

TOWN CATS OF MORGAN HILL



Foster Care Medical Guidelines

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**Town Cats of Morgan Hill
Foster Manual**

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WELCOME TO FOSTERING

Thank you for your interest in becoming a Town Cats foster parent! Together we can save more lives. We need your help to achieve our goal of providing the best possible environment for each cat in our care with the ultimate goal of finding the right match for each cat and each person, adopting each cat into a good forever home. Our goal is to help as many cats as possible by taking in friendly, adoptable, homeless cats and getting them adopted as quickly as possible into good homes. By becoming a foster parent and opening your home as a temporary sanctuary, you generously give the cat the time and attention she or he needs to ensure good health, socialization and development. Good foster families are crucial to our mission. Foster volunteers are these cats' lifeline, their opportunity to a better life. We thank you for your dedication, hard work and your partnership in offering home care to cats in need. We hope you find fostering as rewarding as we do and that you foster with us for years to come.

This Foster Care Medical Guidelines is to give you an overview of medical conditions and treatments. We are here to help you and your foster cats thrive and succeed.

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AGING CATS/KITTENS

Kittens:

- 1-7 days—has umbilical cord, eyes, ears closed



- 10-14 days—eyes open, ears open



Eyes: They begin to open at 7-8 days and all eyes should be open by day 10. Their eyes generally change from blue to blue/gray then yellow/green between 6 1/2 to 7 weeks of age but can vary kitten-to-kitten and litter-to-litter. In one litter, kittens can be conceived 4-5 days apart. This also contributes to the different days the eyes open.

- 3 weeks—first teeth may be coming in, walking but wobbly.



Ears: Their ears stand up at 3-1/2 weeks of age.

- 4-5 weeks—begin to eat regular food, run, and pounce. Begin to use litter box. Wt. = .5-1 lb.

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- 6-8 weeks—weaning done. Will run, play, pounce, use litter box. Wt. = 1.5-2 lbs.



- 3 months—Wt. = 3 lbs.



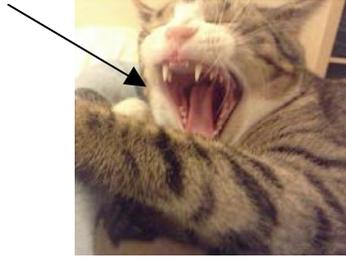
- 4 months—Wt. = 4 lbs.



Kitten teeth still present

- 5-6 months—adult canine teeth present, all adult teeth present. Wt. = 5-7 lbs.

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- 12 months—Considered full grown in skeleton. Will fill out and gain weight through next year.

Cats:

- Adult cats are aged on the amount of tarter and the condition of teeth. The older the cat, the more tarter, more yellow the teeth will be. Cats older than 10 may be missing teeth. Aging adult cats is variable due to how much dental care the cat has had and what it has eaten during its life.



About 3-4 years old



About 8-9 years old

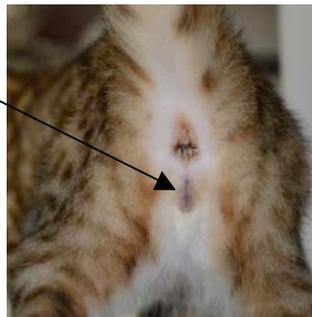


About 12-15 years old

SEXING CATS/KITTENS

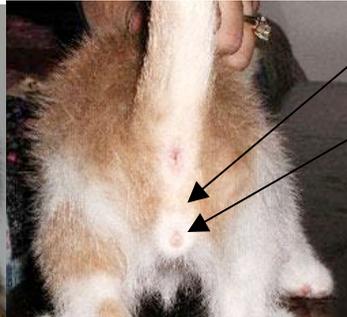
- Female kittens/cats have a vertical slit just below the anus.
- Male kittens have small testicles just below the anus and a “dot” or penis opening below that. Neutered male cats will still have a scrotum and penis, just not any palpable testicles.

Vulva



Female

Scrotum Penis



Male

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CARE

FEEDING CATS AND WEANED KITTENS

Feed a premium dry cat food specifically formulated for the cat's age (kitten, adult, or senior) or medical condition (such as treating for diarrhea or obesity). Leave dry food and fresh water out at all times. We also feed canned food. Adult cats each receive 1-2 tablespoons twice a day. Because this is not the mainstay of their diet, any brand of canned food is ok for adult cats. Kittens each receive 2-3 tablespoons three times a day; however, kittens need a premium kitten formula canned food.

Feed nursing mothers both premium kitten canned and dry food since they're higher in nutrients. If you foster pre-weans, we recommend the use of KMR (Kitten Milk Replacer) or Pro-Biolac formula only. ***Never use cow's milk since this will upset the kitten's stomach.*** Because changes in a cat's diet can cause stress and/or diarrhea, we try to find out what the cat ate before coming to Town Cats and pass this information on to you. If possible, the foster family pays for the cat food; if not, Town Cats will provide the food. Keep receipts for all supplies you buy to take care of Town Cats foster cats; you may be able to claim them as tax deductions on your taxes (consult your tax advisor). Check with your pet store manager; some may give you a discount for supplies purchased for foster cats.

BOTTLE-FEEDING KITTENS

Bottle-feeding: When bottle-feeding kittens, use a different bottle for each litter if you have more than one litter although we recommend fostering one litter at a time. Follow the directions on the formula and carefully warm the formula before feeding the kittens. Also, change your clothes to prevent upper respiratory infections (URIs) and other diseases from passing from litter to litter and to your own resident cats. Pre-wean kittens must be fed every two hours by weight. If kittens are meowing more frequently, feed on demand. Use KMR or Pro-Biolac as formula.

Supplementing a litter of 6 kittens or more with a mother: If you have a mother cat with a litter of 6 or more kittens, watch them carefully around 3-4 weeks of age. Mother cat may not have enough milk for the entire litter and all the kittens will suffer. You may need to supplement the feedings with KMR or Pro-Biolac.

PRE-WEAN CARE

Very young need attention: If the kitten(s) do not have their eyes open, they are young and they should be held a minimum of three hours per day. Without this affection, young kittens will often die. Hold them SEVERAL HOURS A DAY and you should have success with the kitten.

Clear Urine: Urine should be clear, not with mucous or blood. If there is blood or mucous, see a vet immediately. If the urine is yellow, the kitten is probably dehydrated. You may want to have

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lactated ringer's solution (fluids) administered subcutaneously (SQ). The vet at Town Cats can show you how to do this.

