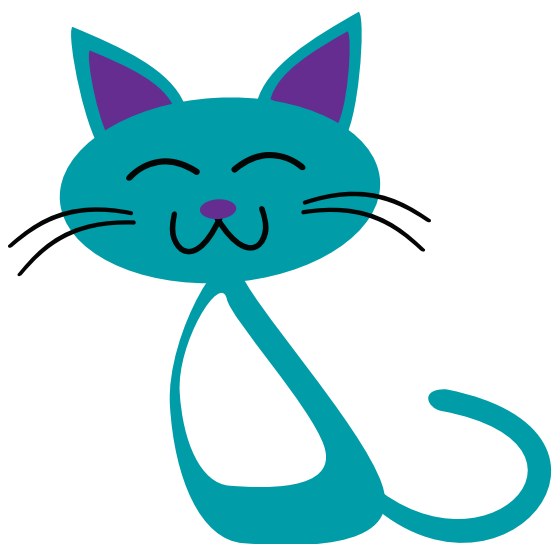
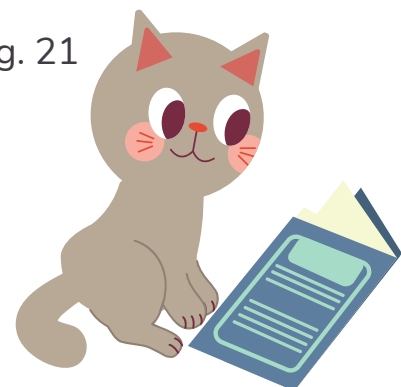


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BEFORE THEY COME HOME

Your journey of kitten fostering will start right before you bring your little ones home. Having your home and the space ready for the kittens will help you get started off on the right PAW!



Prepare the Kitten's Space

When you bring the kittens home you should have a small, closed-off space set aside for them to start off in. A bathroom or a bedroom with a door you can keep closed is perfect. This will ensure they are kept safe and are able to adjust to their new surroundings while also being quarantined from other animals you may have.

You will want to have somewhere soft for them to sleep. They will be more than happy with an old blanket or a couple of towels.

You'll also want to think about "kitten-proofing" this space. Kittens love to climb, jump, and explore. You may want to remove curtains and take breakable items off of shelves. Close off spaces they could hide in. Also, notify all household members to keep the toilet lid closed at all times.

Prepare a space to place their litter box and food. Kittens are just learning how to use a litter box, so an area that can be easily cleaned is a good place for it.

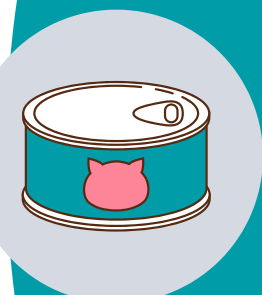
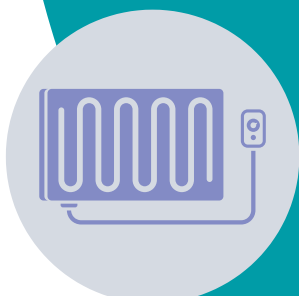
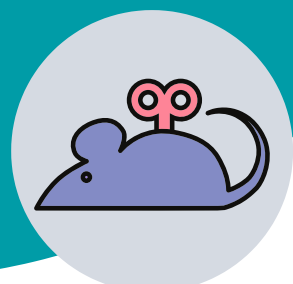
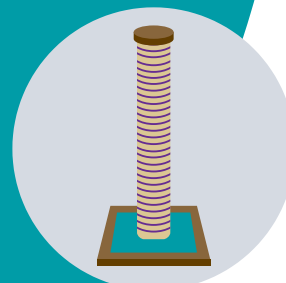
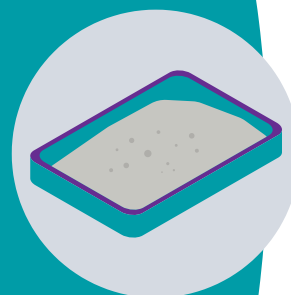
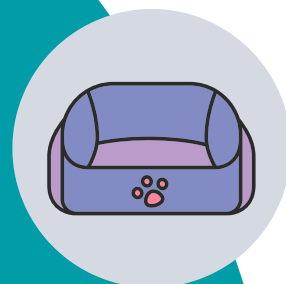
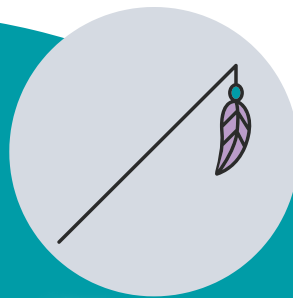
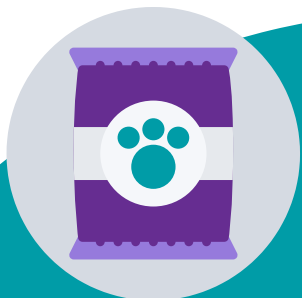


