

Kennebec Valley Humane Society



FOSTER CARE GUIDE



Foster Contacts

Kennebec Valley Humane Society: (207) 626 - 3491

Please call the foster Program coordinator Sunday through Thursday between 8 a.m - 4 p.m. with questions, concerns or to schedule veterinary or other check ups.

Foster program coordinator:

Sabrina Beggs

Desk (207) 626 - 3491

Email: Foster@pethavenlane.org

LIKE our facebook page: KVHS fosters

On days the foster program coordinator is unavailable, call the following staff members at KVHS:

Stevanie Roy (207) 626 - 3491

Robin Coston (207) 626 - 3491

Emergency Protocol and Contact Information:

On occasion, foster animals have medical emergencies that happen outside of the normal hours of operation. In case of an after-hours medical emergency, please contact the foster program coordinator at Foster@pethavenlane.org .

The contact person will direct you to either to meet them at the shelter where they will administer the appropriate care, or they will direct you to a veterinary facility. The emergency clinic can contact the director of operations for approval of emergency care. Please note that if you decide to take the foster animal directly to an emergency veterinary facility without prior approval from KVHS, KVHS will not be responsible for any of the costs incurred.

Lewiston E-Clinic: (207) 777 - 1110

Poison Control Hotline: 1 (800) 222 - 1222

Facebook Group – Please request the group “KVHS Fosters”. This is a closed group only for you to socialize with other foster parents, share stories, photos and videos of your foster animal, and learn from each other. Please read the guidelines that are pinned at the top of the page and remember that your foster coordinator is your main contact for questions.

DEAR FOSTER FAMILY,

First and foremost, THANK YOU! You are about to embark on a life - saving adventure that you'll never forget and become a hero to your foster animal(s)! Our foster program exists to give young animals a chance to grow and to give injured, sick or under socialized animals an opportunity to heal. Since the program's inception, our foster families have saved hundreds, if not thousands, of dogs, cats, and small animals.

In this manual, you will find guidance and helpful tips to ensure success for the duration of your foster animal stay.

Types of Animals That Need Foster Homes:

- Orphaned kittens or puppies too small for adoption
- Puppies or kittens that are under socialized
- Injured animals or animals recovering from surgery
- Sick animals - Examples: Upper respiratory, Skin issues and diabetes.
- Nursing cats or dogs
- Pregnant cats or dogs
- Bottle-fed babies
- Animals during overcrowding
- Cats/Dogs waiting for spay/neuter
- Pocket pet (mice,rats,guinea pig,rabbits)

If the requirements included in the following section do not work well with your current schedule, please let us know. We can help find a foster situation that will work best for you.

Sincerely,
Sabrina Beggs
Foster Coordinator
Kennebec Valley Humane Society

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TIME:

Are you able to devote the required time daily and weekly to foster an animal? (See chart)

SPACE:

Are you able to handle cleaning procedures such as washing hands after every encounter and cleaning/disinfecting animal’s quarters regularly?

Are you able to handle any potential house damage (carpet, clothing, and / or furniture) associated with animals?

CARE:

Are you prepared to handle sickness or possible death of your foster animal?

Are you able to emotionally handle letting go of the foster animals after becoming attached once their foster period is over?

Are you able to handle the potential of foster animals carrying illness that could affect your household animals/family?

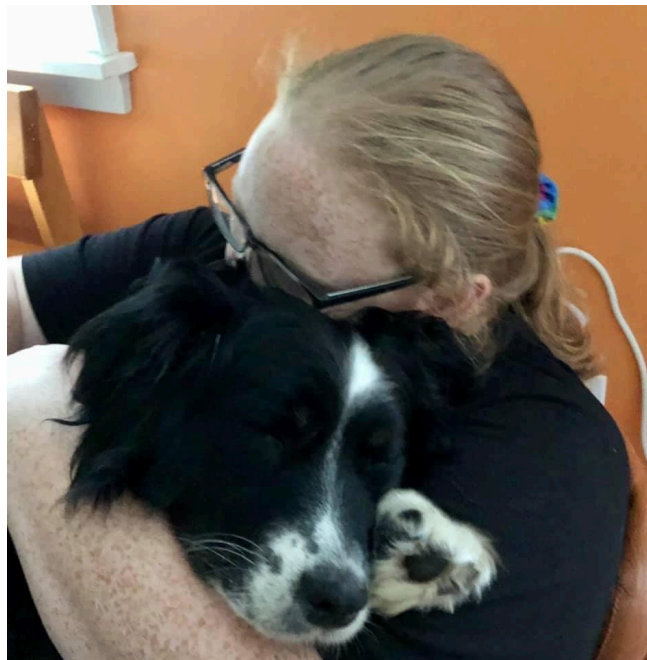
TIME COMMITMENTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

<u>Type of Foster</u>	<u>Duration of Foster</u>	<u>Daily Commitment</u>
Orphaned kittens	1 week - 5 weeks	3 - 6 hours
Sick/injured Cats	1 week - 2 months	2 -3 hours
Neonatal	6 - 8 weeks	24 hours
Mom with Litter	2 - 8 weeks	3 - 5 hours
Weaned Puppies	1 - 3 weeks	3 - 6 hours
Sick/Injured Dogs	1 week - 2 months	6 - 8 hours