Bathroom stimulation: Stimulation is required for the release of both stool and urine until 3-4 weeks of age. Use a warmed, wet wash cloth or a paper towel. Make sure the towel is wet. Slowly massage the genitals until the kitten has peed and pooped. The stool should be softly formed, not runny. If the stool is runny, it is likely you are overfeeding the kitten or the kitten may have a parasite. It is better to feed more often and give less food each time than to overfeed a kitten. Potty them before and after each feeding.

Keep warm and away from drafts: Young kittens do not keep a steady body heat. Keep them out of drafts. Also heating pads are essential if the weather is less than 75°F. Put the pad on low and cover with a towel. Some heating pads are auto shut-off; you want a heating pad that stays on when it is plugged in and in use. The kitten will move off the pad when warm enough, so allow enough room in their area for them to move off the pad. You want to provide the kitten with half heat; give the kitten a choice to be on the heating pad or off the heating pad.

Sucking on each other: If the kittens suck on each other's genitals, separate them immediately. This can be painful to the kittens and can cause sores as well as protruded genitals (which will calm down when the kittens are separated). Once they stop sucking, you can put the kittens back together. This can take several days.

Litter box usage: When starting to use a litter box, if the kittens poop outside the box, pick up a piece of poop and place it into the litter box and place the kitten in the litterbox as well. Most kittens train themselves with a litter box with a little nudge from us. If you have the kittens in a large area, you may wish to provide more than one litter box so accidents don't happen. You want to make it easy for cats to do the right thing.

Type of litter: Do not use clumping litter with kittens under 6 months. Litter can get into the eyes and cause infections. Kittens also tend to eat the litter when young. You may wish to start out with a small container for the litter box with sides that are only 2 inches high. A metal baking pan can be used for small kittens until their legs have grown enough to be able to climb into a regular litter box.

Keeping the kittens clean: While you are feeding the kittens, they will get food all over them, especially while you are weaning them. You need to keep clean. They have sensitive skin and can get red, irritated skin if you leave kitten milk on their skin. A damp washcloth usually cleans them. You don't want them to get too wet and therefore get cold. Make sure you dry them off.

Feeding all kittens: Food should be warmed to room temperature prior to feeding any kitten under 4 months of age. This includes mother's milk replacement. You should only put as much milk in the bottle that will be used at this feeding. After the feeding is over, throw out all remaining milk and clean the bottle and nipple. Re-using milk can cause bacteria in the kitten's stomachs, which can make them stop eating. If kittens do get bacteria in the stomach (and stop eating), a dose of amoxicillin should fight the bacteria within 12 hours. Please speak with a

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Town Cats representative prior to any treatment.

How much to feed and how often: 8cc per ounce of weight per day. Do not overfeed. Feedings should be every 3-4 hours when the kittens are young and should be around the clock. The stool should be soft formed, not runny. If the stool is runny, it is likely you are overfeeding the kitten or the kitten may have a parasite. It is better to feed more often and give less food each time than to overfeed a kitten.

Food: Pro-Biolac or KMR should be used on young kittens. Regular cow's milk (whole, low-fat and non-fat) as well as goat's milk is not recommended. Pro-Biolac will be available at Town Cats. KMR: Available from a pet food store, your vet or a feed store. KMR is available in both mixed and dry version. The dry is more economical. There is a trick to mixing the water. Get a small container with a secure lid. Add some KMR powder and then add 1/10 the amount of total water needed. Shake until mixed. You should have a thick, smooth liquid.

Position to feed from a bottle: A kitten should eat on his or her stomach, in the position the kitten would nurse from the mother cat, in the same position as one would feed a horse, lamb or cow. Do not put them on their backs and feed like a human baby. This can lead to milk aspiration into the lungs. The formula can go into the air pipe which can cause pneumonia and can kill the kitten.

How the kittens should suck the bottle: A kitten should suck from the bottle; formula should not be forced down the throat. If the kitten is sucking, the ears move and the mouth creates a suction around the bottle. This prevents the food from going down the air pipes which can cause pneumonia. If the milk comes out of the mouth or nose, the hole in the nipple is too big and you need to replace the nipple with one with a smaller opening. Tip the kitten upside down and let gravity help you; wipe the formula away from mouth and out of the nose.

Weaning kittens: Weaning kittens can be frustrating, especially if they don't want to give up the bottle and the special attention you are giving them. Start by mixing human baby food meats (like Gerber chicken or turkey baby food – make sure there is no onion or garlic in the baby food meat) or a premium canned wet cat food (like Wellness brand) mixed with KMR. You can also puree dry food in a blender and add with KMR. We have had success with Royal Canin Mother & Babycat dry food; the kibble is shaped in tiny squares. It comes in a pink, 3.5 pounds bag.

Water dishes: Kittens should start drinking water on their own at 4-5 weeks of age. Don't get frustrated when they are only playing or walking in it. One day, you will see them drinking.

SHELTER, SUPPLIES, AND SANITATION

Provide a closed room where the cat will be separated from your own pets; don't let them mingle. *Don't accept more than one litter or unrelated cats unless you can keep them physically apart in separate rooms.* Have food and water dishes, litter boxes, litter, scoops, beds, scratching posts,

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and toys always on hand. If possible, the foster family pays for these supplies; if not, Town Cats will help provide supplies. Scoop litter boxes at least twice daily. If you see signs of parasites and/or diarrhea, don't scoop; instead, replace the litter completely each time and disinfect the litter box each time so the cat won't step in anything that is contaminated and get re-infected. Always have extra litter boxes available for rotating while you clean the others. Bleach is the most effective germ killer for cleaning litter boxes, floors, and other surfaces cats touch; mix one part bleach to nine parts water. Wash your hands with antibacterial cleaners each time you handle the cats, litter boxes, and bowls to help prevent spreading disease.

VACCINATIONS

FVRCP = Feline viral Rhinotracheitis, Calicivirus, Panleukopenia. Rhinotracheitis is like a cold with runny eyes and nose. Calicivirus is similar but can also have ulcers in the mouth/tongue and shifting leg lameness. Panleukopenia is similar to Parvo in dogs--it is deadly and highly contagious. One sign of a possible Panleukopenia infection is the cat will refuse to eat. These diseases are not contagious to humans.

Rabies = Rabies vaccine—prevents Rabies, a deadly disease that can be transmitted to any warm blooded animal (including humans). Rabies is a zoonotic disease.

