



CAT & KITTEN HANDBOOK

A Reference Guide for Foster Volunteers

Questions?

**Call (310) 756-0751 or email
info@carsoncats.com**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>Carson Cats FOSTER PROGRAM</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>FOSTERING REQUIREMENTS</u>	<u>4</u>
<u>TIME, COMMITMENT AND RESPONSIBILITIES</u>	<u>4</u>
<u>SUPPLIES NEEDED FOR THE FOSTER HOME</u>	<u>4</u>
<u>LETTING GO</u>	<u>6</u>
<u>IMPORTANT REMINDERS</u>	<u>6</u>
<u>INTRODUCING NEW FOSTERS TO THE HOME</u>	<u>7</u>
<u>KITTEN DEVELOPMENT AND WHAT YOU CAN DO (<i>Kittens with Mother</i>)</u>	<u>9</u>
<u>ORPHANED AND BOTTLE-FED KITTENS.....</u>	<u>12</u>
<u>MEDICAL INFORMATION.....</u>	<u>19</u>
<u>MEDICINE GUIDELINES.....</u>	<u>19</u>
<u>COMMON CAT ILLNESSES</u>	<u>21</u>
<u>HOW TO GET YOUR FOSTERS ADOPTED.....</u>	<u>25</u>
<u>THANK YOU FOR VOLUNTEERING!.....</u>	<u>30</u>

Carson Cats FOSTER PROGRAM

Welcome to the volunteer foster program for Carson Cats. This handbook is provided to foster parents as a guide for the care of cats and kittens. The goal is to prepare cats and kittens for adoption into their new forever home. Thank you for opening your home to a rescued cat.

Carson Cats has been in existence since 2004. With your help, our rescue has saved over 7000 cats and kittens from euthanasia. This program provides a safe environment for cats to heal and socialize until a permanent adoptive home can be found.

Cats that need foster care fall into the following categories:

- Kittens too young to be adopted.
- Orphaned kittens.
- Abused cats that need socialization and tender loving care.
- Injured cats.
- Cats recovering from surgery or illness.
- Abandoned mother cats with kittens.

We rescue cats and kittens from the Los Angeles County Shelters, mostly Carson Shelter and also cats off the streets. We sometimes foster owner-surrenders or Good Samaritan surrendered cats and kittens. We help both groups of people, however, we generally expect them to self-foster with assistance from us whenever possible.

Carson Cats is a non-profit *all volunteer organization*. We rely on many types of donations to keep the rescue working going in order to save as many homeless cats and kittens as possible. 100% of the donations received from adoptions go directly back into the rescue to pay for medical care, food, supplies, transportation and boarding of our sick and injured fosters.

Our foster parents are our largest group of volunteers and are the most generous in the giving of their time and caring. Carson Cats recognizes that the sacrifices and time you will be giving to one of our rescues is precious. Please always remember that "Saving one cat may not change the world, but it will certainly change the world of one cat!"

Thank you for your generosity!

FOSTERING REQUIREMENTS

Foster cats require an indoor space separate from other household animals. A spare bedroom, bathroom, or laundry room is ideal. Any indoor space free of hiding places or places where a cat could get stuck will work and that is easy to clean. It is important that the foster parent visits this room often so that the cats become well socialized. **Cats are not allowed outdoors under any circumstances.** A room without carpet is easier to keep clean. *Your current animals must be flea-free, healthy, and current on vaccinations.* Everyone in the family must agree to foster.

TIME, COMMITMENT AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Each situation is unique to the needs of the cat. Cats going into foster care are often stressed. The animals depend on the foster parents for security during this adjustment period, which can take from a few days to a few weeks. Foster parents must be patient and commit to the cat until the healing or socialization is completed to avoid the unnecessary stress of readjustment to multiple temporary homes. Foster cats must remain in the care of the original foster parent unless prior permission is received from Carson Cats.

The length of time foster cats stay in a foster home depends on the health and adoptability of the cat. Cats must be vaccinated, de-wormed and be well socialized before being adopted out. Foster parents should plan to provide a home anywhere from 1 month to 6 months.

When the foster parent and Carson Cats decide that the cat is ready for adoption, the foster family will be asked to send pictures and a short biography for the cat(s) or kitten(s). Please write a short biography that includes the cat's name, personality traits, and temperament. Also include any experience the cat has had with dogs and children. This information will be very helpful in placing the cats in compatible homes. Carson Cats or often times our fosters will post them on Petfinder, Adopt-a-Pet, Craigslist and Facebook. Videos up to 30 seconds in length are encouraged and also posted to YouTube.com. Additionally, we hold weekly adoption events every Saturday and Sunday at the Torrance and El Segundo Petsmarts where you can bring your fosters. You also have the option to adopt your fosters out of your home should that be more convenient for you. We will supply you with all the forms needed to complete the adoption. We do strongly encourage home checks of every potential adopter. Carson Cats will need to approve of every adoption prior to the cat going to the new home.

You must also refer to Carson Cats's DNA (do not adopt) list when adopting out of your home. As much as it is possible, adoptive homes are found based on the foster parent's criteria in mind, i.e.: 2 kittens that are very bonded to each other, one that dislikes dogs, one that really likes dogs, etc.

SUPPLIES NEEDED FOR THE FOSTER HOME

CARSON CATS expects foster parents to supply their food, litter and litter boxes. Medical supplies and all vetting is provided by Carson Cats. It is important that fosters consult with Cyndi Zacko member before taking their foster(s) to one of our partner vets. Cyndi can be reached by phone and text at 310-721-5802 or email at cyndizacko@carsoncats.com

Our main rescue vet is Jansens Animal Hospital and our Rescue Medical Liason there is Frances, the head technician.

Jansens Animal Hospital
22231 S Vermont Ave
Torrance, CA 90502
(310) 328-0380

Foster homes should have the following:

Litter box – Cats will use a litter box instinctively. Cats that like to dig need a deep litter box to minimize scattering the litter out of the box.

Cat litter – Use safe litter. Scoopable or clumping is easiest to use when trying to keep a very clean and tidy litterbox. Litter scoop. For kittens and families, you should use a natural based litter such as wheat or walnut.

Carrier – You should have a cat carrier to be used for transporting the cat.

Whelping boxes - It's important that you provide a safe quiet area that is out of the way of traffic in your home for nursing momma cats and their kittens. Whelping boxes can be made out of cardboard boxes and warm blankets. It's important the newborn kittens do not become cold so make sure you place them in a warm area. You should also keep the litter box and food/water close by for the momma cat to use while she is keeping an eye on her kittens.

Food – It is important to provide good quality food, free of grains as much as possible. Momma cats should be fed dry food and wet food with high nutrients. Kittens should only be fed kitten wet food as the main diet with dry kibble left out, make sure it is not adult food.

