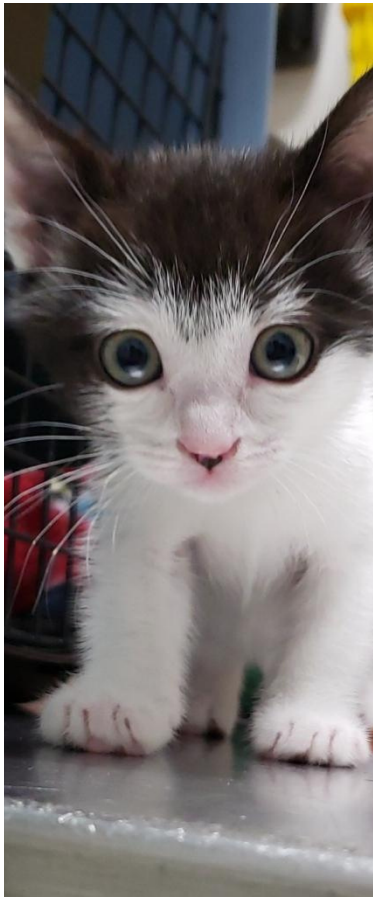




PENSACOLA
HUMANE SOCIETY™

KITTENS & QUEENS FOSTER HERO GUIDE





FIRST AND FOREMOST, THANK YOU!

You are about to embark on a journey to save one of our most vulnerable populations - kittens. Without foster heroes like you, we wouldn't be able to take in underage kittens at all. In this packet you'll find all the information you should need to raise and care for neonatal kittens, moms with litters, and a kittens track through the Pensacola Humane Society from foster to adoption.

YOUR FOSTER TEAM

Aly Martinez 850-270-3136
foster@pensacolahumane.org

FOSTER RESOURCE PAGE

Be sure to log onto our Foster Resource Page and take a moment to look through all of the resources provided there. You'll also be able to find contact information for all of our foster team and our foster superheroes:

www.pensacolahumane.org/fosterresources

login: foster

password: fosterhero

APPOINTMENTS

Acuity is our scheduling app where we direct fosters to make all wellness, medical, drop off and pick up appointments.

<https://pensacolahumanesociety.as.me/>



TRELLO

Trello is our web-based board where we post all of our animals in need of foster, as well as showing the ones who have already been placed.

When it comes to neonatal kittens, we will typically send an email to find fosters.



FACEBOOK

If you are Facebook be sure to join our private foster group, Pensacola Humane Society Foster Heroes!

www.facebook.com/groups/fosterhero



VOLUNTEER HOURS

The Pensacola Humane Society awards 12 volunteer hours per animal per day. If you need a letter acknowledging these hours please email the foster team at foster@pensacolahumane.org

OTHER VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

The foster team also has several volunteer positions that always need filling, from photography and marketing to admin assistant. Email the foster team for more information! We can also always use volunteers physically at the shelter. To apply visit- www.pensacolahumane.org/volunteer

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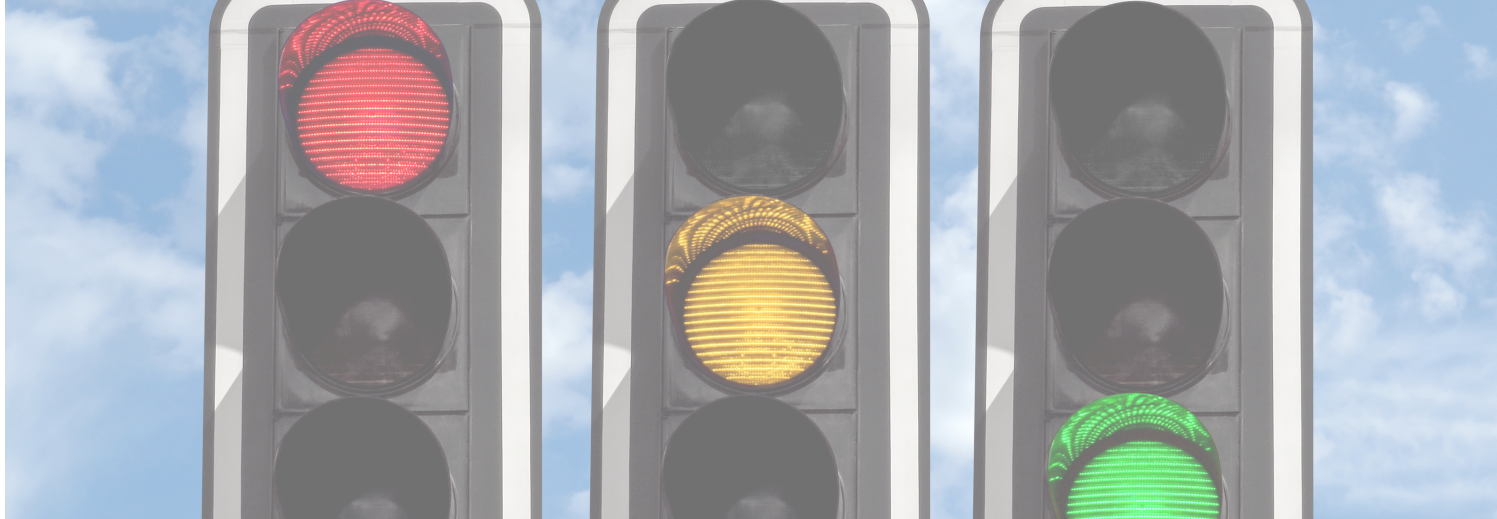
Things To Keep In Mind While Fostering

DO

- Love your fosters and enjoy your time with them!
- Keep an open line of communication between yourself, your SuperHero and the foster team
- Always continue handling and training your foster
- Advocate for your fosters
- Market your fosters everywhere you can imagine!

DONT

- Leave your foster with anyone outside of the PHS foster program
- Let your foster cat or kittens outside
- Take your foster to your own vet
- Let your foster interact with public animals
- Fail to report any medical concerns or injuries to your foster team



EMERGENCIES HAPPEN, NOW WHAT?