Things to know before you become a foster:

Fatalities - Whether you are fostering a kitten, puppy, an elderly cat or dog, there are times where your foster pet will fall ill and pass away while in your care. With fostering an elderly pet, fosters should always be aware that it could be the last home that particular animal has. Euthanasia decisions are not made lightly, but we do what's best for the animal. For having younger fosters, there is still a chance that they could fall ill and pass away. This is possibly the hardest thing to deal with while being a foster parent, and if you do not think you can handle the stress, maybe fostering is not your forte. We have plenty of other volunteer opportunities that you may be more interested in! See our front desk for a volunteer application.

Adoption: When your foster pets start to thrive, another challenge is returning your pets for adoption. Fosters can easily become attached to their animals, but it is also important to understand that your animal will find a permanent home. If you are interested in adopting your foster animal (and we certainly do allow it), you will be more valuable to the program if you continue to foster new animals rather than adopting and ceasing to foster. Foster caregivers are special volunteers with advanced training. We never seem to have enough trained foster caregivers. Losing even one reduces the resources available in our care. Learning to bond with foster animals, seeing the animal grow and thrive under your care, and then passing the animal onto an adoptive home is immensely rewarding. It is also sad to see a foster animal leave. Give yourself time to grieve the loss, but also think about the animal's new life ahead.



Sanitizing Your Home Between Foster Animals

In order to prevent disease and parasite infections in your home, thoroughly clean areas where the foster animal has stayed. Wash bedding in hot water, detergent and bleach. Discard non-washable surface toys. Disinfect all washable surfaces with mild bleach and water solution (bleach/water ratio of 1:32 or 4 oz of bleach per gallon of water is recommended). Bleach solutions should be prepared as needed, because bleach loses its strength after 24 hours. Bleach is inactive in the presence of organic matter so clean up dirt, hair, feces, ect. before using bleach to disinfect. Bleach solution must stay in contact with the surface being sanitized for at least 10 minutes to be effective. Vacuum all carpeted areas. Soak toys in bleach water for 20 minutes. Scrub and bleach crates, carriers, litter scoops, food bowls, and litter boxes. Any litter boxes or bowls with grooves/scratches you need to throw it away to prevent possible disease transmission. Regularly clean up any waste in the yard or litter box to decrease the risk of spreading disease.

If you have carpeted floors, you will need to vacuum them and spot clean any soiled areas. If you have carpet cleaner you should use it between groups. If you do not have carpet, sweep and mop the floors.

You will need to wipe down all other surfaces with a clean water solution or Clorox Cleanup with bleach. You should also wipe the bottom three feet of your foster room walls.

*Note: If you prefer not to use bleach, you can also order a product called "Rescue" diluted online. It is a bit more effective because it doesn't require that all organic material to be removed, but it is also more expensive.

Quarantine Periods

We always recommend keeping foster kittens separated (quarantined) from the other animals in the home for two weeks. After two weeks if they aren't showing any symptoms of illness you can introduce them into the rest of your home (If tested for FIV/FelV). Sometimes an animal is sent into a home before evidence of a disease has manifested. If your previous foster animal has been diagnosed with an illness you may be asked to take time off from fostering while you sanitize. This protects future foster animals from being infected with virus or disease.

GET READY!



TIPS: Use glass or metal bowls - plastic bowls are porous and not easy to clean!

Preparing the Room:

Before you bring home your foster(s), make sure you have a suitable place for them to stay. A bathroom often works well, a spare bedroom, a walk-in closet with a baby gate for the doorway, pop up animal play pen or even an extra-large dog crate in your bedroom. The room you should adhere to is the following.

- A temperature controlled space
- The space has been disinfected by using mild bleach solution (1 part bleach to 32 parts water, kennel-sol or rescue)
- Separate from other household pets
- Can withstand messes: spilled water, food, vomit, urine, feces, etc.
- No breakable items
- Free of candles or scentsy plug-ins
- Electrical outlets and wires are blocked
- No small items
- Secured windows (closed or with secured screen)
- Secured appliances (Toilet lids, washing machines and dryer)

Toxic household plants. The list can be found at www.asPCA.org/pet-care/poison-control/plants.

Household poisonous plants include: Lilies, Sago Palms, Corn Plant, Aloe Plant, and Asparagus Fern.

Everything you will need for your fosters will be provided!

Check below for further tips on how to properly set up for your new foster environment.

Cats

- Indoors only (do not let your foster cat/kitten outdoors.)
- Cats/Kittens should be in a carrier at all times while leaving the house. Please not bring cats/kittens into KVHS without a carrier.
- If you are fostering a cat/kittens with FIV or FELV they will need to be completely separate from other cats in the home.

