

# FOSTER HANDBOOK

## Columbus Pet Rescue

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## SUPPLIES

### *For cats/kittens:*

**Heating Pad:** Be sure to wrap a towel around the heating pad and place it somewhere with room for kittens to crawl off if they get too hot. You will want to assure that the heating pad will stay on at all times rather than shut off automatically. If you do not own a heating pad, you can alternately fill a large sock with uncooked rice and heat it in the microwave for a few seconds. This will stay warm for several hours. Be sure to test the temperature with your hand first.

**Scale:** It is important to weigh the kitten/cat regularly to assure that they are gaining weight. You will also need their weight for medical purposes such as appropriate medication dosing and readiness for spay/neuter surgery.

**Syringes:** 1, 3, and 20cc syringes without needles are needed for dosing medications. Be sure to rinse and air-dry between use.

**Bottles:** Nursing bottles and nipples for feeding kittens separated from mothers and animals that are sick/resisting food.

**Medications:** \*New fosters must consult with more experienced volunteers regarding medications. Animal may require veterinary attention first. Here is a list of commonly used medications and their respective purposes.

- Amoxicillin and/or Clavamox (antibiotic, powdered form – mix in food)
- Erythromycin or Terramycin for eyes
- Ponazuril for coccidia
- Panacur/Flagyl for giardia
- Strongid T for hook and round worm
- Praziquantal/Droncit for tape worm
- Total dewormer (adult cats only)
- Albon for bacterial infections
- Viralys anti-viral for immune system
- Capstar for current fleas
- Revolution for fleas, mange, and ear mites
- Otomite for ear mites
- Tresaderm for ear infections
- Zymox Otic for yeast infections in ears

**Thermometer:** Digital thermometer to check body temps.

**Bedding:** You can use towels, fleece blankets, small baby blankets, sheets, etc. The goal is to provide plenty of padding and warmth. You can also use a pet bed if available. Blankets are great for easy washing.

**Animal Carrier:** REQUIRED for any transportation of the animal. Animals going to the vet MUST be in an animal carrier. If you are taking multiple cats in for spay/neuter surgery, they will likely each need their own carrier for recovery as anesthesia can alter their behavior temporarily.

**Food & Water:** Ample food and water should be available at all times. If an animal is not eating, this may be a sign of illness or that they dislike the food. Try offering the cat/kitten different options, including wet food.

**Litter:** Clean litter should be available at all times. Scoop out soiled litter AT LEAST once a day. Be sure to keep the litter box about 1/3 full.

**Cleaning Supplies:** Bleach mixed with water will kill most bacteria and fungi, however it can rust metals, fade color, and has a strong odor. A good alternative is Pro-3 from Simple Green, available at most home and garden stores. It is as effective as bleach without the odor and can be used on all surfaces. Be sure to follow instructions on the label.

**Toys:** Wands, balls, string, bells, etc.

*For dogs/puppies:*

**Collar & Leash:** Dogs/puppies should never be transported without a clasp leash and collar. The failure to use this equipment can lead to escape of the animal, especially those that are fearful.

**Food & Water:** Clean water should be available at all times. Underweight dogs/puppies should be fed as much as they will eat to encourage weight gain. For healthy weight animals, follow food instructions on the bag, veterinary instructions, or previous home regimen in the case of surrender (if appropriate).

**Crate:** We discourage the unnecessary use of crates, however we understand that dogs in training may need a crate when left alone until better trained.

**Bedding:** Dog bed or thick, soft blankets for comfort.

**Toys:** Balls, ropes, chew toys, etc. Use caution when choosing toys. If the dog has a tendency to destroy/ingest certain items, refrain from purchasing.

## INTAKE

**Testing:** Before introducing around other animals, the rescue will be taken to the vet for a series of tests and initial treatment. Cats/kittens should be tested for FeLV/FIV unless kitten is under 6 weeks of age. If FeLV or FIV tests come back positive, the cat must be separated from any other cats/kittens.

**Separation:** New intakes should be kept separate from other animals until they have been treated for fleas and no sign of upper respiratory infections or other illness is present. They should also have their own litter box to prevent the spread of parasites through feces.

\*If they have fleas, bathe dogs/puppies and kittens in warm water with a small amount of Dawn liquid dish soap. Adult cats can be given oral Capstar followed by topical flea treatment, Revolution.

**Paperwork:** Rabies tags and veterinary paperwork must be kept with the animal at all times. Paperwork must be shown at the vet, when dropping off at PetSmart Adoption Center, and will be transferred to the new owner upon adoption. Any receipts from the vet should be saved. Receipts of any purchases that require reimbursement must be saved.