All cats and kittens should be “free fed”, which means that there is always food and water available. There will be times, such as overweight animals, that cats will have alternative feeding plans. Tall, heavy ceramic dishes are used for most cats and cats wearing cones, while flat dishes work better for flat faced cats or canned food. A cat with a decreased appetite and kittens might respond to slightly warmed wet food.

Cats can be finicky eaters. If the cat is rejecting the food, not gaining weight appropriately, or has diarrhea, contact Cyndi Zacko for instructions. Do not feed cats any food not approved by Carson Cats. Often our rescued cats are in poor health and proper nutrition gives them the help they need to become and remain healthy. Do not give cats table scraps or cow's milk.

Water – Fresh water in a clean bowl must be available at all times. This is especially important for kittens.

Heating Pad – A heating pad or heating disc set on low is needed for orphaned kittens or sick cats or kittens. Always cover a heating pad with a towel and allow space for the cats or kittens to crawl off the pad if they get too hot. Check with Cyndi Zacko before using a heating pad. In lieu of a heating pad you can use a clean sock filled with uncooked rice and heat that in the microwave. It too must be covered and space allowed for kittens to crawl away from it.

Toys – Stuffed mice, small balls, and cardboard from toilet paper rolls, wine corks, and crumpled paper are good cat toys. Adult cats sometimes like catnip but kittens usually are not interested. All toys should be disinfected before another foster cats plays with them. Do not let cats play unsupervised with string or rubber bands which if swallowed can cause fatal damage in the intestines.

Scratching post – Corrugated cardboard scratching mats are inexpensive and divert cats from scratching furniture. These are available at any pet supply store, WalMart, Target, etc.

Keeping the Household Safe and Healthy

New Foster Health Risks

It is always a health risk to expose your pets to other animals. Animals are at risk of contracting an illness in the veterinarian's office, the city park, or the back yard. However, the health risk is minimal if your pet's vaccinations are current, they maintain a healthy life style, and they are not very young, very old, or immune compromised. Any concerns should be addressed by a veterinarian before becoming a foster parent. Keeping foster cats isolated from household pets will minimize any transmission of disease. Foster cats can be particularly susceptible to illnesses carried by household pets because they are already in a vulnerable state. **Strict isolation for at least the first 7 days is important. Cats that have been pulled from the shelter should be isolated for 2 weeks before being released. If they have all ready been isolated for 2 weeks, waiting one more week once they get to your home is always recommended as a precaution.** Also household cats that are being allowed indoor/outdoor access can carry deadly viruses into the home without showing any outward signs of illness themselves. Be aware that a mother cat with a litter of kittens can be very protective and might act aggressively toward other animals and people to protect the kittens.

Dogs are not affected by feline upper respiratory diseases, feline leukemia, or feline immune deficiency virus. Parasites and fungi, however, can be passed between cats and dogs.

Humans who are in contact with live animals can be exposed to a group of diseases called zoonoses. A zoonotic disease is a disease transmitted from animals to humans or humans to animals. There are about 200 zoonotic diseases. If someone in the household is immune compromised or pregnant, a potential foster parent should consult a doctor and/or a veterinarian before becoming a foster parent.

Keeping Fosters Safe in the Home

Cats and kittens are curious creatures. Many are capable of jumping onto high surfaces or squeezing into the smallest of spaces. Please use the following warnings as guidelines to making your home a safe place for foster cats and kittens.

Kitchens/Bathrooms/Utility Rooms - Use childproof latches to keep little paws from prying open cabinets. Keep medications, cleaners, chemicals, and laundry supplies on high shelves. Keep trashcans covered or inside a latched cabinet. Check for and block any small spaces, nooks, or holes inside cabinetry or behind washer/dryer units. Make sure cats or kittens haven't jumped into the dryer before you turn it on (this does happen!). Keep foods out of reach (even if the food isn't harmful, the wrapper could be). Keep toilet lids closed to prevent drowning.

Living/Family Room - Place dangling wires from lamps, VCRs, TVs, stereos, and phones out of reach. Keep children's toys put away. Put away knickknacks until the cat or kitten has the coordination and/or understanding not to knock them over. Block all those spaces where your vacuum cleaner doesn't fit, but a foster kitten could. Remove dangerous items, like string and pins. Move houseplants – some of which can be poisonous -out of reach, including hanging plants that can be jumped onto from other nearby surfaces. Put away all sewing and craft notions, especially thread. Secure aquariums or cages that house small animals, like hamsters or fish, to keep them safe. Make sure all heating and air vents have a cover.

Garage - Most garages usually contain too many dangerous chemicals and unsafe items to be an acceptable foster care site. Foster animals should never be housed in a garage unless discussed with your Foster Coordinator. Move all chemicals to high shelves or behind secure doors. Clean up all antifreeze from the floor and driveway, as one taste can be lethal to an animal.

Bedrooms - Keep laundry and shoes behind closed doors (drawstrings and loose buttons can cause major problems). Keep any medications, lotions or cosmetics off accessible surfaces (like the bedside table). Move electrical and phone wires out of reach of chewing.

Potentially Dangerous Situations - Closet and bedroom doors open doors to the outdoors (escape), open dryer doors, open cabinet drawers, accessible dog doors to the outside.

Computer wires (electrocution or strangulation), folding chairs, potted plants (possible poisoning or pulling plant off of shelf onto animal)

LETTING GO

When kittens thrive, sometimes you're faced with another challenge: it can also be hard to let go and let your kitten go to a new home. You can always adopt a foster animal (regular adoption requirements and fees may apply), but please think about whether or not you'd have difficulty returning a foster cat before beginning to foster. Much as you might like to, it would probably not be feasible for your household to adopt every single cat you foster! And the more you can foster, the more lives you can save!

IMPORTANT REMINDERS

Every year we come across other things that should be mentioned:

- Foster parents cannot foster out their kittens without Carson Cats approval.

- Foster parents & volunteers cannot accept animals into Carson Cats without prior approval. We have over 20 foster parents and volunteers and a lot of us come across situations everyday. Unfortunately just because a person fosters or volunteers with us, does not insure that we can take all the rescue situations they come across.

INTRODUCING NEW FOSTERS TO THE HOME

Keeping new fosters secluded

Carson Cats recommends keeping your new foster(s) secluded at a minimum of 7 days. Many cats and kittens are stressed when they come of the shelter. Additionally, they could develop URI (upper respiratory infection) once they are out and this can be very contagious to any resident cat you may have in your home. It also helps your new foster to get accustomed to the sounds and smells of your home so that they can become more relaxed. Also, it is best to interact with them on their own without any other distractions so you can gauge their personality and help them overcome their fear.

