

FOSTER KITTEN RESOURCES



OC Animal Care



So, you're thinking about fostering bottle kittens... Check out the online resources below to prepare your home for incoming kittens!

SETTING UP A SPACE FOR YOUR FOSTER KITTENS

- How to Prepare a Space for Your Foster Kittens: <https://youtu.be/AUFsGUtVtC>

SUPPLIES NEEDED FOR KITTENS

- Essential Kitten Supplies: <http://www.kittenlady.org/supplies>
- Downloadable Fast Facts Neonatal Kitten Care "Go Kits": <https://kittencoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/NKC-Fast-Facts-Kitten-Care-Kit-5.9.17.pdf>
- ASPCA Supply List and Tips for Foster Kittens: <https://www.aspcapro.org/sites/default/files/aspcapro-mfn-kitten-foster-list.pdf>

AGING YOUR KITTENS

HOW OLD IS THAT KITTEN?

Alley Cat Allies®

Kittens are adorable at any age, but did you know that figuring out how old a kitten is can help determine what sort of care they need? It can be tricky to tell, but our at-a-glance kitten progression chart, featuring Darling the kitten, is here to help you out!

NEWBORN	ONE WEEK	TWO WEEKS	THREE WEEKS	FOUR WEEKS	
 <i>so fragile!</i>			 <i>a little wobbly!</i>		
When kittens are first born they are completely helpless—their eyes are closed, their ears are folded, and they can't stand, keep themselves warm, eliminate waste, or eat on their own. They rely on mom for everything!	Darling is starting to become more aware of his surroundings! At about seven days old, a kitten's ears will unfold and their eyes may start to open.	Look at those blue peepers! Darling's eyes are fully open, and he is taking his first wobbly steps. Kittens this age start interacting more with each other, but still need mom.	Darling's now playing with his siblings and getting more mobile. You should be able to tell if kittens are boys or girls! You can start providing a litter box and wet food.	Look how much Darling has grown! At four weeks kittens are sturdy on their feet and playing with each other, toys, and people.	
FIVE WEEKS	SIX WEEKS	SEVEN WEEKS	EIGHT WEEKS	NINE WEEKS	TEN WEEKS
 <i>let's play!</i>			 <i>so grown up!</i>		 <i>ready to take on the world!</i>
Get ready for a lot of fun! Darling is now full of energy and plays exuberantly. Interacting with people is important for kittens at this age. Darling is developing lots of personality!	Every day Darling is getting more sure of himself through socialization and play. He's using the litter box and eating cat food—though he still visits mom for snacks and comfort.	Darling is almost fully weaned, and continues to play and learn. Being introduced to new people, places in the home, and other pets is an important part of socialization.	Two pounds! Darling now weighs enough to be neutered. He's also getting more skilled and adventurous. Darling is learning so much from his mom, siblings, and human caregiver.	Looking pretty grown-up, Darling! At this age kittens are behaving and using their body language like adult cats. Darling is eating all solid food, and his eyes have gone from blue to yellow.	Darling is fully weaned, neutered, and—because he was socialized to people—ready for his loving adoptive home. They grow up so fast!


Get even more details (and cute pics!) with our week-by-week kitten progression resource at alleycat.org/KittenProgression

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- Downloadable Maddie's Fund Kitten Bottle Feeding and Stomach Capacity Chart: <https://www.maddiesfund.org/assets/documents/Institute/Kitten%20Bottle%20Feeding%20and%20Stomach%20Capacity%20Chart.pdf>

STIMULATING TO USE THE BATHROOM

- How to Stimulate a Kitten: <http://www.kittenlady.org/stimulating>
- Instructional Video on Stimulating Kittens: <https://youtu.be/QGKFaz-dpVc>




Fast Facts

Kitten Stool Chart

Stool Color	Notes	Action
Brown	Normal	No additional action needed.
Mucous	Clear (poss. slight yellow or white) slimy substance. Bowel irritation. Possible	Needs attention.
Bloody - red	Red blood seen in stool or irritation at rectum or anus. Bowel irritation. Viral or bacterial infection.	See vet ASAP - immediately if lots of blood.
Black	Tarry; possibly with large gelatinous clots. Bleeding in upper GI tract. Exception is meconium which is very dark - possibly with greenish tinge.	See vet immediately if not meconium. Meconium is seen at 1st defecation at 1 or 2 days old.
Orange	May indicate liver or gallbladder issue.	See vet.
Yellow	With a very foul smell may indicate coccidia. Can be bacterial overgrowth/imbalance.	See vet.
Greenish	Severe bacterial infection.	Needs treatment.
Gray	Overfeeding; lack of probiotics or bile.	Reduce food intake and/or frequency; add probiotics.
White	Severe bacterial imbalance or lack of flora. Life-threatening!	Give probiotics and seek veterinary care immediately.