GREEN LIGHT EMERGENCIES: TEXT FOSTER SUPERHERO OR SEND AN EMAIL TO FOSTER@PENSACOLAHUMANE.ORG

- Hot Spot/Rash
- Light coughing/sneezing
- Single episode of vomiting/diarrhea
- Dirty ears
- Fleas
- Visible worms in stool
- Trouble urinating
- Watery eyes

YELLOW LIGHT EMERGENCIES: SEND TEXT TO SUPERHERO OR FOSTER ADMIN

- Multiple diarrhea/vomiting episodes
- Chewed or removed sutures
- Lethargy
- Lack of appetite
- Limping
- Cut or puncture
- Any act of aggression
- Light blood in stool
- Colored/thick discharge from nose or eyes
- Dark colored urine

RED LIGHT EMERGENCIES: IMMEDIATE PHONE CALL TO **ALY MARTINEZ 850.270.3136 OR MELISSA GARRETT 850.206.9175**

- Severe trauma
- LOST foster animal
- Ingestion of toxic plants/chemicals/medications
- Dog bite on humans or animals
- Unresponsive
- Difficulty breathing
- Seizure/Disorientation
- Distended abdomen
- Profusely bleeding from any orifice

DEATH OF A FOSTER

If a foster passes away while in your care wrap them in a paper towel or small hand towel you are okay parting with, place them inside of a zip bag. Write the fosters name on the outside of the bag and place in freezer until you can bring the animal to PHS to be cremated.

MOST MEDICAL NEEDS WILL BE HANDLED BY OUR MEDICAL STAFF AT OUR ADOPTION CENTER OR OUR CLINIC. IF WE CANNOT HANDLE IT IN HOUSE WE WILL DIRECT YOU TO THE APPROPRIATE VETERINARIAN AND FOLLOWING STEPS. DO NOT TAKE YOUR FOSTER TO AN OUTSIDE VETERINARIAN.

FADING KITTEN SYNDROME

Fading Kitten Syndrome is a life-threatening emergency in which a kitten, sometimes one that was previously healthy, “crashes” and begins to fade away.

Symptoms

- Low Body Temperature – the kitten feels cool or cold to the touch
- Extreme Lethargy – not getting up, unable to stand, not responding to touching/petting
- Gasping for Breath – meowing/crying out

Cause

- Hypothermia – being too cold
- Hypoglycemia – blood sugar is too low

WHEN THIS HAPPENS, IT IS VITAL THAT YOU TAKE THESE STEPS IMMEDIATELY!

Step 1:

- Get them warm:
- Create a “burrito” towel. Immediately wrap the kitten up in a towel like a burrito leaving only their face exposed (their whole body, tail, ears, and paws should be in the towel, only nose and mouth left out). Do not take the kitten out of the towel to adjust them, check on them, etc. Every time you take them out, you risk making them cold again, even if it is only for a second.
- Wrap a heating pad turned on low around the burrito towel, to avoid burns, as an extra source of heat. Secure it around the towel so it stays in place.

Step 2:

- Get their blood sugar up:
- Get a bowl or Tupperware container and add a few tablespoons of sugar in hot water.
- Stir so that the sugar dissolves – you want the mixture to be thick but still runny
- In a pinch, Karo syrup can also be used as a substitute.
- Use a syringe or your finger to give 3 drops of the mixture every 3 minutes into the mouth. If they are not swallowing, try not to get it down their throat. Aim for their gums or tongue.
- Set a timer to make sure that you are doing this at least every 3 minutes. Every 5 to 10 minutes is too long and they will continue to crash.

Step 3:

- Notify the foster team:
- Send a text to Aly – we will not have extra advice for you, this is the most that can be done but we do need to be made aware of what is going on. We do not send these kittens to veterinarian’s offices because these offices are kept cold and the staff does not have the ability to feed them as described above on short notice.
- If you have to leave while a kitten is crashing, please let us know so that we can make other arrangements.

It can take hours for kittens in this condition to improve. Once they have shown marked improvement they can return to their normal activities. You should continue to monitor them for any reoccurrences.

Keep in mind that even with love, attention and treatment, some kittens still will not make it. Try not to blame yourself during this difficult time. Any foster kitten that you have cared for was given a second chance at life BECAUSE OF YOU. Their chances at survival are much higher with you, than they are left at the shelter. The Foster Team knows that you did everything you could for every kitten in your care.

COMMON MEDICAL ISSUES

Neonates do not have fully developed immune systems and are susceptible to many illnesses and parasites, some of which they get from their mother at birth. Kittens need proper care and attention to ensure they grow up happy and healthy.



Upper Respiratory Infection (URI)

The term "upper respiratory infection" describes any illness that affects a cat's upper respiratory system; think of a kitty cold. URIs are very common in shelter cats. Common symptoms include sneezing, ocular/nasal discharge, fever, and loss of appetite. URIs are treated with antibiotics. It is very important to keep kittens warm while they recover from an upper respiratory infection. URIs are also very contagious (airborne) and you should be extra careful to sanitize between handling your sick cats and kittens and healthy animals as well as the supplies they use.

FeLV and FIV

Feline Leukemia Virus (FeLV) suppresses the immune system and can cause serious illnesses in susceptible cats, including tumor growth. FeLV is fatal and the life expectancy of a mature, infected cat is 2-4 years; most FeLV+ kittens do not survive to maturity. FeLV is transmitted through saliva and nasal secretions, as well as through urine, feces, and milk from infected mother cats. The virus can also be transferred through a bite wound, mutual grooming, shared use of litter boxes, feeding dishes, sexual contact, and from a mother cat to her kittens while in utero or during birth. FeLV+ cats and kittens are not housed with FeLV- cats and kittens for this reason. Young kittens testing positive for FeLV are tested again when they are older to confirm the results of the first test, which commonly gives a false positive as antibodies from the mother can be detected in the kitten. All cats 8 weeks and older are tested for FeLV and FIV.

Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV) is a virus that can cause a multitude of health problems in cats due to reduced immune system function. FIV is contagious, but only to other cats. Most cats with FIV live a normal life despite the virus and can live well with other cats all long as there is no aggressive fighting. Cats living indoors in a stable social structure have little chance of passing the disease to other household cats. Transmission occurs most commonly through deep bite wounds; less commonly, it is transmitted by an infected mother cat during birth or through sexual contact.

Calicivirus



Calicivirus, also known as "calici," is a viral infection that can occur in cats and kittens that are not vaccinated or are newly vaccinated. Calici is also airborne and spread between cats through direct contact with saliva, nasal mucous, eye discharge, or through contact with contaminated objects that an infected cat has sneezed on or otherwise been in contact with, such as carriers, feeding dishes, and even food. Humans that have come in contact with an infected cat or kitten could potentially pass the virus through contact with other cats. Due to the ease of transmission of this virus, cats and kittens with calici should be immediately quarantined and strict sanitation protocols should be followed.

The virus can have multiple forms, the most common being an upper respiratory tract form. Other forms include the joint form, which can cause fever and swelling of the joints, and the mutant virulent form, which can cause URI signs and ulcers on the face, among other symptoms.