You will also want to keep them in a separate area such as a bedroom with the door closed. You will need to provide them with their own litter box and food/water bowls. When you do interact, keep your voice low and cheerful and approach the cat cautiously. Some cats and kittens are not too affected by their shelter stay and may be very friendly from the beginning. But for those cats who do seem stressed, just take it slowly until they have calmed down. Don't rush it and let them do this on their own time.

Introducing new foster cat to resident cat(s)

If it is necessary to introduce foster cats to resident cats, it is vital that the foster cat has an established safe haven (separate bedroom as above) to maximize the comfort of the new cat and minimize the territorial threat to the resident cat. Start the introduction by allowing them to sniff each other through a closed door. Take a pair of your socks. Swipe one on the foster cat and the other on a resident cat, then let them have the socks. They will be able to smell each other without any threat. If both or all cats seem calm, allow them to meet by cracking open the door between them a couple inches. They should be able to sniff each other. If either cat hisses or growls intensely or swats at the other cat, close the door and consider the meeting session over for the day. A little hissing and batting at each other is expected. You will want to trim everyone's nails to help prevent inadvertent injuries. If the cats remain relatively calm, try playing with them with a string toy or offer them treats. Open the door and let the cats enter the same territory while supervised. Do not force either cat into an unfamiliar space. Sometimes a cat can be distracted with food or toys. Separate the cats and repeat this process a few times a day. Time apart gives them a chance to process the information gained while they were together. Continue to repeat the supervised visits until both cats are comfortable and there is no aggressive behavior.

Never punish a cat for aggressive behavior. Punishment will not discourage the aggressive behavior but it will upset the cat, which will prolong the aggression between the cats. Encourage getting along by staying silent or softly reassuring the cats while you separate them. The key to introducing cats to each other is patience. What often appears to be fighting is actually a way of defining territory. Should there be a potential cat fight, keep a water bottle or water gun handy. When you sense that something may happen, give them each a squirt to stop this behavior. You may only need to do this a few times.

Introducing cats to dogs

After cats are healthy, introducing a foster cat to a resident dog is encouraged. Cats that have learned to socialize with dogs are more adoptable. After the minimum one week isolation period, begin to allow the cat to explore the dog's territory while the dog is away. When the cat appears relaxed while exploring and after trimming the cats front nails, allow the dog and cat to meet. At the initial introduction, the dog should always be on a collar and leash with the owner in complete control. A dog that shows aggression, like snarling, growling, and bearing teeth, will probably never accept the cat. In those cases, the cat will be safer if kept separated from the dog at all times. The cat should be up high and unreachable by the dog. If they are both calm, walk the dog around the room on a leash, but let the dog lead the way. The cat should be allowed to escape or approach the dog as desired. Neither force nor expect a face-to-face interaction in the first few meetings. A dog is a predator

and it is natural for a dog to want to chase a cat. Be prepared for the dog to yank on the leash and try to chase the cat. Kittens are very vulnerable because they remind dogs of small toys. Do not let the dog intimidate the cat by barking. All inappropriate behavior should be discouraged with a quick sideways tug on the leash. On the other hand, if the cat bops the dog on the nose, consider it a warning and a good sign; this may be the first step in setting up boundaries in the relationship. Allow the interaction for about a half hour, then, return the cat to the safe haven. Increase the amount of time they spend together each day. It is important to be patient and calm with these interactions to help the cat and dog to relax. Praise both animals profusely and never force an interaction. Consider supervised off-leash visits when both animals appear ready.

Giving comfort to the new Foster

Homeless cats and kittens have come from a variety of situations. Some of the situations we will never know what they were, but we do know that they were either neglected or mistreated. As Fosters you have an important roll to play in the socialization of these cats and kittens. This means that they should be treated as if they were your own pet with love and attention being given liberally. Cats and kittens that are very social are most requested by adopters and have the greater chance of living out their lives in their new home. Patience and love is the magic combination that will make your foster a more desirable pet for a potential adopter.

Cat manners

Yes, cats and kittens have to learn their manners. Please do not encourage or allow cats to climb on your legs, bite or scratch your hands or face or suck on you or your clothing. It may be cute as a kitten but imagine a full sized cat doing these things. This will make them less adoptable and can cause them to be returned once they are older. Always play pounce, bite, scratch, stalk and hunt games with fishing pole type toys.

Basic care for cats/kittens

- Brushing – Cats and kittens that have medium to long hair should be brushed once a week. Kittens should start to get accustomed to brushing even though they will try to play when they are being brushed. Older cats and kittens should be brushed to help them with their grooming and to cut down on shedding. This will also help during times of excessive shedding when the climate changes. Be sure to use the appropriate type of brush for their length of fur. Long haired breeds need to have long metal bristles to keep mats from forming. Smaller kittens can use a shorter bristle. You would need to use long strokes and be careful to not pull the cats fur. If this is done correctly you will have a cat that actually enjoys this type of interaction.
- Bathing – Bathing a foster cat that has recently been pulled from the shelter may be necessary. If this is something that needs to be done you can attempt it yourself. Be sure to trim the cats nails first. Use gloves and long sleeves to limit any nail or teeth damage from a stressed cat.
- Nail Trimming - Nails grow continuously. When nails are not worn down naturally by activity, they may need to be trimmed. Before trimming your foster cat's nails, get it accustomed to having its paws handled. Begin by gently petting the cat's legs and paws while giving it a treat, making this a pleasant experience. Gradually increase the pressure on the paw so that petting becomes gently squeezing, as you will need to do to extend the claw. Continue with the treats until your cat will tolerate this kind of touching and restraint. This may take longer with cats that have rarely had their legs or paws handled. Apply a small amount of pressure to the cat's paw, with your thumb on top of the paw and your index finger under the paw, until the claws are extended. You should be able to see the pink or "quick", which is a small blood vessel. You DO NOT want to cut into the pink portion, as it will bleed and be painful for the cat. If you cut off just the sharp tip of the claw, it will dull the nail and prevent extensive damage to household objects and to your skin. The nails can be trimmed weekly. If a nail clipper is used, it is important to keep the clipper perpendicular to the claw so as not to crush it.

If you are uncomfortable trimming any foster cat or kitten's nails, please do not attempt it. Ask for assistance from an event coordinator, foster coordinator or Cyndi Zacko.

