

BOTTLE BABY KITTEN FOSTER **INFORMATION PACK**

How to Care for Un-Weaned, Orphaned Kittens

AID: _____



Board of County Commissioners
Public Safety Department
Animal Care and Control Division





Welcome to the Bottle Baby Foster Program!

We're so excited for you to join us and we're extremely grateful for your help!

Every year, we receive countless orphaned kittens who need our help. Due to the critical care that they need, these babies are some of the most vulnerable and at-risk pets in our shelter. This guide has been composed to help answer some of the questions you may have and to supply you with the knowledge, tools and confidence needed to care for them. Of course, if you need additional help at any time, please don't hesitate to get in touch using the contact information in this guide.

While fostering orphaned kittens is an incredibly rewarding experience, there are several requirements to be a great foster for these animals. If the requirements laid out in this guide do not fit with your current schedule, please let us know – we have multiple programs available and we'll help you find a foster situation which works for you.

Thank you so much!

Palm Beach County Animal Care and Control

Foster Team

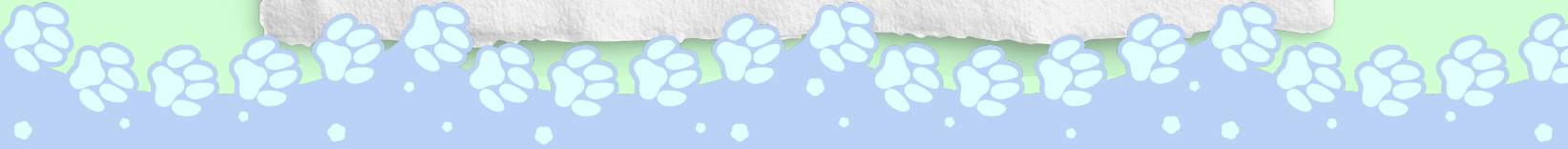
THANK YOU FOR SAVING LIVES!!

Supplies You'll Need

You'll need to supply:

- Towels for bedding
- Cotton balls/wipes for cleaning and stimulating
- Corn syrup/table sugar/liquid dextrose (in case of Fading Kitten Syndrome)

We Supply:

- Digital Scale
 - Nipples
 - Baby bottles
 - Syringes
 - KMR powder
 - Carrier
 - Heat source (warmie or heating pad)
- 

Caring for Orphaned Kittens: What to Expect

Orphaned kittens require the same care as kittens raised by their mother, but the foster caregiver must take on the role of the mother cat. Kittens under 3–4 weeks of age cannot eat on their own and need round-the-clock care. At this stage, kittens mostly sleep and eat.

Healthy kittens should gain weight steadily—up to about ½ ounce per day. Mortality rates for orphaned kittens can be high, particularly for those with low birth weight or poor growth. While loss can be difficult for caregivers, it is important to understand that even under natural conditions, not all kittens survive.

Feeding and Growth

- Kittens 3 weeks and younger must be bottle-fed and cannot feed themselves.
- As kittens become more mobile, introduce a soft “porridge” made of kitten milk replacer (KMR) mixed with canned kitten food.
- A good rule of thumb: when kittens can lift and control their tails, they are ready to start learning to eat on their own.
- Weigh kittens at least once daily, at the same time each day.

Keeping Kittens Warm

- Keep kittens in a warm, draft-free area away from children and other pets.
- Use a heating pad set on LOW, placed under half of the carrier so kittens can move away from the heat.
- Never place kittens directly on the heating pad and ensure adequate padding to prevent burns. Too much heat can be just as dangerous as too little.

Weaning

- Begin weaning around 4 weeks of age by offering formula in a shallow dish.
- Gradually add small amounts of wet kitten food to the formula.
- Slowly decrease formula as kittens eat more on their own.
- Kittens are fully weaned when they no longer take a bottle after eating independently.



Vaccinations and Veterinary Care

- When kittens reach 1 lb. (around 4 weeks old), they must return to ACC for vaccinations and a health check.
- Booster visits are required at regular intervals after that.
- If you do not know when to return, please reach out to the clinic.

**For recheck appointments
or medical questions,
please call:
(561)-233-1223**

Hygiene and Cleaning

- Keep kittens clean and free of food, urine, and feces.
- Use a damp cloth for spot cleaning when possible.
- If needed, rinse the lower half with warm water and towel-dry.
- Soap is usually unnecessary, but kitten shampoo or a small amount of Dawn may be used if needed.
- Always dry kittens completely to prevent illness using a towel or blow dryer set to low.