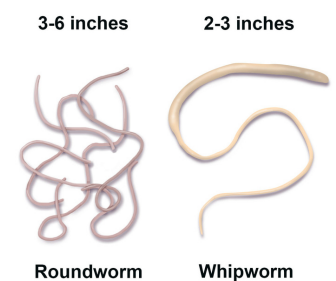
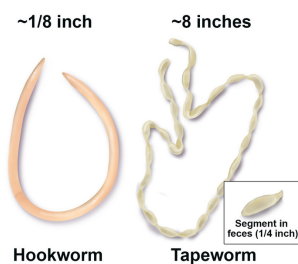
COMMON MEDICAL ISSUES CONTINUED

Panleukopenia

Panleukopenia, also known as "panleuk," is a viral infection that most commonly affects kittens and young cats. It is transmitted through direct contact with saliva, vomit, and feces. An infected mother can also transmit panleuk to her kittens at birth. Left untreated, it is almost always fatal. This illness can be frustrating and difficult to deal with because the virus is very durable, can survive in the environment for up to a year, and is highly transmissible. There are also many strains. This means that other vaccinated or unvaccinated cats can become infected with panleukopenia simply by coming into contact with places where an infected cat has been. Cats that test positive for panleukopenia should be quarantined and strict sanitation protocols should be followed.

Worms

Kittens often have internal parasites like coccidia, hookworms, roundworms and tape worms. It is important that we get these parasites treated as soon as possible. Symptoms can include diarrhea, vomiting and nausea. While coccidia, hookworms and roundworms can't be seen in the stool tapeworms can be seen. Tapeworms break apart and normally come out of the body in segments that resemble little grains of rice.



Herpes

Herpesvirus infection, also known as feline viral rhinotracheitis (FVR), is an infectious disease caused by feline herpesvirus type-1. As with other herpes viruses, the virus is very species specific, and is only known to cause infections in domestic and wild cats. The virus can infect cats of all ages.

FVR is a major cause of upper respiratory disease in cats, and is the most common cause of conjunctivitis (inflammation of the tissues surrounding the eye, especially the lining of the lids and the third eyelid).

A cat becomes infected with this virus by direct contact with virus particles. The virus is spread in saliva and in discharges from the eyes and nose of an infected cat. Therefore, an infection occurs when a susceptible cat comes into direct contact with an infected cat, or comes into contact with inanimate objects (e.g., clothing, food and water dishes, furniture) that have been contaminated with viral particles.



Ringworm

Ringworm is a fungus that initially presents itself as round scaly patches of skin. You will most often find it starting out on the feet, tails, ears or face. It is contagious to people and other animals through touch. If untreated the fungus will cause body wide hair loss and skin irritation. Treatment typically takes around 21 days and quarantine is mandatory.

COMMON MEDICATIONS

Medications should only be given at the direction of the Pensacola Humane Society Foster Team or their medical staff.

Giving Liquid Oral Medications

The foster team will typically have your oral medications dosed out in syringes for you so that you don't have to worry about drawing up the correct amounts. Hold the kitten in your non-dominant hand and hold the syringe in your dominant hand. Placing them on a table or counter may be easier than holding them in your lap. Not every kitten will need to be scruffed while medicating but it can make the process easier. Having two people (one holding the cat and one plunging the syringe) will always make things go a little more smoothly as well.

Place the syringe into the side of the kittens mouth and angle the syringe towards the throat - be careful not to gag or choke the kitten. Depress the syringe to feed the medication into the kittens mouth. Try not to draw the process out but be sure to not go so quickly that you overwhelm, choke the kitten or have them spit out the medication, causing a missed dose.

**When giving doxycycline, follow the medication with the same amount of water in a syringe. Doxycycline can irritate and burn the throat and esophagus and it's important to chase the medication with water to prevent damage.*

Panacur

Panacur is an oral dewormer that treats roundworms, hookworms and whipworms.

Fortiflora

Fortiflora is a probiotic that improves gut health and can help with diarrhea.

Itraconazole

Itraconazole is an oral anti fungal medication commonly used to treat symptoms affecting the skin, like yeast and ringworm.

Lime-Sulfur Dip

Lime-sulfur dip is a topical bath that is used to treat ringworm

Nebulizing

Nebulizers can be used for kittens with upper respiratory infections, similar to people using an inhaler or mask, to administer an aerosolized medication mist that they inhale. Cats are typically placed in a manipulated box that the nebulizer is hooked up to instead of using a face mask like you'd see for humans.

Ponazuril

Ponazuril is an oral dewormer that treats coccidia.

Doxycycline

Doxycycline is an oral antibiotic that we commonly use to treat upper respiratory symptoms.

Penicillin

Penicillin is an injectable broad spectrum antibiotic.

Ketoconazole

Ketoconazole is a topical antifungal - we typically use this to treat ringworm.



RECOMMENDED SUPPLIES

These are some of the supplies that the Pensacola Humane Society Foster team requires that you have when fostering kittens. We will do our best to send all necessary supplies with you but you may need to supplement with your own supplies.

Bottle Babies 0-5 weeks

- Bottle
- Syringe
- Miracle Nipple
- Breeders Edge Formula
- Blender bottle
- Heating Pad(no auto off)/Snuggle Safe
- Digital scale (needs to weigh in grams)
- Thermometer and lubricant
- Baby wipes
- Top open cat carrier/Tub with no lid

Gruelie Babies 5-7 weeks

- Canned kitten food, we feed Fancy Feast
- Hard kitten food, we feed Purina One
- Breeders Edge Formula
- Kitten proofed room or playpen
- Shallow litter box
- Non-clumping litter, we use pine pellets
- Heating Pad(no auto off)/Snuggle Safe
- Digital scale (needs to weigh in grams)
- Baby wipes
- Cat carrier for transportation
- Blender or food processor (optional)
- Nutrical (optional)

Pregnant/Nursing Mom

- Canned kitten food, we feed Fancy Feast
- Hard kitten food, we feed Purina One
- Bottle & Miracle Nipple in case you need to supplement a kitten
- Breeders Edge Formula, in case you need to supplement a kitten
- Cat carrier for transportation
- Heating Pad(no auto off)/Snuggle Safe
- Digital scale (needs to weigh in grams)
- Baby wipes
- Empty room or large kennel to isolate mom and babies
- Litterbox with non clumping litter
- A welping box that mom can get in and out of easily but babies cannot

Kittens 8+ weeks

- Canned kitten food, we feed Fancy Feast
- Hard kitten food, we feed Purina One
- Standard litter box
- Non-clumping litter
- Cat carrier for transportation
- An kitten proof room
- Appropriate toys
- Cat scratcher

GETTING STARTED WITH KITTENS

SETTING UP YOUR ROOM

Kittens 0-4 weeks

Kittens 4 weeks and under should be kept strictly in a carrier or in a rubbermaid tub with no lid. You should have a heat source such as a heating pad (without the auto off function) or a snuggle safe. Place a blanket between or towel between the kittens and the heating source. The heat source should not cover the entire space, so that the kitten can move towards and away from the heat as necessary. Without external heat your kitten will fail to thrive.