<u>Age</u>	<u>Vaccine used</u>
10 days – 5 weeks	Killed FVRCP in scruff
5 weeks and older	Modified Live FVRCP in scruff—repeat every 15 days until they have at least 3 vaccines <i>and</i> are 5 months old
16 weeks	Rabies vaccine given under skin of <i><u>Right rear leg!</u></i>
Adult cats	Modified Live FVRCP in scruff—they should be revaccinated once at 15 days after the first vaccine. Rabies vaccine given under skin of <i><u>Right rear leg!</u></i>
Pregnant Females	Killed FVRCP in scruff
Nursing Females	Modified Live FVRCP in scruff

- All cats should be vaccinated at 1 year of age with Modified Live FVRCP, Rabies.
- Adult cats older than 1 year should be vaccinated with Modified Live FVRCP every year and Rabies every 3 years.

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FLEA AND INTERNAL PARASITE CONTROL

Kittens

- Wormed with Pyrantel Pamoate/Strongid every 2 weeks until 8 weeks old. The dose is 0.1cc per lb. —a kitten weighing 1 lb. would get 0.1 cc. Worming should start at 4 weeks of age. This wormer treats roundworms (Ascarids) which are very common in kittens. Different worms/parasites require different medications.
- If younger than 8 weeks of age, Advantage should be used every 3 weeks until the kitten is 8 weeks of age. If Advantage is used, Pyrantel pamoate should also be given.
- Revolution topically once the kitten reaches 8 weeks of age. Repeat monthly. Revolution will treat both internal worms and external parasites (fleas, ticks, ear mites, lice).
- If tapeworms are seen, Droncit/ Drontal pills given every 2 weeks for 2 treatments.

Adults

- Revolution every month as needed to control fleas, internal parasites.
- If adults have ear mites, give 2 treatments of Revolution. Revolution applied once and then applied again in 2 weeks as the ear mite eggs will hatch in two weeks.

NOTE: Revolution will kill fleas, ticks, ear mites, lice, roundworms, hookworms, whipworms.
Advantage will only kill fleas, lice.
Pyrantel will kill roundworms, hookworms only
Droncit will kill tapeworms only
Drontal will kill tapeworms, hookworms, roundworms.

SPAY AND NEUTER SURGERY

When the cat needs to go to the vet for the spay/neuter surgery **call Town Cats first to approve and schedule the appointment.** This ensures Town Cats staff is aware of all veterinary care given and pending expenses since veterinarians bill Town Cats directly. All cats and kittens must be spayed (females) or neutered (males) before they are adopted. They must weigh at least 2 pounds before the surgery can be done although some veterinarians are doing spay/neuter as young as 1 ½ pounds. Watch their surgery areas for proper healing, signs of infection (swelling, discharge, excessive redness), or spay stitches coming out. Call Town Cats immediately if you notice any of these warning signs. Before allowing the cat to be adopted, monitor the cat at least 3 days after the spay/neuter surgery and/or vaccinations for any negative reactions.

Foster parents bringing in their cat/kitten(s) for spay/neuter surgery must follow the below instructions:

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Night before surgery: Remove the cat or kitten's food.

Adults should have nothing to eat after 6:00 pm. Younger kittens should have nothing to eat after 9:00 pm. For the safety of the animals, please do not bring them in for surgery if they have eaten. Food in the stomach can cause life-threatening complications during surgery and while under anesthesia. Fresh water should always be left out for the cat/kitten all night.

Morning of surgery: Bring your copy of the cat's medical file to appointment. Drop off at the approved veterinary facility. Have a separate carrier for each animal brought in for surgery. If the cat/kitten is feral and not able to be handled, bring the cat to the vet in a humane trap.

Afternoon of surgery:

Call prior to pick up to check on the recovery of your cat and to check on when to pick up.

Other considerations:

If preparing for an adoption event, surgery needs to be done one full week before the event to allow sufficient recovery time. Nursing mothers should be 3-4 weeks past weaning. It is best to allow nursing to at least 8 weeks of age, or at least the nipple area should be flat and not engorged with milk.

As always, kittens should be at least 2 pounds (weigh ahead of time at shelter if necessary) and animals should be completely healthy with no lingering symptoms of any illness.

Spay and neuter surgeries are generally done as soon as possible, however, anytime a cat has to undergo anesthesia for a procedure, ideally they should be altered at the same time.

Female and male kittens with umbilical hernias will have the hernia repaired at the same time as their spay/neuter surgery.

A spay surgery involves general anesthesia and is more involved than a neuter surgery. In a spay surgery, the kitten's ovaries and uterus are removed through an incision in their abdomen. This can be done as early as 8 weeks (and the cat has to weigh at least 2 lbs.) but should be done before the cat is 1 year old to prevent mammary cancer in later life.

A neuter surgery also involves general anesthesia but doesn't involve going into the abdomen (unless one of the testicles isn't descended; this is called cryptorchidism and it is believed to be an inherited trait). In a neuter surgery, both testicles are removed. This can be done at any time in the cat's life and can be done as early as 8 weeks (and the cat has to weigh at least 2 lbs.).

Recovery from these surgeries is usually quick although the cat/kitten may be a bit sluggish for 1-2 days after surgery but then will bounce back and act normally. Female kittens/cats may get a bulge at the spay site after 4-7 days, but this will usually go away on its own. If this bulge appears red, leaks fluid or is very tender to the touch, the kitten/cat should be looked at by a vet.

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SOCIALIZATION

LOVE: This is the best part! Be sure to interact with the cat daily. Talk with him or her quietly so the cat learns your voice. Pet the cat gently to gain trust. Play with the cat to encourage exercise and release energy. Socialize, socialize, and socialize! The more you interact with your foster cat, the better you'll learn the cat's personality, qualities, and quirks, and help the cat become a lifelong, beloved companion for his adoptive family. For socializing recommendations please see within.

Single kitten syndrome: Single kittens tend to be biters. This can be helped by putting in a stuffed toy for the kitten to snuggle up to. You may also wish to find another single kitten to raise with this kitten. It is a health risk to each kitten to merge them together, but it can be really hard to break the habit of biting with a young kitten.

Basics of Socializing

The ideal time for socializing kittens is from two to seven weeks of age. As soon as their eyes and ears are opening, socialization opportunities begin. Socialization after this age range is still possible, but becomes more difficult. Attempting socialization after 12 to 14 weeks of age will have more limited success.

Cats and kittens are individuals and each will respond differently to socializing techniques. Some cats can be genetically friendly but feral by experience.

Try to avoid raising solo kittens. Cats learn how to be a cat, gain a social identity, and are likely to tolerate feline companions later if raised with a sibling or littermates. Even if kept as an only cat in adulthood, a solo-raised kitten is more likely to display undesirable behaviors to its human companions.

