



FAQs FOR HPA KITTEN FOSTERS

BASIC KITTEN CARE

How do I care for my Kittens daily?

- Feed kittens as needed and weigh and log daily in a weight chart; weight chart is available on HPA! website or HPA! Cat Foster Facebook page under “Files”
- Utilize Kitten Milestone and Store Ready Checklist to track growth milestones and medical needs
- Cats are prone to several ailments brought on, or exacerbated by, stress; sometimes, even a happy event like moving in with a new foster or changing kittens’ diet can be stressful to a cat’s body and cause a response
- Various kitten care resources (including the Neonatal Guide & Cat Foster Guide) can be found on the HPA! website or HPA! Cat Foster Facebook page under “Files”
- If kittens are not gaining weight daily, contact your assigned Kitten Care Mentor

What Kitten Food does HPA! prefer?

- PetAg KMR for Bottle Babies (approximate feeding chart below)
- Royal Canin Mama & BabyCat or Kitten Food for wet and dry kibble
- Purina Pro Plan Adult & Kitten
- Other major brands including: Hill’s/Science Diet or Royal Canin

kitten weight and feeding chart

AGE	WEIGHT	AMOUNT PER FEEDING	SCHEDULE
0-1 week	50-150 grams	2-6 ml	Every 2 hours
1-2 weeks	150-250 grams	6-10 ml	Every 2-3 hours
2-3 weeks	250-350 grams	10-14 ml	Every 3-4 hours
3-4 weeks	350-450 grams	14-18 ml	Every 4-5 hours
4-5 weeks	450-550 grams	18-22 ml	Every 5-6 hours
5-8 weeks	550-850 grams	(weaning; offer ample wet food)	Every 6 hours

- Here are two links helpful with feeding kittens:
[Kitten Bottle Feeding and Stomach Capacity Chart](#)
[Kitten and Puppy Bottle Feeding Problems and Solutions Chart](#)

My kitten won't eat, what should I do?

- Check Temperature – are they warm? Normal temperature is between 99F and 102.3F
- Check Feeding Timing & Schedule
- Rub Kitten's Cheeks like a Mama would do
- Syringe Feed with 1ml Syringe

When do I start switching my bottle babies to wet food?

- Kittens can start eating a gruel mixture around 3-4 weeks when their baby canines start to erupt/come in
- Weighing kittens before and after each feeding is critical at this stage to make sure they are getting enough nutrition
- Syringe feeding may be necessary if they are not eating enough

Kittens should be weighed daily to ensure proper nutrition and weight gain, but how long do I need to continue weighing my kittens?

- Kittens should be weighed daily until they have been spayed/neutered

I'm still having trouble feeding my kittens, who should I contact?

- Contact your assigned Kitten Care Mentor for help
- If you think your kitten may have an illness, contact sickmedical@houstonpetsalive.org
- Please contact your Kitten Care Mentor or sickmedical@houstonpetsalive.org if you kittens have not gained weight or lost weight within a 48 hour time period

How do I transport my kittens home or to the clinic for appointments?

- Kittens should be put in a clean carrier with a pee pad or towel
- Please label your carrier with your name and the name of the kittens in the carrier
- If your kittens are 4 weeks or younger, they must have a heat source like the Snuggle Disc
- Do NOT use a plastic bin with a lid to transport kittens

Can I give my kittens a bath?

- Yes, but keeping them warm is paramount; an alternative to bathing is using non-alcoholic, unscented baby wipes
- You can give them a bath with Dawn dish soap but towel dry and keep them on a heating pad/warming disc; do not return wet kittens to their kennel
- Newborn kittens cannot be bathed if their umbilical cords are still attached
- You can also use a blow dryer on a low setting at a distance keeping your hand between the kitten and dryer to dry off kittens to completions

When do I offer a litter box to bottle baby kittens?

- Bottle baby kittens should have a litter box starting at 3 weeks of age
- Make sure they still have a heat source to keep warm
- Keep litter box in an area that is farthest away from food and water bowls; older kittens prefer their litter box in a convenient but private area
- Directly after eating, put kitten in litter box to get the habit of using the box
- Scoop litter daily to keep litter clean and appealing to kittens

What Kitten Litter does HPA! suggest?

- Pine Pellets
- Yesterday's News
- Tidy Cats Non Clumping for kittens under 8 weeks
- Tidy Cats Clumping for kittens over 8 weeks and adults

What do I do if my kitten is not using the litter box?

- Make sure litter box is scooped regularly
- Rule out any physical problems or illness
- Are there any changes in the kitten's surroundings (new pet, moving homes, rearranging furniture, etc.), change in the box being used or change in type of litter?
- May need to isolate kitten to a smaller area to reacquaint them with using the litter box
- If you notice the kitten is squatting in the corner or behind furniture, quickly move the litter box so that they get the habit of using the box
- You can also put their poop into the litter so it will help them make a connection between "their smell" and the litter

My neighbor found kittens in their yard, can HPA! foster them?