Kittens 5-7 weeks

Kittens 5-7 weeks of age should be kept in their own space but can be moved from their previous carrier or tub to a larger area like a dog kennel, cat condo or playpen. They're still too young to have free roam of a room all day and need to be monitored regularly. You'll also want to have a shallow litter box now that kittens are moving onto gruel and wet food. It's best to still provide a heat source for them as well during this stage.



Kittens 8+ weeks

Kittens 8 weeks, 2 pounds, and older should be fine to free-roam in a baby-proofed room. This room should have all unnecessary things put away, cords removed, outlets covered and all areas a tiny kitten might be able to wiggle their way into blocked off and covered. They can now have a standard litter box with non-clumping litter. Kittens should have free access to water and dry kitten food and supplemented daily with wet kitten food. Toys, scratching post or board and other enrichment tools should also be provided.

GETTING STARTED WITH KITTENS: TIPS AND RULES FOR SUCCESS

Common Household Hazards

- Reclining/Rocking chairs - kittens can easily crawl up/inside and become injured.
- Toilets - keep lids closed at all times
- Bathtubs - keep water drained at all times
- Doors - open doors slowly and cautiously
- House plants - many are toxic to cats
- Cords - you can use a bitter apple spray or cord cover to kitten proof them.
- Outlets - Keep covered
- Other animals - they can injure kittens or transmit diseases to them.
- Appliances - these often have crawl spaces and wires
- Small objects - these can be choked on, be sure your space is tidy
- Strings/Rubber bands/Hair Ties - choking hazard
- Chemicals/Cleaning products - make sure that all chemicals are removed from the space.

WEIGH YOUR KITTENS!

Kittens 0-4 weeks should be weighed at each feeding until they have transitioned completely to wet food. Kittens 5+ weeks of age that are eating fine on their own should be weighed daily. Remember that a stagnant weight or weight loss is one of the first sign of illness in kittens. Weights should be sent to the foster team at foster@pensacolahumane.org **every friday**. See the last page of this guide for an example of a feeding and weight chart.

*it is not uncommon for kittens to drop a little bit of weight when they begin transitioning to food and are becoming more mobile/learning to play.

Pictures of Your Fosters

Once weekly you should send updated pictures of each of your kittens. Starting at six weeks you are required to submit three photos of your kittens weekly until they are adopted or until they come into stay at the shelter. This should include one face photo, one full body photo and one personality photo. Pictures can be submitted via email foster@pensacolahumane.org or via our private facebook group Pensacola Humane Society Foster Heroes. Starting at six weeks your kittens are eligible for our foster-to-adopt program - see the marketing and adoption section for more information on eligibility requirements.

Other Common Helpful To-Know's

- It is natural for kittens to suckle on each other or on your fingers, even after they've finished eating. This is harmless unless you're noticing that it is causing irritation to another kitten's skin or is directed towards other kittens genitals. Contact your foster team right away to see if the kitten needs to be separated. Suckling on the genitals can cause scar tissue and complications that could require surgery to repair.
- Water drives all metabolic functions in kittens (and people) and their bodies cannot function properly if they are dehydrated. Diarrhea, vomiting and not eating enough as bottle kittens are the key indicators of dehydration and should be reported to the foster team immediately. Dehydration can be life threatening in kittens.
- **UNDERAGE KITTENS ARE NOT ALLOWED TO RETURN TO THE SHELTER, IF YOU CAN NO LONGER CARE FOR THEM LET THE FOSTER TEAM KNOW SO THAT THEY CAN BE PLACED IN A NEW FOSTER HOME.**
- Kittens are not permitted to be outdoors at anytime!

THE KITTEN TIMELINE

Kittens should eat 8 mLs per ounce of body weight. Ex: a 4 oz kitten should eat 32 mLs of formula. This is a guide, not a rule. If a kitten is struggling with eating, maintaining attempts every hour is important rather than extending the time between feedings. Once on track, maintain the normal 2-3 hour feedings.

Kittens are vaccinated every 2 weeks starting at 4 weeks & 1 lb, below is a guide but keep in mind that your schedule may be skewed depending on when your kitten was intaken. Your team will keep you updated!

WEEKS

0-1

FEEDING

Bottle feed formula every 2-3 hours. If there is a mom cat, make sure that all kittens are nursing. Kittens can nurse from mom for up to 45 minutes at a time. A lot of crying or activity could indicate a problem with Mom's milk supply. See our bottlefeeding guide for more info.

DEVELOPMENT

Kittens will weigh about 90-100 grams at birth. Kittens will sleep about 90% of the time and eat the rest of the time. Handle the kittens minimally. Newborns are deaf and blind and are unable to maintain their body temperature. Keep kittens warm. Umbilical cord will continue to dry and fall off on its own.

MEDICAL

Kittens are not old enough for medical intervention or regular vaccinations or treatments at this age.

1-2

FEEDING

Bottle feed every 2-3 hours until kittens are full but not bloated.

DEVELOPMENT

Kitten should have doubled their birth weight. Ear canals open between 5-8 days. Eyes open between 8-14 days. Healthy kittens will be round and warm and have pink skin. Healthy kittens seldom cry. They are still unable to maintain their body temperature. Keep kittens warm.

MEDICAL

Kittens are old enough for medical intervention as determined necessary by our medical staff. They are too young for regular treatments or vaccinations at this age.

2-3

FEEDING

Bottle feed every 3-4 hours.

DEVELOPMENT

Kittens will weigh about 10 oz and will begin to crawl and stand between 18-21 days old. They begin to play with each other. Increase handling of kittens to get them used to human contact. Ensure that all interactions are gentle and positive. They are still unable to maintain their body temperature, keep warm.

MEDICAL

Kittens are old enough for medical intervention as determined necessary by our medical staff. They are too young for regular treatments or vaccinations at this age.

3-4

FEEDING

Bottle feed every 3-4 hours until kittens are full but not bloated. Overnight feedings can be every 4 hours. Kittens may start lapping from a bowl.

DEVELOPMENT

Kittens will weigh about 13 oz. Kittens begin to see well. They may start cleaning themselves but will still need help for serious cleaning. Litter box training may begin at 4 weeks of age. They are still unable to maintain their body temperature.

MEDICAL

Kittens are old enough for medical intervention as determined necessary by our medical staff. They are too young for regular treatments or vaccinations at this age.