A useful guide to socialization is the book "*Tellington T-Touch*" by Linda Tellington-Jones. Before beginning *T-Touch*, the kitten must be approachable. Approach should be gradual, over days or longer as needed.

Eye contact, when made should be quickly broken. Staring at a kitten is threatening. When fearful or stimulated, a cat's eye will dilate. Be aware of the eyes, you may see them dilate as a first (fear) reaction, but as the kittens get familiar with you, the pupils will quickly return to a normal size. Keep the kitten in a room with no inaccessible hiding spots.

Frequent visits to the room where you just sit, gets kitty used to your presence. Next, using a stick or dowel with feathers attached to one end, provide visual stimulation and distraction. A second stick or dowel with a soft fabric on it can be used to touch. As kitty gets comfortable with your presence, try moving closer each time. Do this when kitty eats, perhaps just laying your hand nearby, progressing to being able to hand feed and later to touching kitty. At this point, when you are able to touch, use a finger to make small 1-1/4 clockwise circles all around kitty's shoulders, head, and upper back. Make the circles small and quick and leave the body after each time.

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This kind of touch changes the brain and kitty's reaction to touch. Progress with these "*T-Touches*" to the face, mouth, and gums. The gum area is connected to the limbic area of the brain (the limbic system is connected with emotional behavior and learning).

Desensitization and habituation can be used for taming semi-feral cats. Desensitization reduces anxiety or fear responses by keeping the exposure to fearful stimuli small enough that a pleasant (or at least neutral) state of mind is not disrupted. Positive activities, such as eating or play, can be paired with increasing intensities of the fear-evoking stimulus, including progressively moving closer while the cat eats until you are able to touch the cat.

If the cat becomes fearful, back off to an earlier level such as increasing the distance between you and the cat while the cat feeds. When feeding semi-feral cats, it is a good idea to let the cat see the food being placed. Feeding is a positive experience as an animal must be in a calm or neutral state of mind to eat so staying with the animal during feeding times helps desensitize kitty to your nearness.

A young kitten should not be raised alone if it can be avoided; lack of appropriate social identity can lead to lifelong behavioral problems, including aggression toward other cats and/or humans. Habituation is a passive training tool. When a stimulus (the noise produced by crackly paper when walked on, for example) continues despite a cat's fear response, over time the fear response diminishes (i.e.; they get used to it without the stimulus being associated with you).

Another approach is "flooding," where anxieties and fear-producing situations are continued until it no longer evokes the fear response. This is a stressful and risky approach and should be avoided. Wrapping a fearful cat in a towel and holding the cat against his or her will is an example. Removing the siblings and isolating the most fearful kitten is also a form of flooding, a calmer or neutral state of mind is presumably present in the presence of their siblings. Please try other, slower approaches that empower the animal first. Separating/isolating kittens to speed-up taming is considered a version of "flooding" rather than desensitization.

In desensitization you try to keep the cat in as calm a state as possible so that the calmness is what becomes associated with (gradual) exposures to potentially frightening stimuli, such as unfamiliar creatures, places, sounds, smells, sights, etc. The presence of a littermate would lend support to a state of calmness.

Another socialization tip is to avoid eye contact as this can be threatening to felines and other animals. Kittens are kept in a smaller room with no hiding places. Sit in the room with the kitten several times a day. Let the animal make the moves. At feeding times, set the food a little closer to you each time, desensitizing the kitten to your nearness. As kitten becomes comfortable with this, leave your hand lying near the food bowl, progressing to having your hand touching the kitten.

To get a kitten comfortable with being held, bring the food dish to counter level. You might have to pick the cat up briefly to get to that level. After getting comfortable eating at this level, you can hold your hands around kitty's body, without actually picking them up. Take small steps towards the desired goal and let the animal make the moves as much as possible.

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Sometimes respond with a "meow" if the kitten growls or hisses. Other times, talking to them in a long, drawn out voice with something like the resonance of a purr seems to help. When spending time in the room, it is helpful to lie down (less threatening to kitten) to let them get used to you. If one kitten in a pair or litter is more anti-social than the others, it can be helpful to separate them from the other kittens. A frequent misconception is that just because a kitten will sleep with you, it doesn't mean it is becoming more socialized, it just means that you're warm and non-threatening when lying down.

The goal is a cat that will approach and seek out interaction with humans. The goal is to help kittens learn that humans are a source of good things and to approach us for contact, including petting, companionship, warmth, food, etc.

To summarize some main points in working with semi-feral kittens:

- Allow no inaccessible hiding places; a small room with a secure (for the kitten), but accessible and visible space (crate, carrier) is best. **NO FREE ROAMING** in a large space with hiding places! A hiding kitten is learning nothing about trusting humans and valuable socialization opportunities are being wasted.
- Slow approach; let kittens make the first moves towards you. Respect the kitten's space and don't force contact or holding. The first few days may be spent just sitting several feet away and talking to kitty.
- With a toy, you might even pull it back when kitty approaches it to empower the kitten.
- Eye contact should be avoided or brief to not threaten the animal. Try a series of blinks or a yawn to communicate, "I am not a threat."
- Talk in a low, soothing voice. Experiment with "meows" in response to hissing; purring to respond to purring.
- Avoid sudden movements or loud noises; try leaving a radio on low to habituate the kitten to normal human noises.
- Approach the kitten gradually during times of a calm or neutral state of mind, like eating or play times. If kitten reacts with fear, pull back and take a slower approach.
- Place food successfully closer to you and progress to hand feeding. The hand should become a good thing (feeding, petting) and not a threat (grabbing, holding against kitty's will). Make sure kitty associates you with food, even if it is just that they can see you put the food down at first.
- First contact might be done with a cloth-covered stick while kitty is playing or eating, progress to petting with your hand.
- Try *T-Touch* as described above when beginning to touch kitty. *T-Touch* is short and brief.

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Petting should be long, slower strokes, since faster petting strokes can agitate a kitten.

- After a kitten is comfortable with petting and approaching you, try briefly picking kitty up and place it on a counter or your lap. Being picked up and set on a counter with some tasty food waiting there can help them associate being picked up with something desirable.
- Sometimes separating a hiding, shy kitten from others can turn them around quickly. Because this isolation is probably stressful, try other approaches first and use this for as short a time as possible.
- Avoid raising solo kittens whenever possible.
- If a mellow, calm cat is available, this can be a great role model for the semi-feral cat. Kittens learn a lot from watching and copying other cats. Therefore a calm, purring cat that seeks human interaction is good exposure.
- Avoid wrapping and holding a fearful kitten in favor of these slower, less stressful approaches.