Dogs

- Dogs should be kept indoors in a crate when unattended or a separate room/office.
- Dogs should be on a leash at all times when outdoors unless in a private secure fenced area. Recommended fence height is 6-feet.
- Foster dogs/puppies are not permitted to go to dog parks.
 1. Dog parks can be extremely dangerous environments; there are no lifeguards or professionals at the dog park when conflicts arise.
 2. Not every dog is safe
 3. Dogs have a variety of play styles and these play styles can be conflicting and instigate fights.
 4. Sicknesses spread from animal to animal through play, dishes, fecal contaminants and used toys.

Puppies and Kittens

- Indoors - spare room. For puppies, a baby gate or crate is provided upon request.
- Puppies / kittens should be around humans for socialization purposes and should not be isolated.

Supervise your foster animals when around children and other animals!

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/puppies 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 mothers 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.

Newborns 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 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 expecting 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. A plastic swimming pool for a mom dog. Fill it with clean towels or baby blankets. Change this bedding after the birth and then on a frequent basis because it will become soiled.

After the birthing is over, remove the towels and replace them with fleece blankets or fleece beds. Newborns 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 newborns onto the clean layer underneath.

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

The shelter strives to feed a premium diet to provide the best support for the mothers, the best start for the babies, and an easier transition to the diet they will be fed when they return to the shelter.

TIPS AND TAILS – A typical gestation period for a cat is 63 days. A cat may gain 2-3 pounds during her pregnancy, depending on how many kittens she is carrying.

The Birth

A week or less before the event, the mother 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 or puppies is a natural and normal experience and cats/dogs have been doing it for thousands of years!

Most feline and canine births are routine and trouble free, so try not to disturb her during the process. Make sure she has access to food and water. She will start the second stage of labor, straining a few hours before the first baby is born. If, however, she has been heavily straining for 30 minutes without producing a baby, or three or more hours pass between babies, call your foster coordinator.

Occasionally, first time moms will not quite “get it.” If this is the case and she delivers a baby, and just walks away, she might not realize that it is alive and needs her care. The membrane covering the baby's face must be removed immediately so the baby can breathe. If mom doesn't do this, gently tear open the sac covering the head so the kitten can breathe. After the first newborn, mom usually figures it out and carries on as she should. Most moms will eat the afterbirth 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 newborn, she will take a rest. This rest could last 30-60 minutes before she starts labor again to give birth to the next baby.



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 your foster coordinator immediately if any of the following happens during delivery.

- The mother seems to be straining or having strong contractions for a period of 30 minutes without delivering.
- 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 babies after delivery. If this occurs, use a piece of sterile gauze and remove any fluid from the nose and mouth. Then dry the baby using a clean towel with gentle rubbing action.
- If the baby 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 baby booger sucker to suck any fluid from the throat and nose.
- 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 one 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.

Post-Delivery

After the delivery of the litter is finished, try to observe the family to make sure that the newborns are nursing, and that mom is not bleeding excessively from the vagina. If things are not as they should be, call your foster coordinator. Once the event is concluded, and mom and babies are resting comfortably, replace the soiled towels with clean fleece or cloth and let the new family rest in peace and quiet. 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 babies 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 and make sure the nesting box is well insulated. Be sure that the mom and babies have the option to get away from the warming disks if desired. Handle newborns gently, but make sure to check on them at least twice a day. Are they nursing? Gaining weight? 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 baby out of the nest and leave it somewhere else in the room. If this happens, put the baby back in the nest and call your foster coordinator right away. **Make sure to weigh your kittens in grams each morning at the same time of day. You want to see them gain 10-15 grams per day.**

Post-Natal Signs of Trouble

If all babies and mom seem well, your only obligation to the mom and newborns for the first week or so is watchful supervision. Mom will need kitten/puppy food and water at all times. Contact your foster coordinator immediately if you observe any of the following in the mother cat:

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

Babies should be nursing up to three times an hour. The mother should be grooming each baby after feeding, and licking their bottoms to stimulate elimination. Contact your foster coordinator 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 litter.
- Rejected or ignored by the mother.

TIPS AND TAILS - 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.

IMPORTANT: If you see any signs of swelling, discharge, pain, or redness at the umbilical cord site, please contact your mentor at once.



BOTTLE FEEDING

When to bottle feed a kitten:

If we receive a kitten that is too young to eat on its 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 over a 24 hour period, even if it is still nursing on mom. In this case, you will only be "topping off" the kitten after it nurses. If your kitten loses weight within a 24 hour period, contact your foster coordinator immediately. If your kitten does not gain weight within 36 hours, contact your foster coordinator.

Foster parents will need the following supplies for bottle feeding:

- Snuggle Safe warming disc or other device designed for animals
- Cat carrier for kitten nest
- Fleece blankets for bedding
- Milk replacer formula
- Nursing bottle with nipples (Miracle Nipple)
- Syringes
- Cotton balls, gauze pads or baby wipes
- Thermometer
- Scale

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, or place them on a towel that is resting on a Snuggle Safe warming disc. 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 a snuggle safe 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. The temperature in the nest where the kitten is kept should be 86 degrees. The temperature can be lowered 5 degrees a week thereafter until a mild 75 degrees is reached. To create a good nest, place them in a carrier and put a towel or blanket over the carrier to trap in the heat.

Start feeding:

Never give a neonate kitten anything other than their specified formula.