WEEKS**4-5****FEEDING**

Feed every 4-5 hours, if they are not interested in weaning, continue to bottle feed. Weaning of kittens may begin gradually. See feeding guidelines and weaning kittens section for more information on transitioning your bottle babies to gruelie babies. Remember it is better to feed more often than not enough!

DEVELOPMENT

Litter box training may begin at 4 weeks of age. Kittens should weigh around 16 ounces at 4 weeks.

MEDICAL

Kittens are old enough to begin their receive regular vaccinations and treatments. Their first exam will consist of two vaccinations, a microchip and their first dose of dewormer. You'll make this appointment once they reach 1 lb using the following link www.calendly.com/phsfosters

5-6**FEEDING**

Weaning should be easier now. Feed gruel 4 times a day. Introduce dry food and water as well. You may also experiment with PLAIN meat (no spices added) baby food to help with the transition.

DEVELOPMENT

Kittens can start to wander around the room, under supervision. Play with your kittens often! View our Fear Free Kitten Socialization Hand Out to get ideas on how to grow your kitten into a well rounded cat!

MEDICAL

Kittens are not due for regular vaccinations or treatments this week.

6-7**FEEDING**

Feed canned food at least 3 times daily and have dry food available at all times. If any kittens are territorial with food, provide a second bowl so that everyone gets fed.

DEVELOPMENT

Kittens will start to act like actual cats; playing and grooming themselves. Be sure to show them the litter box after meals, play sessions, and naps. Scratching inappropriate objects should be redirected to a proper cat scratching post/board.

MEDICAL

Kittens are due for their boosters this week, if the entire litter has reached 1.5 lbs they will all receive flea prevention as well. If they have not hit this weight requirement we will do flea prevention at week 8. Kittens will receive another single dose of dewormer. If your kitten did not have dewormer at week 4 we will send you home with three days of dewormer instead.

KITTENS THAT ARE 6 WEEKS OLD, WEIGH 1.5 LBS, HAVE 2 BOOSTERS AND ARE GENERALLY HEALTHY ARE AVAILABLE FOR FOSTER-TO-ADOPT

7-8**FEEDING**

Feed canned food at least 2 times daily. If any kittens are territorial with food, provide a second bowl so that everyone is being fed. Begin leaving dry food out at all times. Remember to be weighing your kittens!

DEVELOPMENT

Kittens are maturing and growing more. They will be active and exploring like toddlers do.

MEDICAL

Kittens are not due for regular vaccinations or boosters this week

8-9**FEEDING**

Feed canned food at least 2 times daily. If any kittens are territorial with food, provide a second bowl so that everyone is being fed. Begin leaving dry food out at all times. Remember to be weighing your kittens!

DEVELOPMENT

Kittens are growing and will soon be teenagers. Kittens at this age should be at least 2 lbs.

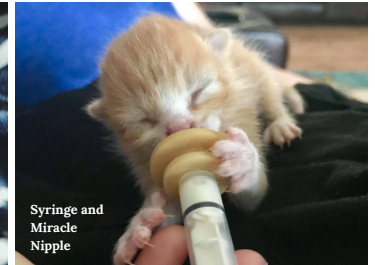
MEDICAL

Kittens are due for their boosters this week. The foster team will schedule your kittens neuter for week 9, when your kittens are weighing 2 lbs. They will receive a FIV/FelV test during surgery. If your kittens haven't been adopted yet, they'll stay at the shelter after their surgery for adoption.

STEP BY STEP BOTTLE FEEDING AND ETIQUETTE

Step One: Preparing Your Formula & Bottle

Never give a neonate anything other than the specified formula. NO COWS MILK! Kittens digestive systems are fragile and they should only be on the recommended formula/food, unless told otherwise by PHS's veterinarian or foster team. No treats or table food. If you start them on a specific brand of formula, it is best to stick with that type. Switching formulas can cause discomfort, gas, diarrhea, and intestinal issues



When preparing your formula, be sure to follow the mixing instructions, although if you need to transition kittens from moms milk to formula, the chart below can be helpful in preventing diarrhea, constipation and an upset gut. Mixed formula can be kept in the refrigerator for up to **THREE DAYS**, after that it must be disposed of. Unmixed powdered formula can be stored in the refrigerator for four months and six months in the freezer once opened. Always make sure that your formula is completely mixed and there are no clumps. We recommend using a blender bottle to ensure this. Only use clean, sterilized nipples, bottles and blender bottles when feeding.

After mixing your formula and filling the bottle or syringe, place hot water in a cup and let the bottle/syringe with formula rest inside to bring the milk to the temperature of your skin. Never microwave the bottle/syringe with formula outright. This can destroy nutrients and can also create 'hot pockets' in the formula that can burn the kitten mouth. Discard any unused formula from each feeding. **DO NOT REHEAT.**

Should you have to transition kittens from moms milk to formula, use the following mixing chart to prevent diarrhea:

- First four feedings 8 parts water to 1 parts formula
- Second four feedings 4 parts water to 1 parts formula
- All subsequent feedings should be as the formula directions instruct or 2 parts water to 1 parts formula

Step Two: Stimulate Your Kitten

Helping your kitten to eliminate before feeding will ensure that your kitten can eat the entire amount that they need to as it will prevent the kitten from feeling full too early. They are too young to eliminate regularly on their own. To stimulate a kitten take a warm wash cloth, cotton ball, tissue or baby wipe and gently rub at the kittens genitals and rectum until the kitten stops peeing and pooping. Kittens should urinate at every feeding. Very young neonates may start out pooping once a day but the frequency should continue to increase regularly. Normal neonate stool colors will be brown with a slight yellow cast. Stool should come out easily, it should be soft but retain it's shape. Diarrhea and constipation are both dangerous in kittens.

If you think your kitten is constipated you can massage their abdomen in a warm bath or add a tiny drop of olive oil/mineral oil to one of their feedings to loosen things up. If your kitten has diarrhea you can slightly decrease the amount of water in the formula to help the kitten firm up. If these tips do not help let your foster team know by email foster@pensacolahumane.org.

STEP BY STEP BOTTLE FEEDING AND ETIQUETTE

Step 3: Weigh Your Kitten

Always weigh your kitten before feeding them. An easy way to calculate how much the kitten ate, instead of trying to decipher those tiny lines on the syringe or bottle, is to weigh them after they eat and subtract the two numbers. Final weight - initial weight = amount eaten. It's easiest to weigh your kitten by placing a bowl on your scale, hitting the tare button so that your scale forgets the weight of the bowl and then placing your kitten inside the bowl so that they can't squirm or crawl off the scale while you're waiting for their weight to register.