**Medications:** All new animals will be treated for fleas, ticks, worms/parasites, etc. You will receive the appropriate medications from the foster coordinator with instructions for administration.

\*Vaccinations should be held off for a few days to make sure the cat does not have a URI or diarrhea. Scrawny or ill cats should not receive vaccinations.

**Spay/Neuter:** \*For cats: must be at least 12 weeks or 2+ pounds, mothers can't be done until kittens no longer require nursing and are not in heat

\*For dogs: must be at least 8 weeks old, mothers can't be nursing or in heat

Following surgery, it is important to keep animals calm with minimal activity until fully healed. If the animal is easily excitable, you may want to separate from other animals and company, and remove overly stimulating toys.

**Adoption:** Please see the following section for details regarding our adoption process.

## ADOPTION

**Marketing:** Our end-goal is to see these animals find loving forever homes. For us to succeed, it is imperative that we advertise available animals online. Fosters should take flattering photos of their animals and email them to [columbuspetrescue@gmail.com](mailto:columbuspetrescue@gmail.com) to be posted on Petfinder, Adopt-a-Pet, the website, and social media. Please take care when photographing animals to display their beauty and the extraordinary care we provide. If you need assistance getting photos, please email us.

**PetSmart Adoption Center:** As a PetSmart charity, we have access to cages at several PetSmart locations. Healthy, fully vaccinated cats can be placed in these cages. Please communicate with the person coordinating cages regarding when an animal can be shown at PetSmart. No cat will be in a cage greater than 2 weeks. Any cats that begin exhibiting signs of illness or distress will be removed and returned to foster care immediately. Young kittens will not be kept in the cages as they are still developing their immune systems and need extra nurturing. We do not keep dogs at PetSmart.

**Adoption Events:** Adoption events are held regularly to interact with the public and show off the wonderful animals looking for forever homes. These are held at the PetSmart locations with which we have cages. Healthy animals in foster care, including dogs, should be brought to these events whenever possible.

**Adoption Applications:** Adoption applications are required for anyone interested in adopting through Columbus Pet Rescue. A copy of this application can be viewed online. Applicants must provide two personal references as well as a veterinary reference (if applicable). All references will be called and asked a series of questions to assess the adequacy of the applicant as a pet owner. Driver's license numbers are required for background checks, which will be run on all applicants. We require approval of applications prior to scheduling private meet and greets. Paper applications should always be available at the PetSmart stores and downloadable versions are provided online.

**Finalizing Adoptions:** In many instances we receive a large volume of applications for any one animal. Our duty to these animals is to find the most fitting forever home. We will offer the adoption to approved applicants in the order that their applications were received. Adoptions are to be completed at PetSmart. Paperwork must be submitted to PetSmart at the checkout. Columbus Pet Rescue should receive a copy of this paperwork, as well as the adopter. Payment is required at the time of adoption.

## WORMS

**Roundworms:** Most common type of worm in cats/kittens. Kittens with roundworm appear thin but have potbellies. In the feces, they look like spaghetti noodles.

**Hookworms:** Small, thin worms. Signs of hookworms are diarrhea, anemia, weight loss and progressive weakness.

**Tapeworms:** In the feces and around anal area, they are shaped like grains of rice. They result from ingestion of an infected flea.

**Treatment:** Strongid given in at least two doses, two weeks apart for hook- and roundworms. Praziquantal/Droncit for tapeworms.

## DIARRHEA

- Causes of diarrhea:**
1. Food change/overfeeding (especially kittens)
  2. Parasites
    - a. Worms – treat w/ Strongid (2 doses/2 weeks apart)
    - b. Coccidia – treat w/ Ponazuril (2 doses/2 days in a row)
    - c. Giardia – treat w/ Panacur/Flagyl mix for 7 days
  3. Bacterial infection – treat w/ Amoxicillin or Clavamox

\*Sometimes diarrhea is also the result of medications themselves. You can try adding plain yogurt or pumpkin to their food.

## STOOL COLOR

**Bloody:** Red blood seen in stool. Abnormal, needs immediate treatment. This could indicate feline panleukopenia virus (FPV).

**Mucous:** Yellowish/white/clear slimy substance. Result of severe bowel irritation. Abnormal, needs immediate treatment.

**Black:** True black color, usually a sign of bleeding in the bowel. Severe sign, needs immediate treatment.

**Brown:** Normal.

**Orange:** Usually a sign of too much bile in the stool, often from reflux. May need treatment. Notify coordinator.

**Yellow:** Almost always a sign of bacterial imbalance in the bowel. If coupled with diarrhea, most likely coccidia. May need treatment.