Consistency Notes:

- Any stool softer than toothpaste consistency is cause for concern. Kittens with liquid diarrhea are at risk of dehydration and death. Seek treatment immediately.
- Kittens straining to defecate or who have not defecated for more than two days may be constipated and need to be seen by a veterinarian.




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- Downloadable Fast Facts Kitten Stool Chart: https://kittencoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/NKC-Fast-Facts_Poop-Chart_5-2018.pdf

BATHING AND FLEAS

- Fleas and What to Do: <https://www.kittenlady.org/fleas>
- How to give a Kitten Flea Bath: <https://youtu.be/jkZnUF846zw>
- Different Baths to Keep Kittens Clean: <https://youtu.be/gqxzUan3AP8>



Fast Facts

Neonatal Kittens and Fleas

It is critically important to perform a thorough intake exam on all kittens, including using a flea comb. No jumping fleas were noted on the kitten at the top right; however, upon combing, a lot of flea dirt became visible. Upon bathing, many live fleas were revealed.



Fleas can be deadly to a neonatal kitten. As long as there are no open wounds, it is important to bathe the kitten when fleas and/or flea dirt are seen since over-the-counter and prescribed flea treatments are not made for use on neonatal kittens. Bathing neonatal kittens is an important skill to learn and to become confident in performing – it can save a kitten's life.

We recommend using a very small amount of Dawn dish soap with warm water. Part of the bath will require that fleas be removed if they don't wash away. Do not be surprised if the fleas move toward the head and face during the bathing process. Be ready with your flea comb and tweezers to get them as they move up!

Once the kitten is free of fleas, be sure to dry gently and thoroughly with a towel. You can also use a hair dryer on the lowest setting, and be sure that it is not too close. It's a good idea to gently buff the kitten dry keeping your hand moving between the kitten and the dryer to ensure the heat is not too hot or too direct for the kitten. You may not get all of the fleas, especially due to the lifecycle of a flea, so you may need to repeat the bath in a few days.

Be careful and check that the kitten is not chilled after the bath by including a SnuggleSafe or other safe warming device (placed under only half of the housing area). Remember, neonatal kittens cannot regulate their own body temperatures. It's also a good idea to wash bedding in hot water and to dry it thoroughly to kill fleas and their eggs – do this daily. Make sure other adult animals in the household are on a flea preventative (a good practice if you are fostering), and be sure to read the label! Many products for dogs are not safe for kittens or cats. Keep all felines away from recently treated canines or be sure the product used on the dog is also safe for cats and kittens.

Pictured at the bottom right is the same kitten after a thorough drying and a good meal!


Kitten Care Tip: Make original, blue Dawn dish soap a part of your fostering toolkit. Be prepared – always have it just in case it's needed!

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- Downloadable Fast Facts Neonatal Kittens and Fleas: https://kittencoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/NKC-Fast-Facts_Fleas_9.2017.pdf

IMPORTANCE OF A HEAT SOURCE

- Different Heat Sources for Kittens: <http://www.kittenlady.org/heatsources>



Fast Facts

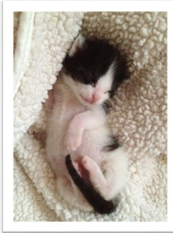
Hypothermia in Neonatal Kittens

Hypothermia is a major cause of neonatal kitten death. Because kittens cannot self regulate their body temperature until about four weeks of age, ambient temperature can significantly affect their survival. Without mom to keep them warm, body functions may begin to shut down as their core temperature decreases. Kittens should feel warm when you pick them up. With a cold kitten, warming is the absolute first priority as cold kittens cannot metabolize food or medications. Do NOT feed a cold kitten as this is dangerous and may even lead to death. Begin warming immediately with consistent moderate, not extreme, heat. Holding kittens against your body is only a partially helpful emergency measure as our body temperature is lower than the 100-102 degrees F that a kitten's body temperature should ideally be. Get the kitten to a veterinarian as quickly as possible even if responding to the warming techniques.