KITTEN DEVELOPMENT AND WHAT YOU CAN DO (*Kittens with Mother*)

We have many families rescued from the shelters that need fostering. During kitten season (March thru October) is when we have many kittens that are born and need to be taken care of until adopted. We also receive many pregnant cats into our foster care that need to be fostered during their pregnancy, during birth and after birth until the kittens are old enough to be adopted. We understand that if this the first time you have fostered pregnant cats and newborn kittens that you may have many questions as to what is normal. The following information should answer some of your basic questions. However, if your question is not addressed here, please be sure to contact Cyndi Zacko as to any kitten or cat issues that may arise.

Neonates (Newborn)

- Neonatal kittens should be pink, firm, plump and generally healthy in appearance.
- Temperature - Normal rectal temperature for newborns is 96 – 97 °F.
- Eyes and Ears – Closed, but can still hear (poorly) and respond to bright light with a blink reflex.
- Muscles –Healthy kittens will curl their bodies and limbs inward.

1 – 2 Weeks

- Temperature – Normal rectal temperature has gradually increased to 100°F.
- Eyes and ears - Open at approximately 11-15 days.
- Muscles –Kittens can use their front legs to stand and walk shakily.

What you can do –You can engage in gentle handling and cuddling at this point. These sessions should be very short (1-2 minutes) and great care should be taken in the handling process.

- Rub the hair coat gently with your hands, and gently finger the webbing in between the toes. Rub ears and muzzle.
- Invert the kitten so it is facing the ceiling and gently rock back and forth, up and down.

2 – 3 Weeks

- Vision - Poor even after the eyes open, but continue to develop until 3 to 4 weeks of age. If the eyes fail to open and the lids look sticky, the lids should be very gently wiped with dampened cotton and a little petroleum jelly smeared on them to ease their opening. ***The eyelids should never be pulled apart.*** If the eyelids still haven't opened by 14 days, contact Cyndi Zacko.
- Muscles – The rear legs can now support the body. Kittens are crawling.
- Temperature – Able to maintain their own body temperature within the normal range (100.5 – 102.5°F).
- Teeth – Deciduous incisors erupt, followed by deciduous canines.

What you can do – Be careful not to startle the kitten with sudden movements or loud sounds.

- The living area should have 2 areas, one for sleeping and the other for a litter box (away from the sleeping and feeding area).
- Provide 5 minutes of handling exercises; the purpose is to stimulate the kitten, not to alarm it.
- Gently roll the kitten over on its back for 5-10 seconds, and then draw it close to you, stroking and cuddling it.

- Grooming – Softly and gently brush the kitten’s coat a few strokes, touch the ears and mouth and clip nails (see nail clipping section or call a Carson Cats member if you are not sure how to do this).

3 – 4 Weeks

- Muscles –By 21 days, kittens can walk with a fairly steady gait. Kittens can sit and have reasonable control of toes.
- Eyes and Ears - Vision and hearing normal. Blink response disappears, due to the development of accurate pupil control. The infant is now able to use visual clues to locate and approach the mother. Ears should be completely open by 17 days.
- Teeth - Deciduous incisors and canine teeth erupt.

What you can do – Do not permanently remove the kitten from its mother or littermates at this time. It is critical to the kitten’s development that it continues with this social interaction.

- It is important to provide a stable home environment to balance the excess stimulation a kitten is experiencing. This would not be a good time to move the whelping box.
- The kittens will start to investigate their immediate environment. Safe, simple toys can be added for them to discover at this time.
- The kittens can be introduced to people at this time, but this interaction should be carefully controlled. The interaction should be limited to 5 minutes of time spent in gentle massage and cuddling.
- The main caregiver should continue grooming and handling exercises: holding, cuddling, and stroking the kitten’s body, including ears, tails, and muzzle.
- A great amount of time and effort is required to properly socialize kittens between the ages of 4 to 12 weeks. Daily socialization sessions are important in shaping the kitten’s future personality and emotional growth. Combine simple play with restraint exercises. This familiarizes a kitten to having its paws touched (front and back), mouth opened and ears touched. Combining this with regular grooming sessions and body massages help prevents skin sensitivity or aversion to touch. Acquaint kittens to different sights, sounds and textures.

4 – 5 Weeks

- Teeth – Deciduous premolars erupt.
- Muscular – Kittens are walking normally. They are climbing. Social play is prevalent.
- Eyes and ears – Guided paw placing and obstacle avoidance develop between 3 to 5 weeks. Vision is markedly improved.

What you can do – Continue handling and socialization procedures.

5 – 8 Weeks

- Teeth – Entire set of deciduous teeth by 5 weeks.
- Temperature – Normal range is 100.5° to 102.5°F.
- Play – Play with objects and locomotor play rise markedly around 7 to 8 weeks of age.

What you can do – The kitten is totally dependent on the environment you provide to stimulate and develop it.

- Introduce the kitten to as many different people as possible – people of different shapes, sizes, colors, sexes and ages. Encourage the kitten to allow individual handling by different people: men, women, and supervised children.
- Also introduce the kitten to other animals. Supervise the visits (about 5 minutes). These visits should be calm and pleasant. A traumatic incident at this stage could have a lasting effect.
- Continue to add appropriate toys to the kitten's environment.
- Expose the kitten to mild sounds.
- Expose the kitten to different areas and surfaces, allowing it to investigate.
- The main caregiver should continue handling and grooming exercise

8 weeks plus

- Teeth – Change from milk teeth to adult teeth starts at about 3 ½ months.
- Sexual Maturity – Female cats become sexually mature between 4 and 12 months of age. Male cats become sexually mature around 7 to 10 months.

What you can do –Protect the kitten from experiences that could have a lasting effect.

- Introductions to people are extremely important as the kitten develops the ability to form permanent relationships with humans at this time. Supervise the visit, but expose the kitten to as many different types of people as possible.
- The kitten's environment should develop a sense of security.
- Introduce the kitten to a carrier.
- Introduce the kitten to louder noises gradually, such as a vacuum cleaner, washing machine and/or dishwasher. Play with the kitten as you introduce the noise in the background.
- The environment should be mentally stimulating to help the kittens develop. Make noises by blowing whistles, clapping hands, jingling bells, and turning the vacuum cleaner on throughout the day.
- Encourage the kittens to explore, sniff, or lick these noisemakers. Exposing kittens to a variety of unusual sounds helps them become accustomed to these noises. It will also minimize fearful, nervous reactions to noises later in life.
- Only praise a kitten for positive reactions. Do not punish a kitten by forcing it to approach a scary situation and do not comfort it if it shows fear.

Adolescent – 13-16 weeks

- General behavior – the kitten is fully developed, needing only experience. The kitten's mind can still be influenced. The kitten's flight instinct is developing and this may cause it to run from real or imagined threats.

What you can do – Be consistent with rules, continue grooming and socialization.