SICK KITTENS

WHAT TO DO IF YOUR FOSTER KITTEN IS ILL

Due to limited observation time at the shelter, the health of any cat or kitten can't always be accurately assessed. They are living beings and there is an incubation period for illnesses. If you think your cat might need veterinary care, please contact one of us at Town Cats via phone, text and/or email immediately.

- For kittens less than 2-3 weeks, open-mouth breathing, refusal to nurse or take the bottle, and crawling away from the litter/mother are bad, often hopeless signs. Vet care may not help, may prolong the kitten's suffering and may use resources that might be better spent on more hopeful cases. Nature may take its course or euthanasia may be warranted. Please call a team leader for help.
- If kittens are EATING AND ACTIVE, then there is no urgency in seeking a vet visit. Seek only in cases when symptoms are lingering, diarrhea is lingering, or secretions are continuous. It can also be considered when the lingering symptoms seems to be the only thing delaying a kitten otherwise ready for adoption.

APPETITE: If the cat won't eat or drink, you may be required to force-feed the cat. The specially-formulated Hill's Prescription Diet A/D Canine/Feline Critical Care canned food is available at Town Cats and at veterinary practices, and it is effective because it is easy to digest and it contains extra nutrients a sick cat needs. If you can't get A/D immediately, use human baby food (chicken flavor is preferred), canned tuna, or salmon, but these foods should be for short-

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term use only. Make sure the baby food contains no garlic or onion powder as these are dangerous to cats. Remember, human food doesn't have the correct nutritional balance for animals, so use these only as a last resort. You can syringe Pedialyte into the cat's mouth to make him or her drink. Be gentle since liquid can back up into the cat's lungs and cause pneumonia if the cat doesn't have enough time to swallow between mouthfuls. We can demonstrate force-feeding and syringe feeding if you've never done this. Return the cat to Town Cats immediately if you can't do force-feeding. Contact the Town Cats office immediately if force-feeding is necessary as there may be a corresponding vet visit to be scheduled to determine the cat's lack of appetite.

DEHYDRATION: Watch carefully to see if your foster cat is drinking water. You may have to carefully watch the level of the water bowl, and keep track of litter box activity. You can check for dehydration by pulling the skin up just a little lower than the back of the neck. It should be taut and snap back down. If it stands up or takes some time to go back down, the cat may be dehydrated. A lethargic cat is often dehydrated. If your cat is dehydrated, subcutaneous fluids may be necessary. This is a good skill to learn and you can be buddied up with an experienced foster parent who can teach you. There are several foster parents experienced with this and willing to make home visits to hydrate your cat. This will help a cat feel better sooner and will save money by not having to go to a vet. Please contact us right away if you think your cat is dehydrated. We may arrange a home visit, direct you to the shelter for fluids, or as a last resort, to one of the local veterinarians that bill the shelter directly.

If your foster cat is extremely lethargic, it may be dehydrated, have a fever (over 103 degrees F, rectally, constitutes a fever), and/or a bacterial infection, and we would probably direct you to veterinary care.

Other things to watch for that may require additional care or a vet visit:

- Respiratory distress (choking, wheezing, open-mouth breathing, shortness of breath)
- Loose stool or diarrhea - usually caused by parasites that may or may not be visible in feces. Depending upon the parasite, this can be treated with wormer picked up at the shelter or a vet visit.
 - **Diarrhea** (TAKE A FRESH STOOL SAMPLE TO VET) For adults, observe for a couple days to see if it resolves. Watch for signs of dehydration/lethargy (SQ fluids as needed).
- For kittens, if energy lags, contact the Foster Coordinator and seek vet care and keep kitten hydrated (Pedialyte or SQ fluids) until care can be arranged.
- Continual vomiting or occasional vomiting that lasts more than a day or two.
- A temperature that is over 103°F.
- Extreme lethargy for more than 2-3 days—suspect dehydration first.
- Eyes that are red and inflamed or have an extreme amount of discharge and swelling, vs. small amounts of discharge, usually in both eyes that is common with a URI. This can often be treated with eye ointment picked up at the shelter, but may need a vet visit if the infection doesn't respond within a couple of days.
- Nasal discharge that is continuous. It can be clear or cloudy and look like yellow, green or tan pus. This is usually a sign of URI.
- Any crumbly wax-like substance in the ears (possible ear mites). Ear mite medicine can be

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picked up at the shelter.

- Fleas or flea dirt (black pepper-like substance in the fur). *Advantage* is usually applied if fleas are noticed at the shelter. If you see flea dirt, we will find out if *Advantage* was already applied. One application lasts 30 days. If it hasn't or if you find live fleas, please bring your foster cat to the shelter for *Advantage* to be applied.

Veterinary Visits:

Town cats has a veterinarian on staff who is available on Mon and Thursday afternoons (1 pm - 4:30 pm) and Fridays (8 am -3 pm) for exams, vaccines, Felv/FIV testing, microchipping, worming. Dr. Bing can do fecal exams, check for ringworm, check for Panleukopenia, do general health checks and give you medications for upper respiratory disease, diarrhea and provide you with SQ fluids. If you need to see a vet for another reason or on a day when the Town Cats vet isn't available, see below.

All vet visits must be pre-authorized---unless you are willing to pay for the visit yourself.

Please only go to a clinic listed on the Veterinary Clinics Approved for Use.

Always use the cat name and chip number indicated on the shelter file at vet visits.

To help save money, please do *not* accept these items from veterinary clinics as they can be obtained at the shelter:

- Advantage (for fleas)
- Droncit (for tapeworm) or Drontal
- FVRCP vaccination or boosters, Rabies vaccine, FeLV vaccine
- Miticide (for ear mites)
- Strongid-T/Drontal (routine wormer, mainly for roundworms) or Pyrantel
- Terramycin antibiotic eye ointment, Gentamicin ophthalmic ointment, Erythromycin ophthalmic ointment
- Triple antibiotic eye ointment ("BNP")
- Clavamox (Antibiotic), Amoxicillin (antibiotic), Clindamycin (antibiotic), Azithromycin (antibiotic)

These items are also available at the shelter, but you may accept from a vet clinic if you don't know how to give subcutaneous fluids:

- Fluid bags (Lactated Ringers or Normosol)
- Tubing and needles for SQ fluid administration

Please ask if your cat needs subcutaneous fluids for dehydration and lethargy. There are volunteers and employees with Town Cats willing to make home visits to administer fluids and train you on how to correctly administer fluids. This will often get help to a sick cat faster and also save money.