- Any requests for HPA! support for kittens found in the community should be sent to intake@houstonpetsalive.org; please allow up to 48 hours for a response - HPA may not have the ability to take in kittens depending on foster/medical appropriateness
- As always, kittens found in Harris County or the City of Houston can be taken to either Harris County Animal Shelter or BARC. They will NOT be euthanized unless they are very sick and we may have the ability to pull them should they end up on the euthanasia list
- Also refer to <https://www.houstonpetsalive.org/resources/>

How do I sign up for Routine Medical Appointments?

- Find link for Routine Medical Appointments on the Houston Pets Alive Cat Foster Facebook page under "Announcements", in your email titled "HPA IDs & Next Steps" or HPA's website <https://www.houstonpetsalive.org/foster/>
- For sick appointments, please email sickmedical@houstonpetsalive.org for further steps

How do I pick up Supplies from the HPA Clinic at 2800 Antoine?

- Email catfoster@houstonpetsalive.org to schedule a pickup at least 48 to 72 hours before you run out of supplies
- Pickup is generally available Monday through Friday between 1 and 5:30pm or on Sundays during Foster Fest
- Appointments are Required

How do I know when I need to bring my kitten in for wellness medical care?

- HPA has a Kitten Milestone Store Ready Checklist available for download on the Houston Pets Alive website or the HPA! Cat Foster Facebook page under "Files"; this form can be used to track kitten wellness care and timing

My kittens are playing rough with each other, what should I do?

- As long as there are no wounds, even rough play is normal between kittens. However, if they are wounding each other ensure they are separated and contact your mentor or the foster coordinator.

My kittens are biting or scratching, what should I do?

- Make sure to end the play session immediately and walk away
- The kitten may not understand the first time but with repetition will soon learn
- Make sure to distinguish the difference between hands and toys; feathers and wand toys put distance between you and toy and will help your kitten learn this important lesson
- Give you kitten active and regular play sessions

How do I manage the scratching?

- Provide an irresistible surface like sisal or rope post
- Post should be near the kitten's food bowl or bed since kittens like to scratch after eating or napping
- Entice your kitten with a toy dangling from the top of the post
- Kittens have their preferences, but you can also try a horizontal or tall vertical scratcher
- Trim nails regularly every 2-3 weeks

How do I trim my kitten's nails?

- Trimming nails is easiest as a two-person job
- Wrap kitten in a towel and hold firmly, expose one paw and apply pressure to the middle of the paw to expose nails; trim only the clear, hooked part of the claw
- Stay away from the quick which is the pink part, a live vein that will be painful if cut
- Make sure to trim all four claws and the dew claw on each paw

What should I do if I lose power or could possibly lose power during a weather event?

- If you had advance notice, you can pre-warm Snuggle Heat Disc
- Use Hand Warmers available at most sporting goods stores
- Double bag a large Ziploc and fill with hot water, place a blanket on top for kittens to lay on

What should I do if I need to evacuate?

- Please pack up kittens in a secure carrier with a heat source, if needed, and enough supplies to take kittens with you if possible
- If you are unable to take kittens with you, please post on HPA! Cat Foster FB page and ask if someone can take them for you
- If you are still unable to secure a temporary home for your kittens, contact HPA! immediately

Can I adopt out or give away my foster kittens?

- No, foster kittens are property of Houston Pets Alive! and are adopted out through a formal adoption process
- Fosters or individuals interested in adopting your foster kittens should fill in an application at <https://www.houstonpetsalive.org/find-cats/>
- If you are in need of transferring your kittens to another foster before they are pet store ready, please post a request on the HPA! Cat Foster Facebook page with pictures and description
- Email catfoster@houstonpetsalive.org if you are still in need of help or if the kittens have been transferred to a new foster
- It may take a couple of days to find a new foster so please allow extra time

KITTEN MEDICAL CARE

What do I do if my Kitten is Not Gaining Weight?

- Are they eating/eating enough?
- Refer to the Minimum Feeding Requirements for Kittens available on the HPA! Cat Foster Facebook page for guidelines
- If kittens have not gained weight or lost weight in 48 hours, contact your Kitten Care Mentor or sickmedical@houstonpetsalive.org immediately

What do I do if my kitten has fleas?

- Less than 6 weeks - dawn dish soap bath, flea comb
- Greater than 6 weeks - contact routinemedical@houstonpetsalive.org to set up an appointment for flea prevention

How do I schedule vaccines, deworming, surgery and flea treatments?