Mom cats (also see page 15)

- We like to keep the kittens with their moms as long as possible – at least 6 - 8weeks.
- Keep an eye on the mom cat's nipples to make sure they are not getting hard. Mastitis symptoms include nipples showing any signs of redness,heat, swelling lesions, or sores. Contact Cyndi Zacko if you notice any of these signs and apply warm compresses to the nipples

- Mom cats should be spayed 1-2 weeks after they have stopped nursing to give time for their milk to go dry up.
- Feed Moms at least 2-3 big cans of high nutritional wet food (kitten or A/D) while they are nursing and leave dry food all the time.

ORPHANED AND BOTTLE-FED KITTENS

When very young kittens are orphaned ("bottle babies"), foster volunteers are needed to bottle-feed them and provide them with round-the-clock care. Foster volunteers must feed, stimulate young kittens to eliminate, take care of their grooming requirements, and closely monitor their progress. The results are rewarding as you watch bottle babies grow into healthy and active kittens. The length of foster care for bottle babies can be up to 2 months. Kittens are placed into foster care with their litter or individually if only one kitten is brought to the shelter.

Supplies needed for bottle babies

- Animal nursing bottle with nipple, or syringe with or without nipple
- Tissues, toilet paper, baby wipes, cotton balls (unscented only)
- Stuffed toys for kittens to cuddle Heating pad
- Refer to "Suggested Fostering Supplies" section, page 9
- Facilities needed - Infant kittens are easily kept in small carriers, baskets, playpens or boxes. As they grow, they will require an easy to clean area separated from your own companion animals, but not isolated from normal activities.

Recommended diet and feeding schedule

NEVER FEED COW'S MILK TO A KITTEN! Cow's milk is not easily digested by kittens and may cause serious digestive problems.

- Fosters will provide kitten milk replacement formula.
- Nursing queens will need high quality kitten growth food.
- Do not feed a kitten until it is thoroughly warmed, should it become cold. It cannot digest any food until its body reaches normal temperature.
- Use a fork or wire whisk to mix the milk powder in small amounts. Formula may be mixed in a blender using short pulses, but should be allowed to sit for a few minutes to allow the air bubbles to settle out. Keep formula refrigerated after mixing.
- Always warm the formula before feeding. It should feel warmer than your body temperature (100° - 102°F) on your wrist. Heat only enough formula for each feeding and throw away any uneaten warmed formula after each feeding.
- Do not reuse warmed formula. Bacteria can develop after the formula has been warmed and can cause gastrointestinal problems for the kitten.
- Keep both mixed formula and the formula powders in the refrigerator. Dry formula powder may be kept in the freezer for up to one year.

- Overfeeding will cause bloat and distress, because the formula is not readily absorbed. Whatever the planned volume is for a feeding, stop when the stomach begins to show fullness. ***Do not overfeed.***
- Feces (stool) - The stools, (feces), should be tan to brown, firm and well formed.

General Guideline for Formula Feeding, Based on Age

Age	Time Table	Feedings per day
0-2 weeks	Every 3 hours, 24 hours a day	6-8
2-3 weeks	Every 4 hours, 24 hours a day	6-8
3-4 weeks	Every 4-5 hours	5-6
4-5 weeks	Every 5-6 hours	3-4
5-6 weeks	Every 6 hours, from morning until 10 or 11 p.m.	3-4
6-8 weeks	Every 8 hours (plus free feed kitten food all day)	2-3

All determinations of feeding frequencies are based on the kitten's weight.

Tips on bottle feeding

- Use a small towel to hold the kitten. This will reduce stress on the kitten from cold hands and tight fingers, and will give the kitten something to hang onto. The kitten's forelegs should be unconfined to allow it to "knead" as it would on the mother's abdomen during feeding. The "kneading" is essential as it helps to develop the kitten's muscles and initiates peristaltic action of the intestines, which aids in digestion and elimination.
- Use a small syringe (3 cc or less) for feeding newborns. Graduate to a larger syringe when the kitten is taking 3 or more cc's at a feeding. Do not use much larger syringes as this causes the formula to be drawn into the kittens mouth too quickly and can lead to aspiration.
- An animal nursing bottle and nipple may be used for larger kittens. If using a bottle, gently burp the kitten by placing it in on its stomach in the palm of one hand and patting it on the back a few times with the other hand. This will allow any air ingested to be expelled, however, you won't hear the kitten "burp". Be sure to check the size of the hole in the nipple, as this seems to be the number one cause for aspiration and bloating. You should be able to turn the bottle upside down with little to nothing coming out. The milk should only come out if you shake the bottle.
- Do not put more than the amount for one kitten's feeding in the bottle at one time. This will help you keep track of how much each kitten consumes per feeding and will keep the kitten from overeating.
- Feed the kitten in an upright position, body perpendicular and chin parallel to the floor. Support the lower body with the palm of your hand and hold the head steady with your thumb and forefinger. Check the tummy for fullness after feeding 2/3 to 3/4 of the formula to avoid overfeeding.
- Once the kitten opens its eyes, it may prefer to be fed in a prone position - belly on a flat surface, holding the syringe with its forepaws. Wrap the kitten in a towel or soft cloth when feeding to make it feel more secure and easier to hold. A syringe with a sticky plunger should be thrown away - it can cause the formula to be expressed in sudden spurts, which can lead to aspiration. Throw away stretched nipples before the kitten aspirates from a hole in the tip that is too large.
- Aspiration of Fluids - Aspiration (inhalation of fluids into the lungs) of formula can be fairly common. If aspiration occurs, the kitten can be turned upside down and gently shaken once to help the fluid drain out. If this happens with very young kittens, a small bulb syringe or eyedropper can be used to suck the fluids out of the nostrils.
- Do not feed any more to the kitten until it has completely cleared the fluid from its lungs, usually by sneezing. Aspiration can be a dangerous situation, and can lead to possible pneumonia and death. ***If crackling or popping is heard as the kitten breathes, contact Cyndi Zacko immediately.***

- Measure the amount of formula needed for all the kittens for one feeding and warm it in a glass container with a pour spout, (like a measuring cup), to a temperature of about 100° to 104°F. Then pour the proper feeding amount for each kitten into a bottle as you prepare to feed it.
- Another method is to fill the desired number of syringes, place a nipple on each, and place the filled syringes in warm water.
- Check the temperature of the formula on the inside of your wrist before feeding each kitten. It should feel warm, not hot.

Maintaining Body Temperature

It is a good idea to keep a small thermometer on hand, and place it in the container with the kittens to monitor temperature. The temperature should be maintained between 80°F and 90°F at the level of the kittens. It is important that the container be placed ½ on and ½ off the heating pad for kittens less than 3 weeks. By doing this, the kittens can crawl to a cooler spot if they become too warm. Kittens should be able to maintain their body temperature without an additional heat source by 3 weeks of age, but will still need something to cuddle with, like a blanket or stuffed toy.

