

## KITTEN DEVELOPMENT MILESTONES

*Adapted from University of WI Shelter Medicine Program*

<u>Age</u>	<u>Weight</u>	<u>Milestones</u>
<b>Birth</b>	<b>2 - 4 ounces</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Eyes and ears are closed</li><li>• Sleeps 90% of the time</li><li>• Minimal handling</li></ul>
<b>2 - 3 Days</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Umbilical cord falls off</li></ul>
<b>4 Days</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Begins to purr</li></ul>
<b>2 - 3 Weeks</b>	<b>8 ounces</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Baby incisors erupt</li><li>• Can begin to eliminate without help</li><li>• Will start crawling, standing, and playing with littermates</li><li>• Begin regular handling</li></ul>
<b>4 Weeks</b>	<b>1 pound</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Baby canine teeth erupt</li><li>• Beginning to walk but do not have great balance</li><li>• Beginning to groom themselves, able to thermoregulate</li><li>• Continue daily handling</li><li>• Ready for gruel and may be ready for introduction to dry kitten food</li><li>• <b>Ready for first vaccine and deworming</b></li></ul>
<b>6 Weeks</b>	<b>1.5 Pounds</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Baby premolars erupt</li><li>• Running, playing, using the litter box</li><li>• Grooming themselves</li><li>• Should be eating dry kitten food, supplemented with canned</li></ul>
<b>8 Weeks</b>	<b>2 Pounds</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Ready for spay/neuter and adoption!</b></li></ul>

## THE WEANING PROCESS

**It is important that all kittens are in the weaning process prior to their return to PMHS.** This prepares them for placement and helps the mother's milk supply dry up. It is also important that the kittens be gradually and physically separated from their mother during the last 2 weeks in the foster home.

**Once the kittens reach 5 weeks of age,** separate them from the mother periodically and start feeding the kittens at different times of the day. Doing this will gradually decrease the amount of milk being produced by the mother. The mother will start to separate herself by seeking places the kittens cannot reach (window sill, etc.). Make sure she has a place to get up and away from her kittens.

**Transitioning kittens can be fed gruel,** a mix of wet kitten food and water or kitten milk replacer (KMR). Use three parts kitten food to one part liquid for the best consistency. You can also expose kittens to dry kitten food - try soaking it in water or grinding it up if needed.

**Even though the kittens may be eating solid food, they will continue to try and nurse** from the mother and in turn will cause her to continue to produce milk. This will occur even if the mother attempts to push the young away.



**Helpful Resource: "Weaning", from The Kitten Lady:** <http://www.kittenlady.org/weaning>