Orphaned Kittens Temperature Chart ¹			
Age of Kitten	Rectal Temperature	Ambient Nest Temperature	Room Humidity
0-1 weeks	95-99°F	85-90°F	55-60%
2-3 weeks	97-100°F	79-84°F	55-60%
4 weeks	99-101°F	73.5-79°F	55-60%

Tips for Warming Kittens

- ◆ Use a warm (not hot) SnuggleSafe, heating pad on low, warm water bottle, heated rice bag, etc.
- ◆ All heat sources should be covered with a towel so as to moderate the heat and prevent direct contact with the kittens. Be sure warming devices cover only a portion of the kittens' environment so they can crawl away if they become too warm.
- ◆ Constantly monitor the kitten's temperature, and adjust the little one's position to warm all areas of the body.
- ◆ Never leave a debilitated kitten alone with a heat source as overheating and burns may occur.
- ◆ Get the kitten to a veterinarian ASAP – even if the kitten seems to be responding to the warming techniques. A thorough exam will be needed to help determine if the kitten suffered any temporary or permanent injury to its organ systems and if additional treatment is needed.



¹Temperature chart from Maddie's Fund (www.maddiesfund.org)

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- Downloadable Fast Facts Hypothermia in Neonatal Kittens: http://kittencoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/white-Fast-Facts_Hypothermia-v2_2-2017-version-2-white.pdf

NAIL TRIMMING

- How to Trim Your Kittens Nails: <https://www.kittenlady.org/claws>
- Instructional How-To Nail Trimming Video: <https://youtu.be/baZpgnY8GQE>

LITTERBOX TRAINING

- Litter Training: <http://www.kittenlady.org/litter>
- Instructional How to Litter Train Baby Kittens Video: <https://youtu.be/EKe0otXH3Ck>

HOW TO WEAN YOUR KITTENS

- Weaning Kittens: <http://www.kittenlady.org/weaning>
- Weaning a Kitten: <https://pets.webmd.com/cats/weaning-kitten#1-4>
- When Should you Wean Kittens Video: <https://youtu.be/2kAsTM7Kd-k>
- How to Wean Kittens Video: <https://youtu.be/eTEJ4U4x8eQ>

SOCIALIZING YOUR KITTENS

- Kitten Socialization-Teach Your Cat the Basic Life Skills: <https://www.purina.co.uk/cats/key-life-stages/kitten/kitten-socialisation>
- ASPCA Socializing Using Food: <https://www.aspcapro.org/resource/how-use-food-socialize-kittens>

- ASPCA Socializing Kittens: <https://www.aspcapro.org/sites/default/files/resource/downloads/2020-2020-08/aspcakitten-foster-tips.pdf>

GENDER IDENTIFICATION

- Is It a Male or Female Kitten?: https://www.aspcapro.org/sites/default/files/aspcakittensexingfinal_0.pdf
- How to Sex Your Kitten: <https://youtu.be/WTyNJOXycQk>

CLEANING AND DISINFECTING

- Maddies Fund-Cleaning and Disinfections in Foster Homes: https://www.maddiesfund.org/cleaning-and-disinfection-in-foster-homes/presentation_html5.html?_ga=2.54623011.949453534.1594087148-1074109457.1594087148&_ga=2.54623011.949453534.1594087148-1074109457.1594087148
https://www.aspcapro.org/sites/default/files/aspcakittensexingfinal_0.pdf
- Downloadable Deep Cleaning Your Kitten Space: <https://kittencoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Deep-Cleaning-Your-Kitten-Space.pdf>

PROMOTING YOUR FOSTER KITTENS

- Editable Canva template: https://www.canva.com/design/DAEFjehmoNc/share/preview?token=9G_mg2uazyNn8B9p-SKtVw&role=EDITOR&utm_content=DAEFjehmoNc&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link&utm_source=sharebutton
- Kitten Lady How To Take Photos of Kittens: https://www.youtube.com/watch?list=PLZyDy7gy9vvr0m119g5poGvgHM-4Wxv80&v=-SDI-A8RY5E&feature=emb_title
- Kitten Lady Advertising Your Kittens: <https://www.kittenlady.org/advertising>

ADDITIONAL SOURCES

- Kitten Lady Manual: <http://www.kittenlady.org/booklet>
- Best Friends Society Foster Manual: <https://resources.bestfriends.org/article/kitten-foster-manual>
- San Diego Humane Society Orphan Kitten Care Guide: <https://www.sdhumane.org/services/lost-and-found/found-a-kitten/guidlines-for-kittens.pdf>
- University of Wisconsin (Warmth, Feeding, Socializing, and Bathing): <https://www.uwsheltermedicine.com/library/guidebooks/guide-to-raising-underage-kittens/caring-for-kittens-from-birth-to-eight-weeks>
- Caring for Mama Cat and Kittens: <https://fixnation.org/2011/04/momma-mia-7-important-tips-when-caring-for-momma-cats-and-kittens/>