WHAT TO EXPECT

You may be wondering what to expect when you bring your kitten or kittens home. You can expect little balls of adorable fur. Other than that, expect the unexpected. 😊 In all reality, you are taking home a kitten or kittens who need your help to grow, learn, and be loved so, when ready, they can find their FURever homes.

You will be expected to keep their appetites satisfied by keeping their food and water bowls full. Their litter box needs to be kept clean. They require play time and may need to be taught how to play nicely. You will need to monitor their weight and health, and you may need to administer their medication. Don't worry, we'll go over all of this with you!

SUPPLIES



If you can, providing supplies can be incredibly helpful!

- Shallow dishes for food and fresh water
- Two or more litter boxes with low sides
- Kitten toys
- A scratching post or box
- Kitten food, wet and dry
- A soft area to sleep, old blankets or towels are perfect
- A heating pad to be kept on low and covered with towels or blankets
- A small enclosed area for sleep, like a cat carrier or box

CARING FOR THE KITTENS

As the kittens grow, their needs for food will change. Below is an approximate guide for feeding them.



We'll start with the youngest, bottle babies. These are kittens age 0-4 weeks with no mother. These babies will be incredibly dependent on you and will need to be fed on a schedule. They will require kitten formula (NEVER cows milk) from a bottle every 2-4 hours. If you are fostering bottle babies, make sure to read pages 16-17.



By week four, the babies should be ready to start to be weaned off of the bottle. Provide available kitten formula mixed with wet kitten food at all times, while still bottle feeding every 5-6 hours.



You can now start to provide gruel for the kittens, kitten formula mixed with wet and dry kitten food. Encourage the kittens to keep eating by placing them by the food. Gruel should be available at all times.



By now the kittens are ready for dry kitten food, wet kitten food, and water. Keep the food and water available for them at all times.

After a busy day of playing, eating, and cuddling, the kittens will be ready for bed. Provide them a soft, warm place to sleep on in their room. You can use a heating pad on low covered with a towel to provide the warmth they need. Cuddles are encouraged!

CARING FOR THE KITTENS

Play Time

Kitten play time is a very important part of your foster kitten's development. Interacting with other kittens encourages them to develop proper kitty play skills and provides them exercise and stimulus.

You will want to provide toys for the kittens. Toys they can be **left alone with** are toys they can not ingest, get caught in, or in any way harm themselves. For example, cardboard boxes, large balls, or toilet paper rolls. When **you are home to supervise and play** with the kittens, playing with feathers on a string or toy mice is PURRfect!

You will want to be careful not to teach the kittens bad habits, like biting hands or feet. Kittens are natural born hunters, so biting and clawing comes naturally. Encourage them to bite, chase, and claw their toys, NOT you.



Weighing Kittens

Healthy kittens should be gaining about 4 ounces (113 grams) a week. Monitoring their weight is essential to watching their growth and health. You will need to weigh each kitten once a day and track their weight.

To weigh the kittens you will need a digital scale. A food scale works great! Kittens can get a bit squirmy, so using a bowl to place them in can be helpful. Just make sure you tare the scale with the bowl on it. Then, place the kitten in the bowl and write down the weight. Make sure you track pounds and ounces.

If you notice that a kitten is not gaining weight or is losing weight, reach out to your contact at the rescue or shelter right away!



