



# Foster Parent Guide to Kittens

## **ITEMS TO HAVE ON HAND**

- \*Snuggle Safe disc or Heating pad (without shut off)
- \*Formula
- \*Karo Syrup
- \*Canned Pumpkin (the least amount of ingredients the better)
- \*Warm area of house
- \*Kennel, Crate, Hamster cage, Box for nesting
- \*Bedding - and LOTS of it!
- \*Bottles
- \*Cotton balls, baby wipes or washcloths for cleaning

## **ALWAYS WASH BEDDING, BOTTLES, HANDS**

### **Warmth**

**Warmth** is one of the most important things you can provide because kittens cannot maintain their own body temperature. Mother cats are 102 degrees so even you at 98.6 are not warm enough.

**Never** place the kittens directly on heating source. The kittens will be able to crawl around to warmer / cooler areas of the nest.

The nesting area does get dirty, or damp, so always change bedding for warmth.

Kittens must be warm when fed. Wrap kitty like a burrito when feeding

Isolate them from other areas. Some of our Foster Parents have rooms dedicated to fostering, others use bathrooms or closets.

### **How to Bottle Feed**

Kittens should be fed on their tummy with their heads slightly extended. It is suggested you weigh kittens before and after feeding to see how much they have consumed. Sometimes kittens accidentally get formula into their lungs, called aspiration. If you suspect this has happened (ex. formula bubbles out nose) Firmly pat kitten's back until you hear a cough. If this does not work turn baby upside down (tail over head) and shake **GENTLY**, then pat back again. Because fluids in their lungs can lead to infection you may want to consult the SPCA.

### **When to be Concerned:**

- \*Diarrhea
- \*Abnormal twitches
- \*Profuse Bleeding
- \*Loss or decrease of appetite
- \*Lethargic or depressed
- \*Breathing heavily, gasping, breath interval is low
- \*Head slumped in food / water and can't wake up
- \*Body is completely limp and non responsive

For help during this time you can call the SPCA at 782-3260, email [jcspca@yahoo.com](mailto:jcspca@yahoo.com) or Facebook SPCA Jefferson County

### **Watch Closely- Contact SPCA but not an emergency**

- \*Coughing
- \*Wheezing or sneezing
- \*Tires easily
- \*Straining to urinate or defecate
- \*Change in attitude or behavior

### **Helpful Tips:**

\***Constipation** - Mineral oil with each feeding - a few drops per feeding until bowel movement then stop to prevent diarrhea, sq. fluids.

\***Canned Pumpkin** - mix in with slurry or formula (use brand with least ingredients)

- \*To decrease laundry warm up baby wipes for stimulation of belly/rectum
- \*Cotton balls are great for quick clean ups and small kitten stimulation
- \*Think toothpaste! Poop the consistency of toothpaste is what we want. Harder feces can mean dehydration/constipation. Diarrhea can mean infection
- \*Bottom of carrier for litter box to make easy entry/exit
- \*For the first few feedings dilute formula 50:50
- \***DO NOT MICROWAVE BOTTLE.** Place bottles in hot water to warm.
- \*Place nipple on center of tongue - touch roof to stimulate sucking reflex
- \*Angel bottle to prevent air consumption
- \*Kittens may suck on each other or may develop sore bottoms. You can use vaseline or A&D ointment.
- \*Kittens are plump and round with symmetrical body and limbs. Distended abdomens are a sign of concern
- \*Kittens mucous membranes should be pink, moist and slippery.

### **Fading Kitten Syndrome**

Despite all of our efforts, sometimes kittens do not make it. This is called *Fading Kitten Syndrome*. Kittens with this will stop nursing / eating, loose weight, cannot stay upright, cry continuously with extreme lethargy. If you suspect your kitten is fading you can try wrapping the kitten in protected heating source like a burrito. Make a sugar water mixture (or Karo syrup) and dab in mouth. Carefully force feed with dropper or oral syringe every 2-3 minutes. Contact the shelter for medical support.

- Youtube Video on how to feed and care for bottle babies:
  - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lifzi3oOV04&feat>
- Youtube video on how to feed and care for gruel babies:
  - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nFNcs3mCCUQ>

### **Weight Other Mile Markers:**

- 1 pound - bring to shelter for 1st vaccine
- 2 pounds- bring to shelter for spay/neuter surgery.

You are giving these little ones a chance at LIFE! We thank you for that and encourage you to be involved in naming them and giving details on their personality. You are welcome to send pictures along with their names and information to our email [jcspca@yahoo.com](mailto:jcspca@yahoo.com). Pictures may be shared on our Facebook and used to promote adoption. The information you provide on the kittens personality will help find the purr fect home!

### **1 Week Old**

**Housing:** carrier, hamster cage, crate, box - covered (0-2 weeks)

**Temperature** 86-90 degrees

**Feed every 3 hours**, 24 hours a day (Even if kittens are sleeping. seizures may occur if kittens miss feedings) 7 feedings per day until 2 weeks. kittens may weigh about 10.6 ounces. Feeding about 0.4 ounces increasing to 2.5 ounces.

**Stimulate** stomach and rectum for bowel / urine

\*2-4 days umbilical stump falls off

\*Eyes may open by day 5

\*Ears may open by day 6

\*1-10 days can support themselves on front legs- shortly after hind legs gain support.



### **2 to 3 Weeks Old**

**Housing:** carrier, hamster cage, crate, box - partly covered

**Temperature** 80-85 degrees

**2 Weeks Feed every 3-4 hours** 24 hours a day. Kittens may weigh around 8.8 to 11.5 ounces and may consume between 2.7 to 3.4 ounces of formula

**3 Weeks feed every 5 hours** 24 hours a day. Kittens may weigh around 12 to 15 ounces and may consume between 3.6 to 4 ounces of formula

**Stimulate** stomach and rectum for bowel/urine

\*Weight should double by 2 weeks.

\*Eyes open by end of 2nd week

\*Ears open shortly after

**\*3-4 weeks kittens will urinate / defecate on their own. YAY!!!**

\*3 weeks kittens may be interested in gruel (kitten food soaked in formula and mashed)

\*Shortly after 2 weeks walking after 3 weeks normal



### 4 Weeks Old

**Housing:** Kittens exploring more, you may need to increase size of area

**Temperature:** 74-79 degrees

**Feed every 6 hours** 24 hours a day and include gruel (kitten food soaked in formula mashed)  
 Kittens are around 15 and 19 ounces and may consume between 4.3 to 5 ounces of formula. You can try using a shallow bowl instead of a bottle.

\*4-6 weeks normal vision

\*Closer to 2 pounds try some dry food