**White:** Grossly abnormal color, often a sign of severe bacterial imbalance and infection. At risk of death, seek medical attention immediately.

### STOOL CONSISTENCY

**Dry/hard:** Abnormal, likely dehydrated.

**Firm:** Normal.

**Formed but soft:** Low range of 'normal'. If stool was previously firm, change may indicate problem.

**Toothpaste:** Somewhat tubular form but falls apart when touched. Abnormal.

**Cow-patty:** Never formed but thick, lands in patty shape. Abnormal.

**Liquidy:** Fluid coming out of rectum, thin and possibly with mucous. Abnormal, severe.

**The 'Squirts':** No control over bowel and water fluid squirts from rectum. Grossly abnormal, very severe.

### URINE COLOR

**Red/Dark Orange:** Severe sign.

**Dark yellow/almost brown:** Extreme dehydration, treat aggressively immediately.

**Intense yellow:** Concentrated urine, dehydrated.

**Yellow:** Mildly concentrated urine.

**Light yellow:** Mildly dilute urine, adequately hydrated. Normal.

**Pale yellow:** Dilute urine, excellent hydration.

**Almost clear:** Severely dilute urine, risk of over-hydration. Should only be this dilute if animal is under constant medical supervision.

## DEHYDRATION

Dehydration typically occurs in young kittens or sick adult cats. If you pull/pinch the skin at the nape of the neck and it does not resettle quickly, they may be dehydrated. You can treat dehydration with unflavored Pedialyte from the baby food section. A dehydrated kitten's first priority is fluids as dehydration can be deadly.

**Immediate snap back:** Excellent hydration, watch for over-hydration.

**Quick snap but not immediate:** Hydrated.

**Snap back within 1 second:** Adequate hydration but should monitor closely for changes or other signs of illness.

**Within 1-3 seconds:** Dehydrated, treat immediately.

**Stands up on its own:** Severe dehydration, deadly. Treat immediately.

## UPPER RESPIRATORY INFECTION

**Symptoms:** Sneezing, watery eyes, runny nose, congestion, and poor appetite.

Cat should be given antibiotics such as Amoxicillin or Clavamox. While the antibiotics won't treat the URI, it will prevent a secondary infection from developing. Animal should respond within the first 5 days on antibiotics. In more severe cases, they may need Zithromax. Use Erythromycin or Terramycin eye ointment for eye symptoms. Severe symptoms may require nebulizer treatment 2-3 times a day (you can also steam up the bathroom with the shower).

\*Keep away from other cats!

## MANGE

**Sarcoptic Mange:** Distinguished by scaly patches on the ears or small scabs on the head/neck region. Easily treated with two doses of Revolution given two weeks apart. The mites don't last long off the host so no need to worry about transmission to humans.

**Demodectic Mange:** Harder to treat than sarcoptic mange, usually requires veterinary intervention. Much less common.



## RINGWORM

Ringworm is a very contagious fungus that can be transmitted to other cats and humans. An infected cat needs to be isolated, such as in a small bathroom. It is recommended that you turn off the A/C in that room or close the vent to avoid spreading spores.

**A few lesions or spots:** Treat topically with miconazol spray, or over-the-counter human anti-fungals such as Lotrimin, Lamisil, or Tinactin.

**More pervasive lesions:** Lyme sulphur dips one week apart, usually three times.

**Extreme cases:** Ketakonazole orally, must be prescribed and monitored by a vet.

Ringworm can take 6-8 weeks to cure. Occasionally, a cat/kitten will appear to be cured and have ringworm reappear a week or two later. It is comparable to athlete's foot. Wear protective clothing when cleaning the animal's cage and clean last so you don't spread it to other cats. Kittens are at the highest risk of getting ringworm because of their weaker immune system.

## GROOMING

**Claws:** Clip regularly.

**Ears:** Use an alcohol-based over-the-counter ear cleaner. DO NOT use Q-tips, use cotton balls! If ear mites are suspected, treat with Otomite. Revolution used monthly helps prevent ear mites.

**Brushing:** Be careful what brushes you use. Some are sharp and can hurt the cat's skin. Start brushing at the back in long, slow strokes being gentle and watching for reactions. Do not attempt to cut out mats close to the skin for risk of injury, a vet may do this more safely. Regular brushing is important for prevention of matting and hair balls/vomiting.