Feeding and Elimination Guidelines

Instructions for Preparing Formula

1. Mix the formula following the directions on the container.
2. Prepare enough formula for a 24-hour period and refrigerate.
 - a. Never use cow's milk or unapproved substitutes.
3. Discard unused formula after 24 hours.
4. Refrigerate opened formula powder.

NOTE: Young kittens must be woken up for feedings.



Stimulation Elimination

Before and after each feeding, kittens must be stimulated to urinate and defecate. Use a cotton ball, tissue, or soft cloth slightly dampened with warm water and gently dab or jiggle the genital area. Do not rub, as this can cause irritation.

Kittens will usually urinate with each stimulation. Bowel movements typically occur once daily, though some kittens may go a day or two without defecating - this is normal as long as they are eating and acting normally.

Feeding Methods

Orphaned kittens may be fed using either a bottle or syringe. Bottle feeding allows kittens to nurse more naturally, while syringe feeding is often easier for very young kittens.

Prepare the formula according to instructions and only mix enough to use within 24 hours. Refrigerate prepared formula and discard any unused portion after 24 hours.

The bottle nipple may not be precut, so you may need to make a small opening yourself. The hole should be just large enough that formula drips slowly when the bottle is turned upside down—not so large that it pours out.





Feeding Basics

- Follow the feeding guide for proper amounts and frequency based on the kitten's weight.
- Overfeeding can cause diarrhea, regurgitation, or aspiration, which can be life-threatening.
- Warm formula by placing the bottle or syringe in hot (not boiling) water. Never microwave formula.
- Test temperature on your wrist—formula should feel warm, not hot (about body temperature).
- Weigh kittens daily, ideally before feeding.

Safe Feeding Practices

- Always ensure kittens are warm and active before feeding.
 - **Do not feed cold kittens.**
- Feed kittens on their stomachs, never on their backs, to prevent aspiration.
- Allow kittens to suckle naturally - never squeeze the bottle or syringe to force formula.
- Stop feeding when the kitten refuses more or milk bubbles appear around the mouth.
- Some kittens eat slowly; be patient.

After-Feeding Care

- Stimulate kittens again after feeding to encourage urination and defecation.
- Clean faces gently with a warm, damp cloth and dry completely.
- Discard any leftover formula from the bottle after feeding and wash all feeding supplies thoroughly.

Additional Notes

- Never reheat formula that has already been warmed—discard it.
- Label formula containers with the date and time prepared to track the 24-hour limit.
- Kittens may attempt to nurse on each other; this can be reduced by increasing feeding frequency, supervising interactions, or providing fleece toys for comfort.
- Both overfeeding and underfeeding can lead to dehydration and serious illness—monitor kittens closely and report concerns promptly.

Scan these QR codes to access video tutorials for feeding help.



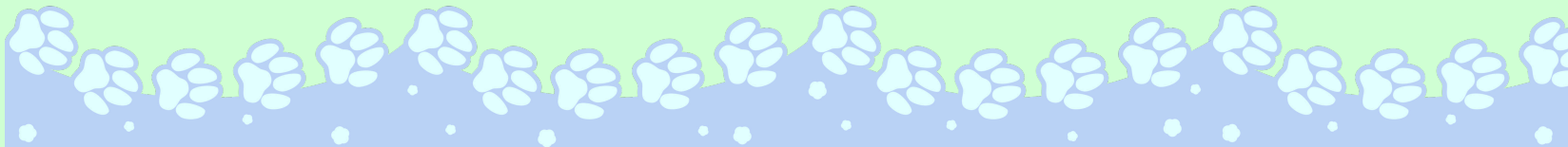
How to Safely
Bottle Feed a Kitten
by Kitten Lady