Common Signs of Kitten Illness

Illnesses during these periods are primarily caused by infections, (bacterial, viral, protozoan and parasitic), or malnutrition during weaning. Illnesses are usually acquired in-utero, during the birth process (seen in neonates and 0 to 2 weeks of age), or in post weaning period.

Some signs of illness in neonatal kittens are:

- Frequent crying
- Restlessness
- Weakness
- Hypothermia (lower body temperature)
- Diarrhea
- Dehydration
- Altered respiration (labored, shallow or “crackling”)
- Cyanosis (white to bluish color of mucous membranes)

Fading Kitten Syndrome

A “fading” kitten is one that appears healthy at birth, but fails to survive beyond 12 weeks of age. Death generally occurs because of one of the following: congenital defects, low birth weight, nutritional diseases resulting from inadequate diet fed to the mother, infectious diseases, lack of antibodies from mother, or miscellaneous causes (such as severe intestinal parasites). Kitten death due to “fading” is not uncommon. Usually the circumstances are unavoidable. ***If this should happen it’s important to remember that it is not your fault! Also remember that you gave the kitten every opportunity to survive.***

IMPORTANT: If an animal in your care should pass away, please call Cyndi Zacko immediately!

Management of Neonatal Illness

Immediate care is required. Refer to the "Emergency Numbers" section on Page 2. Ill kittens need external warming with hot water bottles or a heating pad. Gradually warm the kitten and turn it every hour. If using a hot water bottle to warm the kitten, check the bottle frequently to insure it hasn’t lost its heat and is unintentionally cooling the kitten. Once the kitten’s normal body temperature has been reached:

- Encourage food intake – diluted formula or meat baby food.

- Encourage water intake – diluted formula, if the kitten is still on the bottle.
- Weigh the kitten daily, if possible, to assess weight gain or loss.
- Observe the degree of moisture of mucous membranes, skin elasticity and clearness of urine in assessing hydration levels.
- It is highly recommended to regularly record weight, feeding schedule and amount of food eaten at each feeding, what the urine and feces look like and any other important information. Then you can refer to these records to ensure they are growing at a normal rate, as well as if the kitten(s) becomes ill.
- Healthy kittens have moist gums, elastic skin, and clear, colorless urine when normally hydrated. Dry gums, loss of skin elasticity or any yellow color or odor to urine indicates dehydration.

Weaning and Feeding Kittens

Generally, it is best to start weaning kittens at 3 to 5 weeks of age. Weaning should be a gradual process. If you are lucky enough to have the queen with her kittens, she will take care of the weaning process herself. You will want to be sure you are supplying enough food for the nursing queen as well as the weaning kittens

How to Wean

Begin introducing 3 to 5 week old kittens to semi-solid gruel, made from 1 part canned food to 3 parts hot water or kitten milk replacement formula. Make sure to serve the food at body temperature, (98 to 100°F). Offer this mixture 3 to 4 times daily. Remove the gruel after about 15 minutes and discard.

Introducing Food

Dip your finger into the gruel and let the kitten lick at it, or smear a small amount on the kitten's lips. Be careful not to get any of the gruel in the kitten's nose. You may also touch a finger into the gruel and then place the finger into the kitten's mouth. At around 5 weeks of age, the kittens should be reducing their intake of mother's milk. Once they are consistently eating the gruel, gradually decrease the amount of water used. Always provide plenty of fresh water in clean bowls. All changes in amounts and consistency of food should be made gradually to promote good digestion.

Some kittens take longer to wean than others. It is important to always watch the litter to ensure that each individual is eating healthy amounts of food. Check tummies for fullness after each meal.

Feeding Schedule after Weaning

3 - 6 weeks - Warm gruel 3 times a day.
Dry food should always be available.

6 - 8 weeks – Small can food 2 times a day. Warm it a bit in the microwave.
Dry food should always be available.

Helping the Mother's Milk Supply Dry Up

Many mother cats will dry up as they wean their kittens. It will vary with each individual cat.

Mastitis and the Mother Cat

Mastitis is an inflammation of one or more of the mother cat's mammary glands. Mastitis usually occurs within 6 weeks after giving birth or after weaning, if it is going to occur at all. Symptoms of mastitis include fever, listlessness, loss of appetite and neglect of the kittens. Affected mammary glands are usually swollen, hot and painful to the touch. You can feel firm nodules within the tissue of the teat. The cause is often from a bacterial infection in the mammary gland and may require antibiotic treatment (contact Cyndi Zacko). If the cat will

tolerate it, hot packing the affected glands will encourage drainage. The use of Bag Balm® will also promote healing.

Litter Training Cats and Kittens

When a kitten is about 4 weeks old, it will begin to play in, explore and dig in loose, soft materials, such as dirt or litter. Soon, this investigative digging results in the kitten's eliminating in these materials. Kittens DO NOT have to be taught by either their mother or their human guardians to relieve themselves in soft, loose materials or to dig and bury their waste. This behavior is called "innate" or "instinctive" because the kitten is born knowing how to do it. However, where a cat eliminates can be affected by its experiences. Litter boxes that do not provide an acceptable place to eliminate from the cat's point of view, may cause a cat to relieve itself elsewhere. It is important to provide a litter box that meets the kitten or cat's needs so that it will like the box and use it consistently.

All that is really necessary to litter train a kitten or cat is to provide an acceptable and accessible litter box that follows the criteria listed in this section. What is acceptable and accessible must be determined from the cat's point of view, not the guardian's. It is not necessary, or even recommended, to take a cat to the box and move its paws back and forth in the litter. This may actually be an unpleasant experience for the cat and may initiate negative associations with the litter box.