Record your initial weight at each feeding, these weights are to be sent to the foster team via email **every friday**. This is mandatory. The final page of this guide is a feeding and weight chart, you don't have to use this exact chart but it is a good guide to follow.



Step 4: Feed Your Kitten

Feed babies one at a time. Place them on a counter top/lap and allow them to feed with four paws down with a level head up. This simulates how they would nurse from mom. Some neonates may knead and try to grab your hand or bottle. This is normal, allow them to nurse as they are comfortable. NEVER feed a neonate on their back. This can cause the formula to go down the wrong tube and lead to aspiration.

Kittens 0-1 weeks should feed from a syringe and then transition to a bottle as milk from a bottle comes out much quicker. Miracle nipples will sit nicely on oral syringes, your kitten kit should have several different sizes of syringe so that they can grow with the kitten. Change syringes often as they will begin to stick and can cause frustration or the syringe can suddenly give causing too much milk to enter the kittens mouth.

You can gently open the kitten's mouth with your finger and place the nipple into its mouth directly on its tongue if necessary. Pull lightly on the bottle to promote strong sucking. It's important to tilt the bottle to prevent the kitten from swallowing air. You should never squeeze the bottle, a latched kitten will suckle at a rate that they can handle. Squeezing can cause aspiration which can lead to further complications. A latched kitten's ears will wiggle, their tongue will form a u-shape and you'll hear tell-tale sucking from them. Be cautious about your kitten over eating - they should look like little pears but not appear bloated. Log how much your kitten ate after each meal. After feeding stroke the kittens back to help them burp just like mom would. Using a toothbrush here works great!

Kittens should eat roughly 5 mLs per 100 grams of body weight.

If milk comes out of a kitten's nose, it is aspirating. Kittens are pretty good at clearing milk from their lungs on their own. Set the kitten down and allow it to begin breathing normally, which should take a few seconds. Note on their feeding chart when this happens.

ALWAYS SANITIZE THE AREA AND YOUR FEEDING TOOLS BEFORE AND AFTER FEEDING

STEP BY STEP BOTTLE FEEDING AND ETIQUETTE

Other Tips, Tricks and Things to Keep in Mind

- If your kitten is acting ravenous decrease the time in between feedings until this behavior subsides. Ravenous behaviors can cause them to choke, inhale formula, or become uncomfortably bloated.
- If your kitten does not seem interested in eating, give them a short break and try again after a few minutes to an hour. Continue trying often until they eat. Be sure to log these habits.
- Some kittens do not know how to nurse off of a bottle and it can take a few rounds before they get the hang of it. That's okay and normal. Frustration happens but always remember to STAY PATIENT!
- If kitten isn't latching, make sure you are checking the temp of the formula and the kitten itself. Formula must be body temp or slightly warmer and if a kitten is too hot or cold themselves, they may not eat. Adjust accordingly.
- Research shows that a kittens suckling reflexes are strongest when they first wake up. That's the best time to comfort and feed! Especially if you have a fussy eater.
- If not using a miracle nipple and your kitten does not seem to be getting enough formula and appears distressed, you can make the hole in the nipple *slightly* larger. The formula should drip slowly when held upside down.
- If your kitten is on medication, give it after the kitten has eaten, unless told otherwise, to prevent upsetting the stomach. Some medications can be mixed with formula as its vehicle - ask your foster team if this is okay.
- Keeping your formula container in the freezer will help with longevity and help prevent clumps.
- Some kittens feel secure, focused and may nurse better when they are slightly swaddled in a blanket or towel, especially if they are flailing their arms around a bit.
- Rubbing the kitten's face with a washcloth or toothbrush mimics a mother's tongue and may help prepare them for meal times.
- Always wipe any leftover milk from the kitten's face. This will help keep their fur soft and clean around the face to prevent any hair loss or irritation from old dried milk.
- NEVER feed a kitten who is unresponsive, lethargic, or unable to swallow.
- Feeding kittens inside of their comfy and warm beds is always ideal as well, or a warm countertop versus an unnatural cold surface or your lap.
- Some kittens are competitive and will latch and nurse better when their siblings are around. It's their instinct to fight for survival and food.



TUBE FEEDING GUIDE AND ETIQUETTE

If a kitten is too weak to nurse or the mother will not care for her litter, the pet parent may need to tube feed the young. The necessary equipment includes the appropriate sized soft pliable catheter (your foster team or PHS medical staff will get you the right size), syringes to hold formula, the formula warmed in a bowl, sterile lube and a marking pen.

How to Tube Feed a Kitten

After weighing each animal and determining the amount to feed (5% of the kittens body weight), measure each individual animal from the nostril to the last rib for the feeding tube. This is the length of feeding tube you will insert. Mark this length on the tube. Tubes should only be used on one kitten each. These steps should be repeated each and every day that the animals will be tube fed formula.

Draw up slightly more formula into the syringe and catheter than is needed for the animal. Place the animal on a towel in your lap with the head and chest on a slight upward incline. Hold the back of the animal's head gently. Open the animal's mouth with that same hand. Direct the tube into the front of the animal's mouth (NOT from the side). Do not force the tube to go in. The kitten will reflexively swallow when the tube is at the esophagus. If the kitten does not swallow and you force the tube, it could end up in the trachea. Once the kitten swallows, the tube should slide easily to the point you have marked. Once it is in the proper location, slowly depress the plunger on the syringe.

The tube should be withdrawn after feeding half of the required meal and the animal should be burped. After burping, reinsert the tube and feed the rest of the meal. Burp the animal again and stimulate for urination and defecation. After the feeding, the animal's abdomen should appear rounded and full.

Before feeding the first kitten, practice drawing up water or formula and depressing the plunger. Note the force of the water or formula as it leaves the catheter. Gently depress the plunger to avoid damaging the animal's stomach wall. It will take practice to handle the syringe, catheter, animal, and formula all at once.

Keep in Mind While Tube Feeding

- Do not overfeed and over-distend the abdomen. This will cause the kitten pain causing it to struggle and cry as well as gut and intestinal issues.
- If the kitten coughs or gags when you start to depress the plunger, withdraw the feeding tube and start over. You may have the tube in the trachea. If you continue to inject the formula, the animal may get **aspiration pneumonia or suffocate**.
- If the kitten regurgitates or vomits the food, do not feed it again at that meal. If it occurs for two meals in a row, contact your foster team.
- It is preferable to feed at least two to three meals a day by bottle to allow the kittens to suckle. This may help decrease the amount the animals attempt to nurse on each other, which may result in skin sores.