Kittens who are less than four weeks old are fed KMR (Kitten Milk Replacer). The powder formula must be mixed for feedings. Any reconstituted powder formula can be refrigerated for up to 24 hours. After that point, it must be discarded.

- Only use clean nipples and bottles.
- Feed kittens one at a time. Place them on a counter with a level head. This simulates how they would nurse from a mom.
- Do not feed kittens while on their back. This can cause formula to go down the wrong way and end up in their lungs.
- Gently place the nipple in the kitten's mouth. In some cases you can place a drop of formula on the tongue for a taste to start suckling.
- Pull lightly on the bottle. This promotes strong sucking.
- Tilt the bottle up slightly. This prevents the kitten from inhaling too much air.
- Do not squeeze the bottle to force the formula into the kitten's mouth. This can cause formula to move into the lungs.
- After feeding, you burp your kitten by gently massaging their back.
- Be sure to stimulate the kitten after and before feeding. Stimulate them with a warm tissue or baby wipe.
- Record feedings
- Always weigh your kittens before and after feeding. They should gain 10 grams a day.
- Please watch The Kitten Lady on YouTube for more information on bottle feeding.

IMPORTANT – Never feed a kitten on its back!

Stimulating your kitten:

Kittens younger than 3 weeks of age cannot eliminate by themselves – they need your help. After feeding and burping the kitten, take a baby wipe, washcloth or gauze moistened with warm water and rub 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 times daily.

TIPS AND TAILS

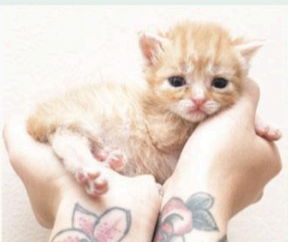


To warm nursing bottles, fill a coffee mug half way with hot water and place the bottle of formula into the mug. After a minute or two, test the formula by sprinkling a few drops on the back of your hand. Formula should be warm to the touch, not hot.

Kitten Development

TEENY TINIES The tiniest, most vulnerable kittens require gentle and frequent care.

<p>NEWBORN</p> 	<p>1 WEEK</p> 	<p>2 WEEKS</p> 
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• umbilical cord attached, eyes closed, ears folded• can't regulate body temp.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• eyes closed, ears folded, no umbilical cord• eyes open at 8-12 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• eyes completely open, blue color• wobbly on their feet

TEENY WEANIES As kittens age, you'll help them reach important developmental milestones.

<p>3 WEEKS</p> 	<p>4 WEEKS</p> 	<p>5 WEEKS</p> 
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• incisors emerging, ears unfolded• discovering litterbox	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• canines emerging• vision improving; walking confidently	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• premolars emerging• weaning slowly onto wet kitten food

BIG KIDS CLUB These social, independent, and coordinated kittens are almost ready for adoption.

<p>6 WEEKS</p> 	<p>7 WEEKS</p> 	<p>8 WEEKS</p> 
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• all milk (deciduous) teeth have emerged• eating confidently	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• transitioning to adult eye color• coordinated and playful	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• once 2 pounds, kittens can be spayed/neutered and placed in their forever home!

Remember that some kittens may reach developmental milestones at different ages, and that's okay!

For more information visit KittenLady.org

Kitten Bottle Feeding

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

Follow this guideline to determine the proper amount and frequency of feeding. Remember that every kitten is different, and this is a guideline—not a rule book!

<http://www.kittenlady.org/bottlefeeding>

TIPS AND TAILS

Do not feed your kitten cow's milk.

Bottle babies should be gaining at least 10 grams a day. When weighing your kittens weigh before and after feedings. The foster coordinator can supply you with a weight chart.



Weaning

Weaning can occur at 4 weeks and should be conducted gradually. Introduce them to solid food by offering pate canned food, mixed with a small amount of KMR in a shallow dish. Begin by placing a kitten to the side of the plate. He or she should start to eat, but it may take a few times for kittens to understand (it can take up to 3-4 days.) Starting at four weeks old it's important to always keep fresh water and food available at all times. (They could already have started trying hard food if you have a mom cat as it should have dry food out 27/7.)

Cleaning Equipment

Keeping the kittens' nursing bottles and supplies clean is vital, as this will prevent diarrhea, vomiting, or infection. Cleaning the bottles and nursing nipples is quite easy. Using hot, soapy water, clean the bottle with a bottlebrush. If you don't have a bottlebrush, you can use a different instrument or a dishwasher. You may place them in the silverware rack or in a dishwasher basket.



Socializing Your Foster Cats and Kittens

First and foremost, we ask that you treat your foster cats/kittens with the same love and care that you give to your own companion animals. Daily attention (at least one full hour a day) from you and other family members or friends makes them more people-oriented, and more adoptable. This includes petting, playing, cuddling, trimming nails, and grooming.

By spending time with your foster cats on a regular basis, you will not only increase their chances of being adopted quickly, but you will also be able to determine their likes and dislikes – this helps us place them in homes with families that best meet their needs.