CARING FOR THE KITTENS



Litter Box Training

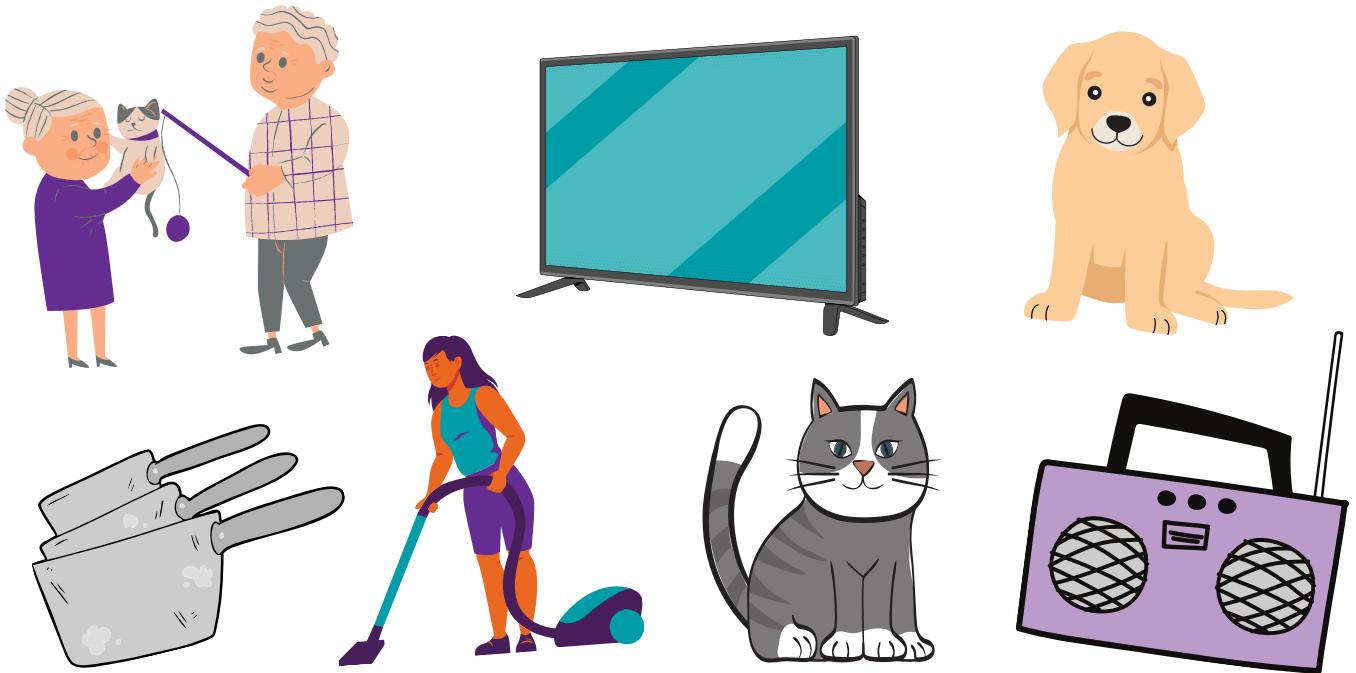
Kittens learn how to use the litter box by watching their mothers, sooo you know what that means! HA! Only KITTING here! 🐱 However, kittens who lost their mother at an early age may not know how to use a litter box and might need a little help learning.

To help set these babies up for success, you will want to have one to two litter boxes in every room the kitten is in. You can use Tupperware with low sides, disposable boxes, or even styrofoam trays. Encourage the kittens to use their litter box by placing them in the box every 20 or so minutes during playtime and after mealtime.

Keep their litter boxes clean to encourage use. Scooping them once a day and replacing the litter and washing or replacing the disposable boxes every 2-3 days is recommended. If your kitten is having trouble getting to the litter box, please let your contact at the rescue or shelter know so they help guide you on what to do next.

SOCIALIZATION

As your kittens' foster parent, you are helping prepare them for their FURever home. Introducing them to new situations, different people, and animals is all part of helping them learn how to be comfortable in their living environment.