- Litter Box Location
Most people want to place the litter box in an out of the way place in order to minimize odor and loose particles of cat litter tracked around the house. Often, the litter box may end up in the basement, possibly next to an appliance, on an unfinished, cold cement floor. *This type of location is often undesirable to the cat.* A small, young kitten may not be able to get down a long flight of stairs in time to relieve itself, especially if it started out on the top floor of the house! An adult cat that is new to a home may not remember where the litter box is if it is located in an area that the cat seldom frequents. A cat may become startled while using the litter box if a furnace, or washer or dryer suddenly turns on. It may associate the litter box with the frightening noise and refuse to use it in that location. Some cats like to scratch the surface surrounding their litter box and may find a cold cement floor unappealing. You may have to compromise by placing the litter box in a location that affords the cat some privacy, but is also conveniently located. If you place the litter box in a closet, be sure the closet door is wedged open from both sides. This will keep the cat from being trapped inside or outside of the closet. If the box sits on a smooth, slick or cold surface, consider putting a small throw rug or mat underneath the litter box. The cat will have something to scratch and less litter will be tracked through the house.
- Type of Litter
A scoopable type of litter will be provided.
- Depth of Litter
It is not true that the more litter put into a litter box, the less often you will have to clean it. Regular cleaning is essential, regardless of the depth of the litter. Cats do not choose areas for elimination where they "sink into" several inches of litter or dirt. Most cats will not like litter that is more than about 2 inches deep. Some cats prefer even less than that, especially some longhaired breeds.
- Covered Vs. Non-Covered Litter Boxes
Many cats will not show any preference for a covered versus a non-covered litter box. However, if the cat is very large, a covered litter box may not allow sufficient room for it to turn around, scratch and dig, and position itself in the way it prefers. Uncovered boxes are easier to use when training kittens because it is easier for them to get into and out of the litter box. A covered box tends to provide more privacy and may be preferred by shy, timid cats.. A litter box cover can be made from an upside down cardboard box with the flaps and one side cut away.
- Cleaning the Litter Box
Litter boxes must be kept clean. Feces should be scooped out of the litter box daily. The number of cats and the number of litter boxes will determine how often the litter needs to be changed. Once a week is a general guideline, but it may need changing more or less often, depending on circumstances. If you notice any odor to the box or if much of the litter is wet or clumped, it is time to change all the litter. Do not use strong smelling chemicals or cleaning products when washing the litter box. The smell of vinegar, bleach or pine cleaners may cause the cat to avoid using the litter box. Washing with soap

and water should be sufficient. Letting the container air dry is also a good idea, but it will be necessary to have a back-up litter box while the other one is being cleaned.

Spaying/neutering cats and kittens

Carson Cats spays and neuters all adult cats and kittens as needed. Please contact Cyndi Zacko for questions about spaying and neutering.

If you have a cat or kitten that has been spayed or neutered, they will need to recover from the procedure for about 3-5 days before being put up for adoption. Males may be ready sooner than females. They should be kept in an easy to clean area separated from your own companion animals, yet not isolated from normal activities. Examples are a bathroom, spare bedroom, heated laundry room or kitchen. Some foster volunteers use a playpen, but a makeshift lid is recommended.

Cats must weigh at least 2 pounds according to many of Carson Cats partner vets. These surgeries are done on various days at partnering vet clinics. ***Please coordinate any spay/neuter visits to the vet with Cyndi Zacko.***

Fostering Injured or Surgery Recovery Cats

MeeowzresQ receives many animals in need of medical care. The foster period for an animal recovering from surgery may vary from a few days to months, depending on the severity of the injuries and treatment involved. These cats or kittens may require daily medications or special diets, as well as visits to the veterinary clinic. Some cats or kittens need complete 'bed rest' in order to fully heal, and some may require some sort of rehabilitation exercises.

Facilities Needed: An easily accessed, easy to clean area, separated from your own companion animals. It may also need a quiet place to stay. For others, being right in the middle of things is best.

Fostering Ill Cats & Kittens

Shelter cats and kittens are frequently exposed to diseases that are contagious to other cats and kittens. These illnesses can affect felines of all ages and can include upper respiratory infection, mites (skin and ear), intestinal parasites, or feline panleukopenia. The immune system of the infected cat or kitten may be compromised because of any of these illnesses. While fostering ill cats or kittens, a volunteer will likely be asked to administer daily medication, provide a special diet, and ensure regular visits to the veterinary clinic.

Facilities Needed: An easy to clean area is needed. The area should be completely isolated from your own companion animals, such as a spare bathroom, bedroom, den or heated basement.

Needed Supplies:

- Medications and supplies will be provided by Carson Cats
- Pill applicator or syringe for liquid medication, if needed.
- Food and water as instructed.
- Carson Cats or the vet will provide special diets when necessary.
- Be aware of possible check up appointments.
- Medicate as directed by Cyndi Zacko or veterinary staff.
- Observe signs of improvement or deterioration.
- Inform Meowzresq immediately if problems occur.

MEDICAL INFORMATION

Authorizing Vet Visits

Before taking your foster to the vet, you must contact Cyndi Zacko for advice and permission. Even if you think it's an emergency, you must contact Carson Cats first.

Jansens Animal Hospital
22231 S Vermont Ave
Torrance, CA 90502
(310) 328-0380

Health Records

The health record should accompany the kitty to each vet visit and/or visit one of our foster coordinators. Please take the greatest care with health records as they contain vital information that cannot be easily duplicated. Records should be updated after each time they have had shots, flea/deworming treatments, ear mite treatments or any other routine treatment. Each one needs to be documented whether it's administered by yourself, Carson Cats or the vet. The general health record will be passed along to the adopter so their family vet can have a more complete history on the cat. When you receive a new foster make sure they have a medical record already started and given to you.

MEDICINE GUIDELINES

Vaccinations

Each foster parent will be responsible for obtaining vaccinations for their kittens on a timely basis.

The vaccinations for kittens in foster care are as follows:

- A 4-in-1 vaccine is the first vaccine injection a kitten will receive. This vaccine should be given to the kitten at about 6-8 weeks of age. This vaccine immunizes against Panleukopenia (feline distemper), Rhinotracheitis, Calicivirus, and Chlamydia (feline respiratory diseases). You can arrange with Cyndi Zacko for these vaccines for your kittens. There are several foster moms who can give the vaccine so there should be one near you.
- The second vaccine injection is also a 4-in-1 and is given 3-4 weeks after the first injection. If we still have the kittens, we will give this otherwise it is up to the adopter to make sure this booster is given.
- After the sets of vaccinations are completed, a yearly booster is all that is required to maintain immunity.
- Pregnant cats are NOT to be vaccinated. This could cause birth defects. They should receive a 4-in-1 vaccine as soon as possible after they give birth. We generally take care of this at the time of spay—right after kittens are weaned.
- Sick kittens should NOT be vaccinated until they are completely well. The vaccine series may have to start over if the kitten becomes sick.

Please be sure to watch your kittens closely for an allergic reaction after they receive their vaccination. If they have any signs of an allergic reaction, call Cyndi Zacko or immediately. Kittens may be lethargic, slightly feverish, and not want to eat. This is normal but if it lasts more than 48 hours or symptoms get worse, again call Cyndi Zacko.