SCAN THIS CODE WITH YOUR
PHONE CAMERA TO WATCH A
VIDEO ON TUBE FEEDING



WEANING BOTTLE BABIES TO GRUELIES!

Kittens will begin weaning at about 4 weeks when majority of their teeth begin erupting. You may notice that your kittens is ready to wean because they are biting at the nipple on their bottle and seem hungrier than ever. This is a sensitive stage because you may see your kitten nibbling on wet or dry food - this does not mean they are eating **enough**. Kittens should eat 5% of their body weight at each feeding

Give kittens a shallow dish with warmed gruel at each feeding and let them discover it. Some may take to it right away - some may not. Be patient with them. If they do not begin eating the gruel on their own see the section about syringe feeding gruel. When leaving gruel in the kittens kennel be sure to use water instead of formula to create the gruel as using formula can go bad when left out. During this stage you will also begin leaving out dry food so that they can independently make the transition when they are ready. This stage is one of the messiest - be sure to wipe gruel from the kittens coat to prevent irritated skin and loss of hair!

Making Gruel

Gruel is made with either formula or water and canned kitten food. Formula can help ease the weaning process as kittens are used to the taste and smell of it by now. You will mix either liquid and the canned kitten food until it reaches an applesauce-like consistency. This consistency is important because it ensure kittens are staying hydrated during the weaning process. A good starting ratio is two cans of food to one can of water or formula.

- It is often easiest to mix the gruel in a blender to ensure the right consistency throughout.
- Always store gruel in a covered container in the refrigerator - bacteria can quickly grow when left out.
- Reduce the amount of water gradually until kittens are on pure canned food.

Teaching Kittens About Gruel

Weaned kittens need to be fed every 4-5 hours to ensure their blood sugar stays up. They can go 6-8 hours over night but not throughout the day.

- Continue to weigh weaning kittens before each feeding to ensure that they are eating enough.
- Be sure to feed gruel in shallow dishes that kittens can easily reach into.
- Always give kittens a chance to discover gruel on their own - if they are simply not eating read on about syringe feeding gruel.

Syringe Feeding Gruelies

Gruel made for syringe feeding should have a consistency that better resembles a milkshake and may require less water than gruel being eaten from a dish. This is also where you may try making gruel with meat baby food so that it will flow through the syringe easier. Make sure that gruel is warmed when feeding but not hot.

- Like you would when bottle feeding, make sure the kitten is belly down and you have a loose grip around their head and shoulders. Insert the syringe into the mouth at a 45 degree angle from the side. Feeding from the front can cause choking.
- Slowly plunge the syringe to feed gruel into the kittens mouth, removing the syringe every few seconds to allow them to swallow. Leading them towards the bowl of gruel will help them learn bowl etiquette and eating on their own as well.
- Weigh kittens throughout the feeding, they should eat 5% of their body weight!

For kittens weaning from mom, give kitten access to wet food several times a day in a shallow dish for them to explore. They will naturally wean themselves when they and mom are ready.

GETTING STARTED WITH MOMS AND BABIES

Setting Up Their Space

Kittens and mom should have their own room where they can be isolated. Kittens should have a whelping box with a blanket that mom can get in and out of but they can not. These whelping boxes should have open tops with sides high enough that kittens can't get out but that mom can without too much difficulty and should have a blanket in the bottom. Providing a heating pad on low, underneath the blanket, can help keep the kittens warm for times when mom needs space. Mom will need free access to dry kitten food and water and have wet kitten food supplemented to make sure that she produces enough milk and has enough calories to keep caring for the kittens. You should also have a litter box with non-clumping litter available for mom.

The first few days you have mom home or the first few days after she gives birth try to disturb mom and babies as little as possible. Come in twice a day to weigh each kitten and give them a quick look over, replenish moms needs and then go back to giving mom her space to do her thing. Stress from human interruption can cause her to stop labor - which is life threatening for her and the babies - and potentially cause her to reject the kittens.

The length of pregnancy in cats is roughly 65 days

Birthing Checklist

- Clean cloths and towels
- A pair of scissors or blade
- Rubbing alcohol for disinfecting
- Unflavored dental floss or sturdy thread
- lubricant like petroleum jelly
- Baby's syringe bulb

The string and blade are to tie off and cut the placenta if mom does not do so after 5 or more minutes. This can wait for several minutes. Also use the blade to *carefully* cut the baby out of the sac if mom has not after 1-2 minutes. These items are just for **IN CASE** you should need them, cats have been doing this for millions of years without our intervention - always give mom the opportunity to do it first.

Be Patient and Cautious With Mom

Just like we can be with our offspring, some moms can become protective over their new babies. Let mom come to you when you enter the room and make sure that she can see the kittens when you have to handle them. **DO NOT** introduce house hold animals to a new mom in her 'sacred' space. This can create stress in mom, which can bring many complications, as well as potentially caused aggression. You are also putting those newborn kittens at risk - they have **NO** immune system, whatever your pet may have carried inside with them from the yard could kill those kittens. Keep them separate.

Things To Look Out For

While mom should typically take care of all the kittens needs there are some things you need to keep an eye out for. Check that mom is not smothering any of the kittens and that they are getting enough to eat. Remember, weighing them twice a day is still mandatory while mom is caring for them. Is mom ignoring a kitten that seems weak or sickly? Is mom acting aggressively towards any of the kittens? Is mom doing anything that concerns you? Let the foster team know immediately so that they can arrange a medical exam or potentially place them with a foster that can bottle feed them if you cannot.

WE'RE HAVING A BABY! MAKING IT THROUGH LABOR

BEFORE

- Signs of labor in moms include panting, restlessness, nesting, loss of appetite and a drastically decreased body temperature - below 99 degrees.

DURING

- If your pregnant foster goes into active labor and hasn't had a baby after 1-2 hours, let your foster team know immediately via group text.

Alysia Martinez 850-270-3136

- As kittens are delivered mom will start cleaning them up. She will remove the fetal membranes and secretions from the kittens nose and mouth, this will allow the kitten to breathe freely.
- There should be a placenta for each kitten born - if not let your foster team know. **DO NOT PULL ON THE CORD WHEN PLACENTA IS STILL INSIDE MOM.** This can cause massive tearing and bleeding.
- **DO NOT HOVER.** Remember that mom's natural instincts will guide her. It is best to NOT intervene. Check on mom every hour or so just to be sure that things are moving along and going smoothly.
- Most moms will not need your help and may deliver in the middle of the night when it's quiet and she knows she will have time to herself to focus on her babies.
- If a baby is stuck in the birthing canal send a group text to your foster team and reference the emergency veterinarians in your Foster Hero Guide
 - There can be a 20 minute to 2 hour pause in between babies being born - this is normal. If mom is pushing and starts to seem frantic or distressed, this is not normal and you should refer to the emergency protocol. Stay calm and we will walk you through whatever steps should be taken next and where to go if necessary.