AUTHORIZING VET VISITS

The following information may be useful in helping you decide what warrants a veterinary visit.

Generally, the Foster and Adoption Coordinator or the Intake and Shelter Coordinator will approve individual visits. If the vet visit needs to happen ASAP and is clearly an emergency, it will most likely be obvious. If you are unsure and want a second opinion, then the cat probably isn't in any immediate danger or distress, therefore, please contact the shelter or the Foster and

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Adoption Coordinator.

Some foster parents prefer to pay for vet visits themselves so they can go to a vet they like or not have to travel very far. This is fine as long as it is realized and agreed they won't be reimbursed and are doing it as a donation. Receipts may be used for charitable donation/tax write-off purposes; please check with your tax advisor.

Additional Visits

In general, avoid them if possible; however, there are times when they will be necessary.

- Veterinarians will sometimes recommend another visit. This is often not necessary for routine situations where antibiotics were prescribed and kitty appears to have recovered normally. If the additional visit is free, then the foster parent is welcome to do so if they choose.
- If symptoms are unchanged after completing a course of antibiotics, or worse after 3-5 days on antibiotics, then another visit may be needed. Try a phone call first; some vets might prescribe something else with just a phone call if the animal was just seen a few days before.
- Stool samples should be checked at that time and can be checked on the first visit even if diarrhea is not a symptom.
- Stool samples should be checked more often and earlier. A parasitic infestation can debilitate a cat and interfere with recovery from illnesses like URI. Some parasites can mimic URI to some extent (lungworm can cause coughing).
- For a second or third visit, the foster parent should consider seeing a new veterinarian. Not because the first was incompetent, but because a new view of the situation is often a help in solving the issue.

Taking Care

Most vet visits are for the purpose of seeking treatment for complicated or unresolved URI, diarrhea, or anorexia. Be more conservative and ask before authorizing vet visits for:

- X-rays, unless an obvious trauma, like a fall or injury needing assessment
- expensive diagnostics, such as ultrasounds or procedures requiring anesthesia
- dental work
- surgeries
- unusual and expensive medications
- chronic conditions may be expensive to support medically. Get other opinion before continuing with visits.
- clear nasal discharge, sneezes, and watery eyes – in general, a cat or kitten with that is otherwise active and eating won't be much helped by a vet visit – the foster parent should try home treatment and wait unless several weeks have gone by, then alternatives will be considered.

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Allergies

Cats, like people, can have allergic reactions to medication. Most medications are not given first at the vet office. If some sudden, adverse reaction happens after giving a new medication, such as wheezing or eyes being more inflamed, do not give any more medication and call the veterinarian. A common reaction to oral medications is drooling. This is not a problem and the medication should not be discontinued. It just means that the cat didn't like the taste.

DISEASES FREQUENTLY SEEN

- Towncats has medicines for all these diseases. The vet at Town Cats can diagnose and dispense the proper medications or do the proper tests to see if the cat has these diseases.

UPPER RESPIRATORY DISEASE (URI)

Viral and Bacterial disease



These are very similar to human colds. The cat is often congested and cannot smell food. Tempting your foster cat with smelly canned cat food, Hills A/D food (purchased at a veterinarian's office), baby food (no onions or garlic in ingredients, please), chicken broth, or even tuna in water (last resort as too much can cause diarrhea) will often get them eating again. You may have to coax them to eat by using your fingers, or warm up the food to get the aromas going, and even try smearing a bit of food on the cat's lips or nose. If your foster cat has not eaten for more than two days, force-feeding with a syringe may be necessary. If you don't know how to do this, we can describe this or show you how.

Steam from a vaporizer or hot shower often helps clear the nasal passages. Keep the nose and eyes clear of discharge with warm, damp cotton balls. A cat that doesn't feel well appreciates some extra petting and quiet time in your lap.

Vaccinations should be given even if kittens have URI symptoms.

Unless the cat or kitten has a rectal temperature of 103.5 or greater. Though the vaccination won't protect them from what they already have (FVR), it will start the antibody-building process protecting them from calici virus and Panleukopenia. There is minimal risk of prolonging their FVR/URI symptoms by giving the vaccine while ill, according to a veterinarian who helped with these guidelines.

A. Symptoms:

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1. Runny eyes
2. Sneezing
3. Runny nose, nasal discharge
4. Some cats will run a slight fever
5. Decreased appetite, decreased activity

B. Transmitted:

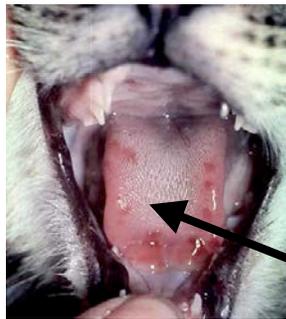
1. Via the air when they sneeze, on cage walls, doors, on hands, direct contact

C. Treatment:

1. Doxycycline liquid—Give 0.1cc per pound of cat/kitten orally *once* daily. Keep in refrigerator—Continue for 10 days.
2. Gentamicin, Erythromycin or Terramycin eye ointment put in eyes *twice* daily if the cat has ocular discharge. Continue for 10 days
3. If the Doxycycline doesn't work, switch to Azithromycin 0.1cc/lb. of kitten/cat *twice* daily orally for 10 days.
4. Any cat that doesn't respond to the above treatments should be tested for FeLV/FIV and further evaluated by the vet.

CALCIVIRUS

Viral disease



Ulcers on tongue

D. Symptoms:

1. Ulcers on tongue, mouth, gums, nose, lips
2. Intermittent lameness, shifting leg lameness
3. Fever
4. Decreased appetite

E. Transmitted:

1. Via sneezing in the air, saliva, on hands, on cage walls, doors, direct contact.

F. Treatment:

1. Doxycycline liquid—Give 0.1cc per pound of cat/kitten orally *once* daily. Keep in refrigerator
2. If the Doxycycline doesn't work, switch to Azithromycin 0.1cc/lb. of kitten/cat *twice* daily orally for 10 days.