- Regular wellness appointments for vaccines, dewormer and flea treatment can be done by signing up on the Signup Genius or emailing routinemedical@houstonpetsalive.org
- Surgery is scheduled by using the Surgery Survey at www.houstonpetsalive.org/foster/ when kitten reaches 2 pounds in weight

What do I need to take with my kittens when they have a visit to the clinic or on surgery day?

- Kittens should be put in a clean carrier with a pee pad or towel
- Please label your carrier with your name and the name of the kittens in the carrier
- If your kittens are 4 weeks or younger, they must have a heat source like the Snuggle Disc

What is Fading Kitten Syndrome?

- Extreme lethargy – unable to stand or hold head up, not responding when touched
- Body feels cool to the touch (not just the insides of ears but all over)
- Rectal Temperature is below 99 Degrees
- Panting or gasping for breath
- Meowing/crying out in distress

What steps do I follow for Fading Kitten Protocol?

- Follow written Fading Kitten Protocol and contact SickMedical@houstonpetsalive.org or EC Line immediately 832-224-6137
- Fading Kitten Protocol can be downloaded from the HPA! website or the HPA! Cat Foster Facebook page under "Files"
- Get Kitten warm by wrapping in a towel and heating pad or warm towel/blankets from a dryer; older kittens should be confined to area on a heating pad to keep warm
- Get Kitten's Blood Sugar Up by giving 0.1ml of warm Karo every 3 minutes
- Check Rectal Temperature regularly

What should I do if I find my kittens suckling on each other?

- The only successful solution is to separate the kittens
- Here is a helpful link regarding suckling:
<https://www.maddiesfund.org/Harmful-Non-productive-Suckling-in-Orphaned-Neonatal-Kittens>

My kitten's temperature is too hot! (Normal Temperature 99F-102F degrees; contact Medical at 103F)

- Put kitten on a blanket on top of a soft frozen ice pack
- Rub paw pads and belly with COOL not cold water.

My kitten's temperature is too cold! (Normal Temperature 99F-102F degrees; contact Medical at 98F)

- Place kitten on blanket confined to a Heating Pad
- Fading Kitten Protocol wrapping Kitten in Heating Pad

Why are my kittens shivering?

- Causes could be nervousness or in pain, no cause to be alarmed if temperature is within normal range
- Make sure kitten is in a safe and secure area

My kitten has Diarrhea, what should I do?

- Check Rectal Temperature
- Add probiotics to bottle or on wet food (Ben Bac probiotics are available at the clinic)
- Give Vitamin Supplements (Hi-Vite Drops or Lixotinic for 3 days)
- If kitten is older than 2 weeks, has appropriate timing of deworming been done, if not, contact sickmedical@houstonpetsalive.org

My kitten is Constipated, what should I do?

- Constipation of less than 48h, as long as kitten is acting normally, is not an emergency
- Dilute formula for Bottle Babies to a 4:1 ratio if your current ratio is 2:1
- Mineral Oil – tiny drop of 0.1 ml one time per day
- Warm Belly Bath & Belly Rub
- HPA! protocols do not recommend pumpkin or Miralax

When do I email SickMedical@HoustonPetsAlive.org?

- Diarrhea
- Constipation
- Vomiting more than three times in a 24h period
- Ringworm Suspects
- Eye Discharge
- Worms in Feces
- Skin Lesions
- Ear Mites and Other External Parasites
- Bloating Belly
- Twitching
- Straining to Urinate or Defecate

When do I call the EC Line at 832-224-6137?

- Fading Kittens
- Temperature Hot or Cold
- Diarrhea (Extreme Liquidity or Bloody)
- Vomiting and Unable to Hold Food Down
- Lethargic
- Mouth Breathing
- Aspirating and Unable to Breathe
- Unable to Swallow
- Seizures
- Intense Pain
- Bleeding profusely
- Any Behavior that seems extremely out of the ordinary

How quickly will I receive a response after emailing SickMedical@houstonpetsalive.org?

- Responses should be received within 24 hours however if medical emergencies are not responded to quickly enough, don't hesitate to contact the EC medical number
- If medical efforts have been made for sick kittens and they are not better in 3-5 days; contact medical using the EC line

Can I take my HPA! foster kittens to my vet?

- While HPA! does not prohibit taking fosters to outside veterinarians there will be no reimbursement for any charges incurred to the foster.
- All wellness/sick appointments, vaccines, and treatments are provided through the HPA! clinic

My kitten has passed away, what do I do?

- Email catfoster@houstonpetsalive.org immediately
- Don't be embarrassed or afraid to reach out--these things happen
- Kittens are fragile creatures, and unfortunately some of them are just not equipped to make it in this world
- Keep kitten in the freezer until it can either be delivered to the clinic or someone can transport it for you to the clinic