You should also monitor your foster cats for behavior problems, such as inappropriate urination or scratching furniture. If problems arise, contact your foster coordinator to discuss behavior modification strategies. Kennebec Valley Humane Society is not responsible for damages that might occur to yourself, others in your household, or your personal property as a result of feline behavior problems while in foster care.

Under socialized Kittens

We occasionally take in kittens between the ages of four and 16 weeks who are undersocialized or fearful of humans. These kittens may have been born outside to a feral mom and have had limited interactions with humans. They may avoid, hiss, spit, swat, or attempt to bite when approached or handled by people.

Socialization Techniques

- Slow Blinks - [Jackson Galaxy example](#)
- Petting - with a paintbrush or toothbrush, then your hand
- Motivate with Food - baby food or Churu, on a spoon, then your finger
- Play therapy - wand toys, get them to run over your legs
- Pick up - start while eating, progress to carrying
- Taco of Trust - use bed to wrap and hold until they relax
- Novel changes - people, noises, rooms of your home
- Feliway

Important Concepts

- You are either training or un-training your kitten!
- Start on day one!
- Routine - short (5-10 min) sessions at least 3x per day, no skipping sessions or days
- Repetition - always ending on a positive note or a “win”
- Gentle Persuasion - you are the leader, try to make progress each session

Possible Issues with Nursing Cats or Dogs:

Maternal Neglect - In some cases, about 8% of the newborn die from poor maternal care. There are a few causes of this. Environmental stress is an important factor, which is why it is important to create a calm environment for mom and the litter. Foster parents should watch for signs of maternal neglect. Call the foster coordinator if you notice the mom avoiding feeding and grooming her newborn and ignoring their cries.

Maternal Aggression - As mom protects her newborns, it is common for her to be aggressive towards humans or other animals. Do not try to introduce your household pets to your foster mom as this adds too much stress to the environment. If aggression becomes severe, call the Foster Coordinator.



Puppy Development

In the first two weeks of life, puppies are helpless and vulnerable. They are still developing basic reflexes, their hearing and vision is not fully developed, and they are unable to properly control their body temperatures. They should therefore be confined to a nursery area. Puppies should not be allowed to mingle with your own pets.

During the first 1-3 weeks of life, puppies do not urinate or defecate on their own and require stimulation for elimination. Gently rub a warm tissue or baby wipe on the puppies genital area and anus. This should be done before and after every feeding. If the puppies are with their mother, the mother will stimulate her puppies herself.

Keeping the puppies clean from food and feces is vital for his or her health. If you notice your puppy has food, urine, or feces on him or her, gently wipe the puppy down with a warm damp cloth or baby wipe. Be sure to dry the puppy well afterwards so they do not become chilled.

TIPS AND TAILS

Do not feed your puppy cow's milk.

Puppies are chewers! Be sure to remove all electrical cords and small objects!



Puppy Bottle Feeding

Puppy Bottle Feeding and Stomach Capacity Chart

Puppy Weight (lbs, oz)	Puppy Weight (grams)	Daily Caloric Requirement*	Amount of Formula Per Day (ml)**	Amount Per Feeding (ml)*	Approximate Number of Feedings Per Day***
2 oz	57 g	11 kcal	18 ml	2 ml	6
4 oz	113 g	23 kcal	25 ml	5 ml	6
6 oz	170 g	34 kcal	38 ml	7 ml	6
8 oz	227 g	45 kcal	50 ml	9 ml	6
10 oz	284 g	57 kcal	63 ml	11 ml	6
12 oz	340 g	68 kcal	76 ml	14 ml	6
14 oz	397 g	79 kcal	88 ml	16 ml	6
16 oz (1 lb)	454 g	91 kcal	101 ml	18 ml	6
2 lb	907 g	181 kcal	202 ml	36 ml	6
3 lb	1,361 g	272 kcal	302 ml	54 ml	6
4 lb	1,814 g	363 kcal	403 ml	73 ml	6
5 lb	2,268 g	454 kcal	504 ml	91 ml	6
6 lb	2,722 g	544 kcal	605 ml	109 ml	6
7 lb	3,175 g	635 kcal	706 ml	127 ml	6
8 lb	3,629 g	726 kcal	806 ml	145 ml	6

*The daily caloric requirement was calculated using 20 kcal/100 g body weight and the amount per feeding using 4 ml/100 g body weight. The energy requirement is ~20-26 kcal/100g body weight daily and the maximum comfortable stomach capacity is ~4 ml/100 g body weight.¹

** Concentration 0.9 kcal/ml. Most commercial puppy milk replacers in the US provide less than 1 kcal/ml, acting to increase the volume of milk required to meet caloric needs. This can be problematic in terms of the number and size of feedings given relative to stomach capacity and more likely to result in gastrointestinal disturbances. This may also account for why bottle fed puppies grow slower than puppies that nurse off a mother.

*** As the puppy is adjusting well to the milk and the feeding volume, you may be able to increase the volume fed to help reduce the number of feedings per day. Be aware that exceeding the stomach capacity (amount per feeding) may put the puppy at risk of aspiration, vomiting, diarrhea, and gas build-up in the stomach and intestines.