Noises

You will want your kitten to become accustomed to normal household noises, such as the vacuum, television, or even the clanking of pans. It is helpful to introduce these noises gradually. Think about first vacuuming in the room next door to the kittens, then outside their door. They will become more comfortable with loud sounds this way. (Maybe never 100% sure of loud noises but this will help!) Having someone play with the kittens while introducing them to new noises can be helpful too.

Animal Friends

Potential adopters of your foster kittens are likely to have other animals. If possible, **safely** introducing them to other animals can be very beneficial for these little babies. You will only want to do this with kittens 5+weeks or older and with animals that pose absolutely NO harm to the babies. At first, keep the babies separated from the other animal(s) by a door so they can sniff with a safe boundary. You can also swap out blankets so they get used to each others' scents. After a couple of days of this, put the kittens in a box and let the cat or dog smell the box. If you are introducing a dog, keep it on a leash. If you are introducing a new cat, the can be very territorial. Keep an eye for any aggressive behavior. If your cat seems too upset, you can start the introduction process over. Be patient. Make sure the dog is sitting, and if it becomes too excited sniffing the kitten's box take the dog out of the room. Do not reward the dog until it is calmly sitting by your side. Again, be patient and remember that it can take time when introducing the kittens to new animals.

People

The more people that can share love with the kittens, the better. Encourage gentle handling and pets of the kittens. Supervise young children with the kittens to ensure proper handling of the babies. Meeting new people should be a positive experience for the kittens. Have your friends and/or family give the kittens treats and play with their toys to help the kittens get ready for their PURRfect future family!





MEDICATION

Many foster kittens are not coming into our care as the "picture of health", and many will require some sort of medication. When you pick up your foster kittens you will be given instructions on how much and how often to administer the medication. You will also be shown how to administer the meds.

Keep in mind these sweet little babies may turn into tigers when trying to give them their meds, but it is imperative that they receive their medication. It can be helpful to use the 'burrito method' by wrapping them up in a towel to keep their little claws at bay. Another trick is to kneel on the ground and position them in between your legs, hold them by the scruff of their neck (like the momma cat holds her kittens), and then give the medication as instructed.

You will need to bring your kittens in to get their vaccines, so please remember these important dates.

YOUR KITTEN'S HEALTH

Though they like to appear tough, your little kittens are quite fragile. Being a vigilant foster parent is incredibly important to helping them grow big and strong.

IF YOUR KITTEN IS LETHARGIC, COLD, HAVING TROUBLE BREATHING, OR HAS AN INJURY THIS IS AN EMERGENCY, AND THE KITTEN NEEDS TO HAVE IMMEDIATE CARE!

The list below shows common health concerns that need to be monitored and brought to the attention of your contact at the rescue or shelter for further help. Please keep an eye out for the following:

<i>Symptom</i>	<i>Monitor For</i>	<i>Contact</i>
Diarrhea	It is not uncommon for kittens to have diarrhea, especially if they are still eating only wet food or nursing or on a bottle. It can also be caused by stress. You will need to alert your contact at the rescue or shelter if the diarrhea is very watery or large in volume.	If you notice blood or mucoid diarrhea please immediately alert your contact so they can give you further instructions. Kittens around 4-5 weeks old should be having solid stool. Let your contact know if it remains soft.
Dehydration	Lethargic behavior, not eating or drinking are signs of dehydration. To test for dehydration gently pinch the skin on the kitten's scruff of the neck. The kitten's skin should fall immediately back into place to indicate they are hydrated.	If the skin creates a "tent" or slowly flattens back out, the kitten is dehydrated and IMMEDIATE care is needed. DEHYDRATION CAN BE FATAL. REACH OUT TO YOUR CONTACT AT THE RESCUE OR SHELTER RIGHT AWAY!
Constipation	Your kittens should be having a bowel movement every one to two days.	If a kitten has not had a bowel movement after two days or is straining to defecate, please alert your contact. This can be fatal and needs to be addressed right away!
Vomiting	Kittens will sometimes eat too fast or too much and throw up, however this should not be a common occurrence.	If your kitten is vomiting two or more times in one day or if there is bile or blood in the vomit notify your contact at the rescue or shelter right away.