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PANLEUKOPENIA

Viral disease



Positive Panleukopenia test

G. Symptoms:

1. Not eating, depression
2. Vomiting
3. Diarrhea
4. Death

H. Transmission:

1. Shed through the feces—**VERY CONTAGIOUS AND USUALLY FATAL!!!**

I. What to do:

1. Get a Parvo test: either use a sample of the diarrhea or wet the Parvo applicator and insert into the rectum to get sample. Leave the cat/kitten where it is while this is being done. Put on exam gloves to handle the cat/kitten—the test can be done at Town Cats San Pedro.
 - ***If the test is positive, send cat to the vet for examination, possible euthanasia.***
2. Clean everywhere the kitten has been with **bleach**, throw away any bedding.
3. If negative, see treatment and then:

J. Treatment: —only if kitten seems bright and alert

1. Give SQ fluids—10cc/lb. LRS SQ under scruff
2. Repeat Parvo test the next day.
3. If kitten is very depressed, send to vet for further workup.

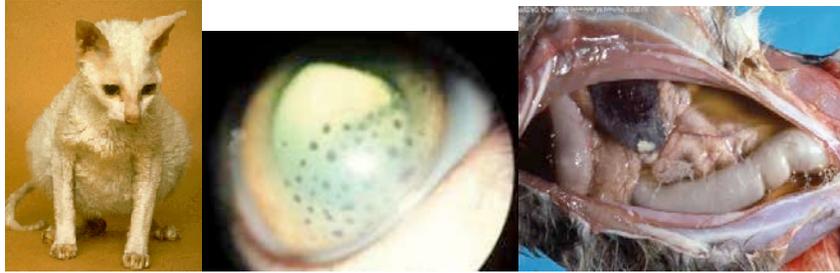
**VERY
IMIMPORTANT!!!**



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FELINE INFECTIOUS PERITONITIS (FIP)

Viral disease – wet and dry form



A. Symptoms:

1. Weight loss
2. Boney back, hips, shoulders
3. Distended belly that is full of fluid (if wet form of FIP)
4. Fever
5. Kittens that don't grow well, slow grower

B. Transmitted:

1. Via the feces and saliva, from mother cat to kitten at birth. The most common transmission of feline coronavirus occurs when infected female cats pass along the virus to their kittens, usually when the kittens are between five and eight weeks of age.

C. Treatment:

1. Tragically there is no cure for wet or dry FIP. It is a fatal, viral disease. FIP is not highly contagious, since by the time the cat develops clinical signs of the disease only a small amount of the virus is being shed. Feline coronavirus can be found in large quantities in the saliva and feces of cats during the acute infection, and to a lesser extent in recovered or carrier cats, so it can be transmitted through contact with other cats and through exposure to feces. The virus can also live in the environment for several weeks.

RINGWORM

Fungal disease



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K. Symptoms:

1. Bald, scaly patches of hair loss especially on the head, face, feet.
2. Sometimes these areas will be itchy.

L. Transmission:

1. Transmitted through the air, on clothes, hands, bedding, and surfaces.
2. ***NOTE: THIS DISEASE IS TRANSMISSIBLE TO HUMANS AND OTHER ANIMALS. USE GLOVES WHEN HANDLING THESE CATS.***

M. What to do:

1. Clean everywhere the cat/kitten has been with Accel or bleach. Throw away all bedding/laundry the cat/kitten has been on.

N. Treatment:

1. Dip cat in Lyme sulfur or Hydrogen Peroxide dip every week, make sure you get the cat's head wet also. (Dipping twice weekly will speed recovery).
2. Terbinafine—10mg/ml0.11cc/lb. orally once daily for several months.

EAR MITES

External Parasite



Signs of ear mites are black, crumbly debris in the ears, severe itchiness. Ear mites are very itchy and the kitten/cat will scratch its ear with the rear foot intensely if you rub the base of the ear. If there are signs of ear mites (debris in the ears), a topical application of Revolution will kill the mites. Do not put the Revolution in the ears—put it on the top of the shoulders like you normally would do when normally applying it. Clean out the ears with a regular, over the counter ear cleaner that you can pick up at a pet food store.

GENERAL DIARRHEA

A. Symptoms:

1. Diarrhea
2. Cat will usually have normal appetite

B. What to do:

1. Move cat to its own cage in the sick room
2. Start medical record

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3. Get a fecal sample and do a fecal floatation
4. Do a giardia test if blood in the feces

C. Treatment:

1. Depends on what the fecal floatation shows
2. If the fecal shows Coccidia, treat as below #VIII
3. If the fecal shows roundworms, hookworms or whipworms, treat as #VII below.
4. If fecal is negative, do a Giardia test: Get a fecal sample—either use a sample of the diarrhea or wet the Giardia applicator and insert into the rectum to get sample. If the test is positive, treat as #VIII
5. If all above is negative, treat with general diarrhea protocol: Ponzural—0.1cc per pound of cat *once* daily for 3 days; Panacur—0.25cc per pound of cat *once* daily for 5 days; Metronidazole 0.1cc per pound of cat *twice* daily for 7 days.
6. If cat still has diarrhea even after this treatment, it may be bacterial overgrowth. Have a veterinarian look at cat. The cat may need antibiotics (azithromycin, amoxicillin).

INTESTINAL WORMS

Roundworms, Hookworms, Tapeworms, Whipworms



Roundworms

Tapeworms

D. Symptoms:

1. Diarrhea, sometimes with worms in it
2. Vomit—sometimes with worms in it (Roundworms)

E. Transmitted:

1. In the feces—eggs are in the feces. With tapeworms, eggs are in the segments that are shed from the rectum and also in infected fleas.

F. What to do:

1. If you see the worms in the feces, you can tell what type they are.
2. If no worms are in the feces, get a sample of the diarrhea for a fecal exam.

G. Treatment: depends on type of worm

1. Roundworms, Hookworms—Pyrantal (Strongid) 0.05cc/lb orally once and repeat in 2 weeks. Alternatively, one can use Revolution (0.13cc

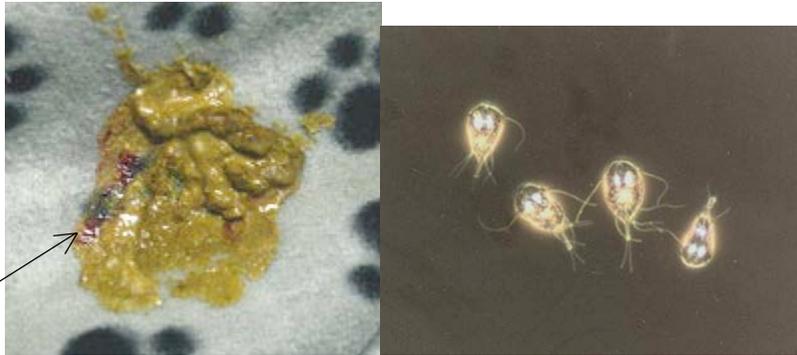
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for cats under 5 lbs, 0.37cc for cats over 5 lbs) topically and repeat in 3 weeks. Alternatively, one can use Dronotal orally once and repeat in 2 weeks.