Puppies at that are between 3 ½ -5 weeks of age are usually eating some solid food, decreasing the amount of milk replacer required to meet daily caloric requirements. This may result in less frequent milk feedings.

¹ Lawler, D. F. "Neonatal and pediatric care of the puppy and kitten." *Theriogenology*, vol. 70, no.3, 2006, pp. 364-392.



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Type of Food

Never give a neonate puppy anything other than their specified formula

Puppies who are less than three weeks old are fed puppy milk replacer or goats milk. The powder formula must be mixed for feedings. It is important to closely follow mixing directions:

One part powder into two parts warm water (as it can cause diarrhea or constipation if not done correctly). Any reconstituted powder formula can be refrigerated for up to 24 hours. After that point, it must be discarded.

Bottle Feeding:

- Only use clean nipples and bottles.
- Feed puppies one at a time. Place them on a counter with a level head. This simulates how they would nurse from a mom.
- Do not feed a puppy while on their back. This can cause formula to go down the wrong way and end up in their lungs.
- Gently place the nipple in the puppy's mouth. In some cases you can place a drop of formula on the tongue for a taste to start suckling.
- Pull lightly on the bottle. This promotes strong sucking.
- Tilt the bottle up slightly. This prevents the puppy from inhaling too much air.
- Do not squeeze the bottle to force the formula into the puppy's mouth. This can cause formula to move into the lungs.
- After feeding, burp your puppy by gently massaging their back.
- Be sure to stimulate the puppy after and before feeding. Stimulate them with a warm cloth if necessary.
- Fill out the daily weight and feeding record.

TIPS & TAILS

To warm nursing bottles, fill a coffee mug half way with hot water and place the bottle of formula into the mug. After a minute or two, test the formula by sprinkling a few drops on the back of your hand. Formula should be warm to the touch, but not hot.

Weaning

Weaning can occur at 4-5 weeks and should be conducted gradually. Create gruel by mixing moistened dry food with water or canned food. Introduce them to solid food by offering warmed can food, mixed with a small amount of water into gruel, in a shallow dish. Begin by placing a puppy to the side of the plate. He or she should start to eat, but it may take a few tries for puppies to understand. If they are not interested, wait a few hours and then try again. After they have accepted the gruel, gradually thicken it by adding less water. Begin to also offer dry food on a free-feeding basis.

Amount of Food

Overfeeding is as dangerous as underfeeding. Feed puppies until they are full but not bloated.

Cleaning Equipment

Keeping the puppies' nursing bottles and supplies clean is vital, as this will prevent diarrhea, vomiting, or infection. Cleaning the bottles and nursing nipples is quite easy. Using hot, soapy water, clean the bottle with a bottlebrush. You can use a different instrument or dishwasher. You may place them in a silverware rack or in a dishwasher basket.

Additional Feeding Considerations

If puppies are fighting over food, start to feed them separately. Contact the foster coordinator for support.

Never take food away from a puppy that is growling. Simply remove the other puppies and wait for the food bowl to be unattended.



Basic Training Tips for Puppies:

- Puppies are born with instincts to bite. One of the most important things they learn, as a puppy, is how to control the strength of their bite.
- Puppies naturally train each other how to bite. When one puppy bites another too hard, the other puppy yelps loudly and stops playing.
- As a foster parent, you can play this role. Any time a puppy mouths too much, yelp loudly. If the puppy continues biting, turn your back on the puppy and walk away. After ten seconds or so, resume playing happily.
- Remember: Mouthing is important! A puppy that is never allowed to mouth will grow up to have a hard bite.
- Never scold, tap on the nose, or yell no at the puppy who is biting. Bite inhibition is a crucial development for puppies. A puppy that is punished for biting can turn into an adult with unsafe jaws (because they do not know their own strength). Simply yell ouch when a puppy bites too hard.



Housetraining

We always want to set our puppies up for success, and doing so in the house training process is essential. Puppies should have frequent breaks and be taken outside to the same spot to relieve themselves every 30-60 minutes when active (when waking up from a nap, after drinking, or eating, and after a play session.) A puppy can hold his/her bladder one hour for each month of age.

Remember these five steps to successful house training:

1. Prevent accidents
2. Reward going to the bathroom
3. Anticipate bathroom needs
4. Interrupt accidents and avoid punishing
5. Clean up accidents with enzyme cleaner

Pee Pads: For puppies five weeks and under, place puppies on pee pads immediately after waking up, after eating, and about once an hour. Praise the puppy enthusiastically every time he /she urinates or defecates on pad. Change the pads frequently, as the puppies tend to chew on the pee pads.

Crate Training

Housetraining and crate training go hand in hand. A crate can be a great tool to use for your puppy, but it can also be misused. The crate should be big enough for your puppy to stand up, turn around, and stretch out. The KVHS will make sure you go home with the correct size, but your puppy may grow and you may need to exchange the crate. Your foster puppy/dog should have a short-term confinement area, such as the crate, and a long-term confinement area, such as a x-pen or a baby gated section of the house or room.

If you are beginning to crate train, feed your puppy in the crate, provide stuffed chew toys only in the crate, and/or play crate games to build positive associations with the crate. Keep sessions short and fun, and have your puppy in the crate for short periods of time while you are home.