<i>Symptom</i>	<i>Monitor For</i>	<i>Contact</i>
Lethargic	Monitoring and knowing your kittens' normal energy levels can be life saving.	If you notice a drop in a kitten's energy level, if a kitten is unable to stand, feels cold to the touch, or cannot be roused contact your rescue or shelter IMMEDIATELY! This can be a sign of fading kitten syndrome and the kitten needs IMMEDIATE care.
No weight gain or weight loss	As we spoke about before, weighing kittens is essential to monitoring their health and growth.	If a kitten is losing weight or not gaining weight please reach out to your contact at the rescue or shelter right away!
Hair loss	Kittens are still growing hair around their eyes, mouth, and ears, so thin hair in these areas is normal.	If you notice hair missing or bald patches elsewhere please reach out to your contact at the rescue or shelter, as this could indicate ringworm or dermatitis.
Pain or strain when urinating	Kittens should be urinating about once a day.	Please alert your contact if a kitten has not urinated for more than 24 hours needs. If you notice that a kitten is crying out or straining to urinate this could be life-threatening and your contact needs to know IMMEDIATELY. This can be fatal and needs to be addressed right away!
Ear scratching	If your kittens start frequently scratching their ear or shaking their heads, your little friends might have some bugs in their ears. You may also notice dark discharge in the ears.	They more than likely have ear mites and need treatment. Let your contact know so they can see the vet.

If you are ever unsure about the status or health of your kittens, do not hesitate to reach out. The team is here to help YOU take care of your foster kittens.

EMERGENCIES

Gasping for air, wheezing, breathing with an open mouth, or trouble breathing

Not breathing

More than 24 hrs of continuous diarrhea

Vomiting for longer than 12 hours

Any trauma (broken bone, unconscious, limping, hit by a car)

Blood in stool and/or vomit

Bleeding from nostril, anus, or injury

Lethargy lasting longer than a day - not eating, low energy, weak, can't stand

12 hours of not eating, or missing two feeds for neonatal babies

Dehydration



**THESE SITUATIONS REQUIRE EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARE.
CONTACT YOUR RESCUE OR SHELTER IMMEDIATELY FOR
FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS.**

BOTTLE BABIES

Taking care of bottle babies or newborn kittens will be one of the hardest but most rewarding journeys as a kitten foster parent. Neonatal kittens are reliant on YOU to survive. You will be the one to help them grow big and strong so they can live a long healthy life. Here are some tips as you get started!

Warmth

These little babies need to be kept warm. Keep the area they stay in warm by providing a heating pad covered with a towel. Keep the heating pad on low to prevent burns. Also, provide a space where they can move away from the heat, should they become too warm.

Formula Prep

These newborn kittens will need around the clock feeding time. From 0 weeks to 4 weeks they will need bottle-fed kitten formula every two to four hours. Around 3-4 weeks you can begin to mix in canned kitten food with the formula for them to start eating out of a dish along with regular bottle feeding.

Feeding Schedule

You can mix the kitten's formula and keep it in your refrigerator for up to 24 hours. Heat just enough formula for feeding time and discard any that has not been consumed, as it can develop harmful bacteria. Check the temperature of the formula before feeding the kittens. Drop a few drops of formula on your wrist to make sure it is not too hot. Do NOT feed the kittens cow milk.



Feeding the Babies

Using the "burrito wrap" method for the kitten is helpful when bottle feeding. Gently wrap them in a towel or blanket while keeping their front legs free to "knead". Feed the kitten with its belly down, pointed toward the floor to ensure proper consumption. Do NOT feed the kittens with their bellies up and backs down.

Once in position, make sure some formula is in the nipple, let a drop out, and place it in the kitten's mouth. You may need to move it around a little bit. The kitten should then latch on and begin to suckle. Keep the bottle at a 45-degree angle to ensure no air gets into the kitten's stomach.