2. Whipworms—Panacur 0.25cc orally once daily for 5-7 days.
3. Tapeworms—Droncet or Dronotal orally once and repeat in 2 weeks.

GIARDIA

Internal parasite—protozoan



Blood in diarrhea

H. Symptoms:

1. Diarrhea, sometimes with blood in it

I. Transmitted:

1. Transmitted in the feces or whatever the feces contaminates
2. **NOTE: THIS DISEASE IS TRANSMISSIBLE TO HUMANS AND OTHER ANIMALS. USE GLOVES WHEN HANDLING THESE CATS.**

J. What to do:

1. Move cat to its own cage in the sick room
2. Start medical record
3. Clean anywhere the cat defecated with Accel or bleach. Throw out litter.
4. Do a fecal floatation. If negative, then do Giardia test.
5. Get a fecal sample and do a Giardia test: either use a sample of the diarrhea or wet the Giardia applicator and insert into the rectum to get sample
6. If test is positive, go to treatment.
7. If negative, go to General diarrhea protocol above #VI.

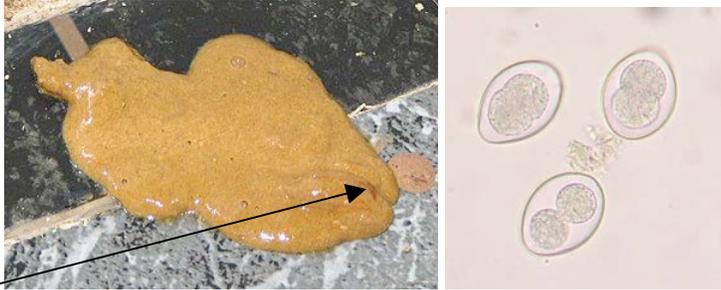
K. Treatment:

1. Metronidazole—0.1cc orally per pound of cat *twice* daily for 7 – 10 days
2. Panacur—0.25cc orally per pound of cat *once* daily for 5 – 7 days

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COCCIDIA

Internal parasite—protozoan



Blood in diarrhea

L. Symptoms:

1. Diarrhea, sometimes with blood in it
2. Sometimes will vomit also

M. Transmission:

1. Transmitted in the feces or whatever the feces contaminates

N. What to do:

1. Move cat to its own cage in the sick room
2. Start medical record
3. Get a fecal sample and do a fecal floatation

O. Treatment:

1. Albon: 0.5 cc orally per pound of cat *once* on day 1 then .25 cc orally per pound of cat *once* daily on days 2 – 7.
2. Ponzural—0.1cc per pound of cat *once* daily for 3 days;

HOW TO GIVE YOUR CAT/KITTEN MEDICATIONS

Many medications come in liquid form that is fairly easy to give to a cat/kitten. Sometimes, a cat or kitten will foam at the mouth after being given medication; this just means that they didn't like the taste of the medication. Some medication comes in pill form. To pill a cat, hold the back of the head and put your thumb and forefinger on each side of the opening of the mouth. Then pull down the lower jaw, put the pill in the back of the throat and push it down a bit with your finger. Wrapping the pill in a Pill Pocket hides the bitterness of the pill and some cats will just eat the pill like it is a treat. A pill coated in Pill Pocket and then dipped in water slides down the cat's throat easier.



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Alternately, you can use a pet piller---if the pill is larger, you may have to break it up into halves and pill the cat twice.



Eye medications are usually fairly straight forward. Ointments are usually easier than eye drops to administer. Hold the cat's head and open each eye when you put the medication in.



If you have to dip a cat, make up the dip ahead of time in a bucket. Use warm water (not hot) and also use a wash cloth to do their head. Dip the entire cat (except the head) under the water, swish it around, use the wash cloth soaked in dip to soak the head and then remove the cat.



GETTING YOUR FOSTER CAT READY FOR ADOPTION

Is your foster cat ready for adoption?

If you are fostering kittens, they must have been altered, vaccinated, microchipped, FeLV/FIV tested and treated for internal and external parasites prior to being adopted. Kittens usually reach two pounds between nine and ten weeks of age. They must be completely healthy and have not had any symptoms of any illness for at least one week prior to adoption.

Is your foster cat on the Town Cats' web site?

Once you have spent some time with your cat and have gotten to know his or her personality, please check to see if the cat's picture is posted on our web site at www.towncats.org, or you can check with your Foster and Adoption Coordinator.

If the cat's picture is already on our web site, you should write a new story about the cat's personality (biography of the cat/kitten). A good story makes a big difference in the number of calls the cat gets, so be descriptive. Try to include things like if the cat likes to be petted; held; is a lap cat; purrs easily; is affectionate; is vocal or quiet; active and playful; calm; has good litter box manners; uses a scratching post; if the cat has had any experiences with other cats, dogs, children, strangers, and how the cat reacted to those situations; is the cat outgoing and friendly, or shy. Of course, any other cute things that the cat does or anything you want to point out about the cat's fur or appearance is good as well. It can be as long as you want, but the typical description is a paragraph. If the cat has some bad habits, this can be discussed during the first phone conversation. The web story should generate interest, not turn people away. We don't want to mislead people; however, we really try to focus on the positive. Please email the story to the web site posting team and it will be posted on the web site and on our Facebook page.

If your foster cat's picture is not yet on the web site or you have better or more current photos, then there are several options for getting photos taken and posted. If you have access to a digital camera and would like to take the pictures yourself, you are invited to do so. Please email them in .jpg format to the web site posting team with your cat's biography.

Arranging to have your foster(s) at a fair

Contact the Foster and Adoption Coordinator when your foster cats are ready for public adoption fairs. The Foster and Adoption Coordinator will arrange a location and time for your foster cat to attend the fair. In some cases your foster cat may stay at that location longer than the weekend in order to maximize their visibility and potential for adoption. In other cases you will be asked to pick up your foster cat at the end of the weekend if he or she has not been adopted. These decisions will be made by the Foster and Adoption Coordinator based on the availability of space at any given fair location.

Thank you for joining the team at Town Cats. Your dedication, compassion, love and hard work make all the difference in the world to these orphaned cats in need. Together we will rescue and save the lives of homeless cats. Thank you for caring about cats in our community.