Never use a crate as a form of punishment for your foster puppy or dog.

Toys

Having toys available for your puppy is vital for their mental health and development. A selection of toys is best such as plush squeak toys, rope toys, stuffed kongs, and teething toys.

Socialization

From 3 weeks to 3 months, puppies are biologically primed to learn that new sights, sounds, smells, objects, environments, and people are fun and safe. This is the most crucial and sensitive period in a puppy's life.

Socialization is not simply exposing a puppy to a variety of people, places, and things, but using positive proactive socialization training. Each new person the puppy meets should be a wonderful experience with treats and toys. Take things slow if your puppy seems fearful of the new person, place, or thing.

Training: Positive Reinforcement

As a foster parent, there will be many situations for you to train your animal. Kennebec Valley Humane Society only promotes training using positive reinforcement. Decades of research and scientific studies concludes that positive reinforcement training is the most humane and effective method of training.

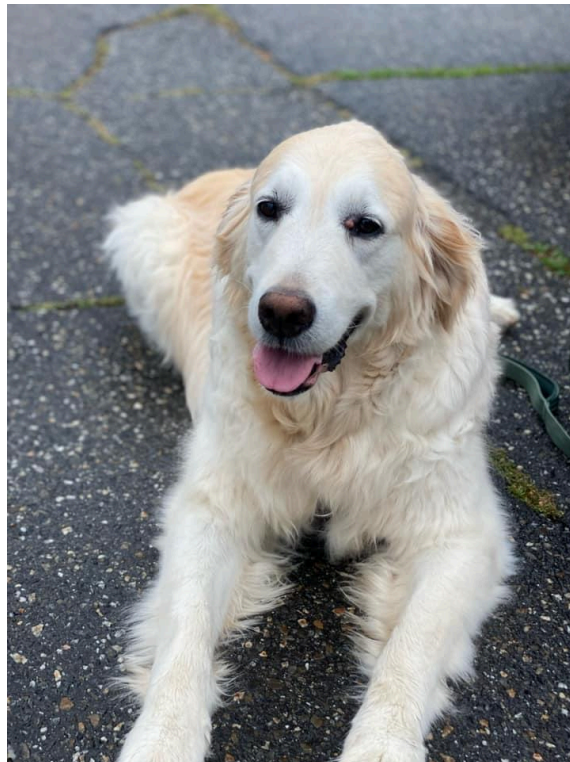
Do not scold or push bad behavior:

- When an unwanted behavior is offered/performed, redirect the puppy with a kissy noise or toy. Praise and reward the puppy from stopping the unwanted behavior and giving you attention.
- Punishment can still instill fear, which can lead to aggressive behavior.
- Praise and reward good behavior
- When a behavior is immediately followed by a positive outcome, that behavior is strengthened.

TIPS AND TAILS

Runaway Foster

- If your foster escapes or runs away, contact the Foster Coordinator immediately. You may also contact your animal control officer in your area.
- If your foster dog gets loose while on a walk, don't chase. Simply lay on the ground and calmly call their name.
- If your foster cat escapes the home, place a blanket that smells like the cat/home and litter box outside of the home.
- Be sure to have your foster collar and tags on at all times. If you did not receive your foster tags at pick up, call the foster coordinator.



Maintaining Foster Health

Taking a Temperature

If you think your kitten or puppy is sick, the first step is to take their temperature. Normal temperature should be between 100-102.5 degrees fahrenheit (Depending on age). Use a regular human thermometer with vaseline. Wipe vaseline on the thermometer and insert just the tip into the anus. After holding it for at least a minute, remove and read the temperature. If the temperature is over 103 or under 99.0, call the Foster Coordinator.

Bowel Movements

There are three types of stool: normal, soft, and diarrhea. Normal stool is firm and has a definite shape. Soft stool is not firm, but still has some shape. Diarrhea is liquid, with or without color to it. Diarrhea is common and can be caused by parasites, viruses, bacteria, food changes, stress and overfeeding.

Diarrhea must be monitored as it can lead to dehydration. If the foster is active, mild diarrhea that occurs for 24 hours is not concern. Feed the foster less at a time but more often. If the diarrhea is served, lasts more than 3-4 feeding or contains blood/parasites, call the foster coordinator to schedule a re-check.

Parasites

Foster's are dewormed upon intake (if old enough) and at the two rechecks. Parasites are commonly found in the stools of puppies and kittens. Tapeworms may look like grains of rice and roundworms look like spaghetti and can be seen in the stool, litter box, or in vomit. If you notice the worms, contact your Foster Coordinator.

Vomiting

Vomiting is not serious unless it happens continuously or accompanied with diarrhea. It can lead to dehydration. If vomiting occurs 2-3 times in a row, call the Foster Coordinator.

Eye Discharge

It is normal to have little pieces of crust in their eyes after waking up. If you see continuous yellow or green discharge or swollen/closed eyes, contact your foster coordinator. You can use a damp, warm towel to wipe the affected eye(s).