Syringe Feeding
by Best Friends
Animal Society



Bottle Feeding
by Best Friends
Animal Society



Kitten Weight and Feeding Chart

©Kitten Lady

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

Orphaned Kitten Feeding and Stomach Capacity Table

©Maddie's Fund

Estimated Age	Weight (grams)	Weight (ounces)	20 Kcal/100 g body weight ¹	Daily volume Commercial milk replacer (ml) Concentration 0.74 kcal/ml ⁺	Stomach capacity (ml) (4 ml/100 g body weight) ¹	Approx. number of feedings per day ^{**}
Newborn	50	1.8	10	13.5	2	7
	75	2.6	15	20	3	7
	100	3.5	20	27	4	7
	125	4.4	25	34	5	7
~ 1 week	150	5.3	30	40	6	7
	175	6.2	35	47	7	7
	200	7.0	40	54	8	7
	225	8	45	61	9	7
~ 2 weeks	250	8.8	50	68	10	7
	275	9.7	55	74	11	7
	300	10.6	60	81	12	6-7
	325	11.5	65	88	13	6-7
~ 3 weeks	350	12.3	70	95	14	6-7
	375	13.2	75	101	15	~6
	400	14.1	80	108	16	~5
	425	15	85	115	17	~5
~ 4 weeks^{***}	450	15.9	90	122	18	~5
	475	16.8	95	128	19	~4
	500	17.6	100	135	20	~4
	525	18.5	105	142	21	~4
~ 5 weeks^{***}	550	19.4	110	148	22	~4



Panleukopenia (Feline Parvovirus)

What it is:

Feline Panleukopenia (FP) is a highly contagious viral disease caused by the feline parvovirus. Kittens are most at risk, while adult cats can also be infected. The virus does not infect people. It targets rapidly dividing cells in the body, including those in the bone marrow, intestines, and developing fetus.

Which cats are most susceptible:

Since the virus is widespread in the environment, nearly all cats are exposed at some point. Young kittens, sick cats, and unvaccinated cats are the most vulnerable. It is most commonly seen in cats 3–5 months old, and death from the virus is more likely at this age. Areas where many cats live together—such as shelters, kennels, pet stores, and feral colonies—are major sources of FP. Outbreaks are more common in urban areas during warmer months, when cats are more likely to interact.

Treatment:

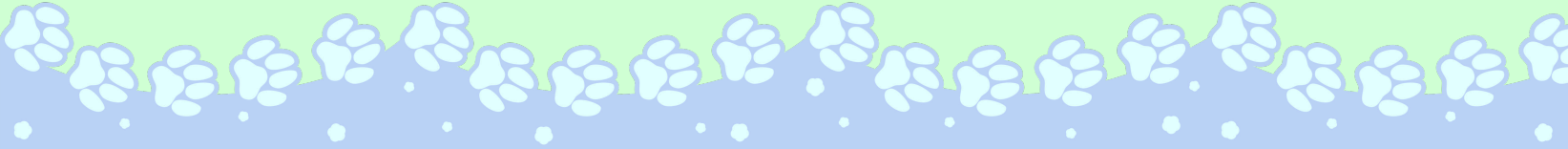
There is no medication that kills the virus directly, so supportive care is critical. Treatment focuses on:

- Correcting dehydration
- Providing nutrients
- Preventing secondary infections

Antibiotics may be used to protect against bacterial infections, as the virus weakens the immune system and damages the gut. Young kittens under 8 weeks old have a poor prognosis, but older cats have a better chance of recovery with early and intensive care.

If a cat survives the first five days, recovery chances improve significantly. Strict isolation is essential to prevent the virus from spreading. Other cats that have been in contact with the infected cat—or with people or objects exposed to the cat—should be carefully monitored. Most cats that recover will not spread the virus through direct contact, although some may shed it in stool and urine for up to six weeks.

What To Look For:

- Lethargy
 - Vomiting
 - Diarrhea
 - Fever
 - Dehydration
 - Loss of Appetite
 - Neurological Symptoms such as tremors, seizures, or disorientation
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THANK YOU FOR SAVING LIVES!!



Bottle Baby Kitten Feeding Tracker

See the Kitten Weight and Feeding Chart on Page 6 to determine how many times a day your kitten(s) should be fed.

[illegible]

Bottle Baby Kitten Weight Tracker

Weigh your foster(s) everyday, ideally at the same time each day, before feeding (BF) or after feeding (AF).

[illegible]

Contact Information

Thank you so much for fostering with us. We know you're going to have a wonderful, enriching experience with the added bonus that you're saving lives! We are truly grateful for your help, and we are here to support you whenever you need us.

For general foster questions and supply refills:

Email: accfoster@pbc.gov

Foster Coordinator: (561) 233-1281 (desk phone)

Foster Coordinator: (561) 329-1418 (cell)

Rescue Coordinator: (561) 650-4870 (cell)

For recheck appointments or medical questions:

Clinic: (561) 233-1223

For urgent, after-hours medical emergencies only:

Dispatch (561) 233-1200, ext. 0

Please explain to the dispatcher that you have a medical emergency regarding your ACC foster pet

PBCACC Shelter Hours of Operation

Monday-Friday 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Saturday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Sunday 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.