AFTER

- Do NOT bathe the litter or mom for a week after birth. Mom will keep them clean and she should not be bathed in soap, only wiped down with a wet rag of any blood/after birth if needed.
- Keep mom and her whelping box in a secluded area - this should be a room with a door that closes to keep her from roaming the house and to keep other animals away from her and the kittens.
- Mom may try to move her kittens to a closet or smaller, darer, or more secluded space if given the opportunity.
- Some vomiting or diarrhea is normal after giving birth. Limit moms food and water intake for the first 24 hours to help with this, after 24 hours resume free access to food and water.

KEEP YOUR FOSTER TEAM POSTED ALONG THE WAY AND BE SURE TO LET THEM KNOW WHEN MOM IS DONE GIVING BIRTH. THEY WILL DIRECT YOU ON WHAT IS NEXT!

MARKETING AND ADOPTION: KITTENS

Foster-to-Adopt Kitten Program

To be eligible for this program, kittens need to be at least six weeks old, weigh at least 1.5 pounds, have been vaccinated twice, have a microchip, and are generally healthy (not being treated for any illnesses).

Once a kitten is eligible for this program they can be advertised via the Pensacola Humane Society website and other marketing avenues. It is your responsibility to market your foster kittens through the Pensacola humane Society. The foster team will provide you with a foster-to-adopt packet for each of your foster kittens - this will include a foster guide that goes home with the adopter and a contract that the adopter signs and you keep and return to the foster team.

Submit weekly photo's of your foster kitten via email, foster@pensacolahumane.org, or via our private facebook page Pensacola Humane Society Foster Heroes. You should include a face shot, full body picture, and a picture that displays the kittens personality. With the pictures include a 2-3 sentence 'bio' or adopt me blurb about your kittens personality.

When someone applies to adopt your foster kitten we will send the adopters information to you. It is your job to arrange a meeting between your foster kittens and the adopter in an timely manner. If they decide to adopter the kitten(s) you will have them read through and sign the foster contract and give them their copy of the foster-to-adopt guide. The foster contract needs to be delivered or scanned to foster team within 24 hours. Taking clear pictures of each page and sending those to the foster team is also acceptable until you can get the physical copy to the shelter. The foster-to-adopt guide will have the kittens neuter date on the front and everything else the adopter needs to know for this period.



Surgery

If your kitten is not adopted during the foster-to-adopt period your kitten will have their spay or neuter surgery around 10 weeks of age and when they weigh at least 2.5 pounds. Your foster team will make this appointment and notify you when and where the surgery will be!

Kittens will be scheduled to stay at the shelter after their surgery and will be available for immediate adoption the following day. If you are interested in fostering your kitten longer or until adoption please let the foster team know before their surgery date. While continuing to foster this litter is no problem, it does mean that you will be unavailable for another litter of kittens that are too young to stay in the shelter for longer.

If the kittens stay in your care after surgery we will continue to send you adoption applications and you are still required to set up and meet and greets per our normal adoption procedure until they are adopted.

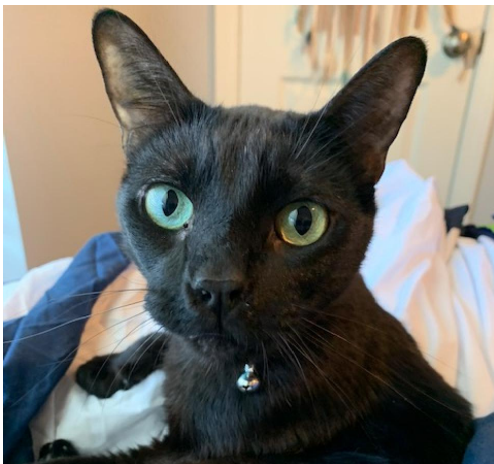
MARKETING AND ADOPTION: MOM

Prepping Mom for Adoption

Mom will stay with you until she is spayed. The sooner her kittens are no longer nursing, the sooner she can be spayed; she must not be allowed to nurse the kittens for 2 weeks before surgery. Her milk must dry up before surgery because the mammary glands are located so close to the incision site. There are a couple of options for dealing with this:

1. You can separate mama from her kittens when you see that the kittens are eating enough gruel/kibble to maintain (and gain!) their weights (generally around 7-8 weeks). This ensures that mama is able to come in for her spay appointment around the same time that her kittens are being spayed/neutered. If you are in a hurry to get mama into the adoption center so you can foster more kittens, this is the best choice.
2. Let kittens nurse from mom until they're adopted or mama kicks them off.. a lot of fosters find it very difficult/heartbreaking to separate mama from her kittens. If you're one of these fosters, do not despair! Allowing mom to nurse her kittens well after they require it is not going to cause any harm. Just keep in mind that the longer you allow mama to nurse, the longer you'll have to wait until she's able to be spayed. If you're in no rush to get rid of mama cat, this is the best option.

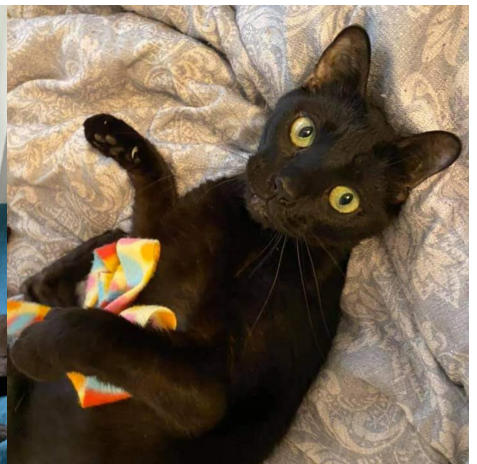
Remember that you, as her foster, are required to prepare mama for adoption just as much as her kittens. We will need a bio for mama, and at least one of each: face picture, full body picture, and personality picture. These should be submitted weekly and can be sent via email, foster@pensacolahumane.org, or via our private facebook page Pensacola Humane Society Foster Heroes



Face Pic



Full Body Pic



Personality Pic

Surgery

All foster surgeries are on Mondays at the Barbara Grice Memorial Spay and Neuter Clinic. It is important that you tell the foster team as soon as mom has stopped nursing the kittens if you decided to separate them or if she weans them on her own. Spay appointments fill up quickly so the more notice we have that her two weeks has started the sooner we can make that appointment for her. By default we will schedule for mom to go back into foster with you. You can make a drop off appointment for her after her surgery using the following link: www.calendly.com/phsfosters/dropoff

FEEDING TRACKER

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