Ear Mites

Ear mites are parasites that live in the ear canal. You may notice a bald spot and or scabs behind the ears due to continuous scratching. They may also violently shake their heads. The ears may smell bad and you may see brown discharge that resembles coffee grounds. Ear mites are contagious to other animals and need to be treated. Call the Foster Coordinator if you notice any of these symptoms.

Fleas

Animals that have fleas will scratch themselves often. Topical flea treatment will be given to foster animals by the foster coordinator around 4 weeks of age. Flea prevention for puppies under four weeks includes daily brushings with the flea comb and daily bedding changes. If you still notice signs of fleas, you can wash the kitten or puppy in a small amount of Dawn dish soap followed by a flea comb to remove any remaining fleas. Baths should not be given more than once every 1-2 weeks. Most likely the foster coordinator has taken care of the fleas before they go into your house. If you still notice signs of fleas, call the foster coordinator.

Ringworm

Ringworm is a contagious fungus that can spread to other animals and humans. A sign of ringworm is thinning hair or patches of hair loss. Ringworm is difficult to remove from your house. To help with prevention and spreading, maintain cleaning protocols and a good hand washing routine. Call the Foster Coordinator if you notice any hair loss.

Mange

Mange is caused by parasites that affect the skin of animals. One form of mange is contagious to other animals and humans. The symptoms include itching, hair loss, and sores. If you notice any of these symptoms, contact the foster coordinator.



Parvovirus (Puppies) + Suppressed Immune Systems

Parvovirus is a deadly and contagious virus that attacks a dog's gastrointestinal tract. Once parvovirus is present in an environment, it is difficult to remove. It is transmitted through direct contact with contaminated feces.

Signs to look for:

- Lethargy
- Dehydration
- Loss of appetite
- Abdominal pain and bloating
- Fever
- Low body temperature
- Vomiting
- Severe diarrhea (with or without blood)

If you notice any of these signs, contact your Foster Coordinator immediately.

Upper Respiratory Tract Infection (URI)

URI's are common and are caused by contagious viruses and bacteria.

Signs to look for:

- Sneezing and discharge from eyes and nose
- Congested breathing
- Loss of appetite
- Lethargy (Lack of energy)
- Dehydration

If you notice any of these signs, please contact the Foster Coordinator.



Scheduling Rechecks and Vaccine Appointments

Foster animal(s) are required to return to the shelter every two weeks for vaccinations, deworming and general exams. All your check-up dates will be decided at the end of each check up. Some recovering from injuries will have to return for repeat x-rays, staple removal or cast change.

Vaccines

Kittens and puppies receive vaccines every 2 or 3 weeks from the time they are 4 weeks of age until they are 16 weeks of age. Animals over 3 months of age also require a rabies vaccination.

Cats and kittens receive FVRCP Vaccine (Feline Viral Rhinotracheitis, Calicivirus, and Panleukopenia)

Dogs and puppies receive the DHLPP vaccine (Distemper, Hepatitis, Parvovirus, and Parainfluenza)

Vaccine Reactions

Vaccine reactions can include, but are not limited to:

- Limping
- Not eating or drinking the normal amounts for one to two days
- Lethargy
- Pain at the injection site
- Unwillingness to play
- Low-grade fever

If any of these symptoms do not improve by 48 hours after the injection please contact your foster coordinator!



THE FINISH LINE

Spay/Neuter Surgery

During a scheduled visit, the Foster Coordinator or recheck staff may decide the pet is ready for surgery and adoption. If this is the case, a surgery date will be scheduled for you to leave your fosters. We use the following guidelines to determine if an animal is ready to return for surgery:

- The puppies/kittens are at least 8 weeks or older.
- The puppies/kittens are successfully weaned from their mother.
- They have been successfully socialized.
- Kittens are at least 2 or more pounds.
- Room on the adoption floor.

Day of Surgery

- Adult dogs and cats cannot have breakfast after midnight, but can have access to water.
- Do not give puppies/kittens breakfast on the day of surgery. Water is OK.
- Small animals must always have access to food.
- Drop-off time for surgery is 8:00am - 8:15am through our front door, or the night before if arrangements have been made with the Foster Coordinator. All cats, kittens and small animals must be in a carrier. Dogs and puppies must have a collar and leash on.
- If you have found an adopter for your foster animal please contact the adopter to let them know they can pick up from the shelter the following day to finalize the adoption during open hours. For any reason they cannot make it during those hours please have them contact the foster coordinator to reschedule.
- Please have all adoption applications turned into the foster coordinator the morning of surgery.

Foster Parents have the first choice to adopt their foster pet!

Fosters get one free adoption a year



Foster Contacts

Kennebec Valley Humane Society: (207) 626-3491

Email: Foster@pethavenlane.org

LIKE our facebook page: KVHS fosters

Address: 168 Leighton Road, Augusta 04330

Emergencies after hours

Email: Foster@pethavenlane.org

Lewiston E-Clinic: (207) 777-1110

Poison Control Hotline: 1 (800) 222-1222

Kennebec Valley Humane Society Staff Hours

Monday - Sunday open for Fosters 8:00AM - 4:30PM