## JUDGING KITTEN AGE

Birth	Eyes closed, ear canals closed
2 – 3 days	Umbilical cord drops off, body temperature between 92° and 97°
4 days	Purrs while nursing
5 – 8 days	Ear canal opens
7 days	Develops ability to shiver
7 – 10 days	Eyes open, blue eyes, body temperature around 98°
8 – 14 days	Ears uncurl and start standing up
14 days	Socialization begins – positive human contact is critical
14 – 28 days	Baby incisors (front teeth) come in
16 – 20 days	Starts crawling
3 weeks	Starts walking, eyes start changing color, ears completely stand up
3 – 4 weeks	Baby canine teeth come in – begins eating solid food
4 weeks	Starts washing themselves, control bathroom habits, digging/raking
4 – 5 weeks	Baby premolars come in on lower jaw
5 weeks	Weight about 1 pound
6 weeks	First vaccination
6 – 8 weeks	Hunting play begins
8 weeks	Old enough to leave mom, weight is 2 pounds
9 – 12 weeks	Eyes change to adult color/shade
12 weeks	Weight 3 pounds, rabies shot eligible
14 – 16 weeks	Permanent incisors appear
6 months	Permanent canines appear, sexual maturity

### Age & Weight Chart

Age	Weight (oz)
1 days	2 – 4
5 days	3 – 7
10 days	4 – 9
2 weeks	6 – 11
3 weeks	7 – 14
25 days	8 – 16
4 weeks	9 – 18
5 weeks	10 – 21
40 days	10 – 23
6 weeks	13 – 26
7 weeks	13 – 31

### Normal Adult Cat Values:

Temperature	101° - 102° F
Pulse	110 – 114 beats per min
Respiration	20 – 30 breaths per min
Gestation	Ranges from 59 – 69 days

## NEWBORN KITTEN FEEDING

**Orphan kittens:** The best nutrition for newborn kittens is milk from a nursing mother cat, which contains important antibodies for the babies' immune systems. If the biological mother is not available, sometimes a surrogate nursing mother can assist. Introduction of an orphan kitten must be done carefully to prevent rejection of both the orphan and biological kittens. First, place the biological kittens in a cloth bag for about 15 minutes to transfer their scent onto the fabric, then return them to the mother. Place the orphan kitten into the cloth bag to transfer the biological kittens' scent onto it. Rub some butter or wet kitten food on the orphan's head so the mother will be inclined to lick it off and likely feed the kittens afterward.

\*If a surrogate is not available, feed with a small baby bottle using KMR or Just Born. **Do not use cow's milk – this causes diarrhea and can be deadly!!!** Cut a crosscut slit in the nipple of the bottle, but not too big as you want the kitten to have to suckle. If this does not work, you can feed with an eyedropper.

Age	How Much Food	How Often – Day	How Often – Night
1 week or less	½ to 1 tsp	Every 2 hours	Every 2 hours
1 – 2 weeks	1 to 1 ½ tsp	Every 2 hours	Every 4 hours
2 – 3 weeks	1 ½ to 2 tsp	Every 2 hours	Once

\*After feeding, wipe their bodies with a warm damp cloth to mimick the licking action of the mother cat. Rub the anal area with a warm damp cloth to stimulate urination and defecation, usually needed until about 3-4 weeks old.

**Kittens over 3 weeks old** (*still using a bottle*): Mix equal parts of rice cereal with kitten milk formula to the thickness of cream. Start feeding a thin slurry of mixed canned kitten/cat food and KMR kitten milk. Paté texture of wet food is best and easiest to mix. After feeding, put each kitten in the litter box immediately to encourage litter box training.

**Kittens over 4 weeks old:** Start putting the food mixture in a shallow plate instead of a bottle. Continue to use the paté canned food mixed with KMR so it's mushy. Slowly reduce the amount of milk until they are eating straight wet food. You can also keep dry food available.

**Kittens over 5 weeks old:** Start feeding mostly dry kitten food and start cutting back on the canned food. Should take about a week to transition.

## THINGS TO WATCH FOR

**Fleas:** Treat fleas immediately, especially in kittens where fleas can be deadly. Bathe in warm water with Dawn dish soap. Lather them up and place them on a towel in a carrier for 15 minutes, making sure they don't get cold. Rinse with warm water and pick off any visible fleas, dumping them into a small pot of flea shampoo. Dry well and keep warm. If kitten is over 2 weeks of age, spray some Frontline into a towel and rub it over them. By 4 weeks old they can have Capstar (kills fleas in 30 minutes), however bathing may still be a good idea to get rid of dead fleas and dirt.

**Limping:** Can be caused by Calici virus, accompanied by a rapid high fever and an ulcerated mouth. May not simply be from injuring a foot, so check temperature.

**Stomach bloating:** Can be caused by round worms and will need Strongid.

**Stool consistency:** See page on stool for details.

**\*\*Never give a cat/kitten aspirin as it can be fatal.**