When feeding the kitten be sure the formula is not flowing too quickly or too heavily, as this can cause the kitten to aspirate. Keep the hole of the bottle nipple small to ensure the formula flows at a slow rate. Do not squeeze the bottle for the kitten.

If the kitten starts to cough or bubbles come out of the kitten's nose, stop feeding immediately. This means they may have gotten formula in their lungs or aspirated. If this happens, try to get the kitten to cough or sneeze by patting the kitten gently on the back. You can also hold them upside down by their tail for a short moment to help get the formula out of their lungs. Please contact your shelter or rescue if this happens to determine if the kitten needs additional care.

Bathroom Stimulation

After eating, a mother kitten will groom her babies to stimulate them to pee and poop. To simulate this, wipe the kittens with a baby wipe or a warm wet cotton swab or cotton ball around their genital and anal area. After they have done their business, be sure to wipe up this area once again. This process MUST be repeated after EVERY feeding to ensure healthy kittens.

Note

IF A KITTEN IS UNRESPONSIVE AND/OR LETHARGIC TRY WIPING KARO SYRUP ON THEIR GUMS TO RAISE THEIR GLUCOSE LEVELS, AND THEN CONTACT YOUR RESCUE OR SHELTER IMMEDIATELY FOR FURTHER HELP!



MOMMA CAT AND BABIES



If you are fostering a momma cat and her kittens, keep in mind that a healthy momma cat knows best. A mother cat should be able to take care of the kittens for their first three to four weeks. Mother cats will nurse their babies and clean them. She will encourage them to eat and will help keep them warm.

The momma cat will want to make a nest for herself and her kittens, so provide her a space in a warm, dry, and quiet place. A large cardboard box works great. Keep this area lined with newspaper and place a blanket or towel folded on top. These materials will need to be replaced every couple of days to keep her area clean. A heating pad can also be used, but make sure there is room for the momma cat and kittens to move away from the heat. Make sure you keep your momma cat well fed by offering her both dry and wet food at all times. Provide her a litter box close to their area as well.

Around 4 weeks old the momma cat will be ready to start weaning her babies. She will not stimulate feeding and may walk away or stand up as the babies try to nurse. You can start placing them in a separate area for a couple of hours, and you can start providing them their own litter box, kitten formula mixed with wet food, and water. Then return them back with their mother and contact your rescue or shelter for the next steps in these little cutie's lives!

CAUTION



Abandonment

Keep in mind that momma cats take care of their young as if they were in nature. This is completely natural, however, you will want to monitor for signs of neglect. The mother cat may show signs of neglect toward a kitten or kittens. This could be because one kitten is the runt and/or show signs of weakness, and it would not generally survive in the wild. The mother cat may also be stressed from moving to a new environment and may neglect all of the kittens. If you notice that the mother does not let a kitten or kittens nurse, is not grooming, not responding to their cries, or is generally distant from the kittens contact your rescue or shelter immediately for further help.

Aggressive Behavior

Mother cats are also very protective of their babies and may be aggressive toward other humans and animals. Do not introduce other pets to the mother and her babies. Keeping them in a calm and quiet environment will help keep their stress levels and aggression down.

HELP US FIND THEIR FUREVER HOME!



As the kittens' foster parent, you are the special person that gets to help them find their PURRfect FURever home! We may enlist you to help us market these little balls of fur. Please take as many pictures and videos as you like, and we'll let you know when we can use this material to show the babies off to potential adopters. Keep in mind, as you help them grow, what makes each kitten special and what they need from a FURever home.

LAST MEOWS

Typically, when a kitten reaches 2 pounds in weight and are in good health, they will be ready to be spayed or neutered and will be put up for adoption. We'll be here to help this process go smoothly.

Once your sweet babies have finished their time with you we ask that you do a deep clean of the spaces they were in so you're ready to take in the next group of lucky kittens. Place items like food bowls and litter boxes in the dishwasher to ensure a thorough clean. Wash all blankets and towels with hot water and bleach. Toys that cannot be sterilized should be thrown away. You don't want to pass on any lingering germs from one litter to the next, so please sanitize thoroughly.

Thank you again for everything you are going to do for these sweet babies. You truly are these kittens' superhero!