Allergic Reaction to Vaccine Symptoms include:

- Swelling of the face, head, or neck
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Itching
- Eye irritation
- Wheezing, sneezing, coughing, panting, difficulty breathing
- Lameness
- Injection-site swelling
- Extensive scratching
- Restlessness, excitability, may appear confused
- Rapid heart beat, weak pulse, drop in blood pressure
- Shock
- Convulsions

De-worming Guidelines

A kitten should receive its first de-worming medicine when it weighs at least 1.5 lbs. The second dose is given two weeks later. Although you may or may not see signs of worms, almost all stray kittens, especially if they have been infected with fleas, need to be de-wormed. Tapeworms look like a grain of rice in the stool or coming out of the anus. Roundworms look like spaghetti and are about 3-5 inches long and are often thrown up.

Other signs of worms are diarrhea, vomiting, coughing, loss of appetite, weight loss, not gaining weight, big bellies, not as active or playful. If a kitten under 1.5 lbs shows any of these signs and worms is suspected, contact Cyndi Zacko.

Typical de-worming medication and dosage:

- Nemex - treats roundworms. Record date meds were given on medical record chart
Dosage: determined by kitten's weight, see chart below. Repeat in 2 weeks
- Drontal - treats roundworms and tapeworms. Record date meds were given on medical record chart.
Dosage: determined by kittens weight see chart below. Repeat in two weeks

Dosage chart:

- 2.2 lbs or less - ¼ tablet
- 2.3 lbs to 4 lbs - ½ tablet

Defleaing Guidelines

Fleas pose a deadly threat to young orphan kittens as they can cause kittens to become anemic and weak. Since the orphan kitten is unable to defend itself and does not have a mother available to help keep it clean and flea-free, the foster parent must regularly check the kitten for the presence of these dangerous parasites. Flea infestation might be recognized by seeing the actual insect or "flea dirt" in the fur. Young kittens can die from "flea bite anemia" caused by blood loss from the flea infestation so treatment is important. To immediately rid a cat or kitten of fleas, bathe in either Dawn/Palmolive or castille soap. Dry little ones thoroughly with a towel and place on a heating pad. All cats should be treated for fleas with Advatange or Revolution. Flea treatment should be repeated monthly.

Signs of flea are:

- The actual flea itself
- Black flea droppings on the fur and body
- Excessive scratching and itching
- Pale gums and lethargy from anemia (immediately contact Cyndi Zacko)
- If the kitten is really dirty, crawling with fleas and has a lot of flea dirt, you will probably need to bathe it first. Use baby shampoo only and rinse the shampoo off thoroughly. Towel dry the kittens with warm towels straight from the dryer. Flea combs work really well at removing any fleas that remain on kittens after a bath. If it is too cold for a bath or the kitten is too young (under a week of age) you can use a flea comb. Have a bowl of water ready to put the fleas in to drown them. Apply Advantage to the back of the neck and be sure to apply directly to the skin and not just to the fur. Record the date Advantage was given on the kitten's medical record chart.
- If you are fostering a mother cat and kittens, the mother cat can receive Advantage while she is pregnant and nursing.

MEDICATION: Advantage flea treatment. Apply monthly

Dosage: 1 drop per pound

For very small kittens ---1 drop on the back of neck and blot with cotton ball,

COMMON CAT ILLNESSES

Fading Kitten Syndrome

A "fading" kitten is one that appears healthy at birth, but fails to survive beyond 12 weeks of age. Once in a while, one or more kittens in a litter that were healthy and vigorous at birth will begin to "fade" after a week or two of life. They will stop growing; begin to lose weight, stop nursing and crawling. They may cry continuously and lose the ability to stay upright. Kittens fade very quickly they will not last 48 hours without veterinary care, and probably will not recover even with intensive care. There is no clear cause or reason for this condition.

Death generally occurs because of one of the following: congenital defects, low birth weight, nutritional diseases resulting from inadequate diet fed to the mother, infectious diseases, lack of antibodies from mother, or miscellaneous causes (such as severe intestinal parasites). Early veterinary treatment is imperative, but even with tube feeding, re-hydration and monitoring, many if not most fading kittens will die. Kitten death due to "fading" is not uncommon. Usually the circumstances are unavoidable. **REMEMBER THAT IT IS NOT YOUR FAULT!** Also remember that you gave the kitten every opportunity to survive.

Panleukopenia (Feline Distemper)

Feline Distemper is highly contagious and almost always fatal. It is a resilient virus that attacks the lining of the intestine and is transmitted only between cats. The incubation period is 2-14 days. It is most common during the warmer months and during the spring and summer when most kittens are born. Kittens and unvaccinated cats are highly susceptible. Symptoms include lethargy, lack of appetite, vomiting, drooling and diarrhea, generally followed by death within 24 hours. Diarrhea is the most common of these symptoms. The virus is present in all body fluids and can live on surfaces for up to a year.

Therefore, if a cat is diagnosed with Feline Distemper while in foster care, special precautions and household cleaning are necessary:

- Double bag and dispose of all bedding, litter, toys, and plastic food dishes.
- Disinfect steel, aluminum and ceramic surfaces (including food bowls) with 1 ounce of bleach diluted in 1 quart of water for 10 minutes. Clean carpet, upholstery, and clothing with the same solution.
- Repeat this sanitization process for 3 consecutive days.
- Household cats should be immune if they are current on vaccinations but watch for symptoms of the disease and act quickly if any are seen.

- Fostering should be suspended for 6 months after a confirmed outbreak of Feline Distemper. Please check with Cyndi Zacko.

Parasites

There are many common parasites seen in cats. Below are the most common you should look for in your foster. Before treating any cat or kitten please contact Carson Cats's Cyndi Zacko for advice. She may be able to supply the appropriate medication for treatment in-home. They may instead direct you to take your sick cat or kitten to one of the partner vets. In which case it is your responsibility to make the appointment, take the foster to the visit and administer any treatment that has been recommended. However, if the vet recommends a medication that is already in Carson Cats's inventory, you may decline the medication and contact Cyndi Zacko to obtain the medicine.

- Coccidia

Coccidia can only be seen with a microscopic examination of fresh stool. It causes diarrhea, lack of appetite and an overall neediness. The treatment is two oral medications administered concurrently: Baycox is administered once a day for two consecutive days and Albon is administered once a day for 10 consecutive days. See appendix for specific dosing requirements.

To prevent environmental contamination, during an episode of coccidia, cat pan liners should be used and soiled litter disposed of daily. Alternatively, disposable cat pans can be used. Daily bathing of kittens, paying special attention to their bums, will reduce cysts load and lower their risk of reinfecting themselves.

- Giardia

Giardia is picked up from contaminated water. The most common symptom is intermittent or chronic diarrhea. The treatment is metronidazole (aka Flagyl).

To prevent environmental contamination, during an episode of giardia, cat pan liners should be used and soiled litter disposed of daily. Alternatively, disposal cat pans can be used. Daily bathing of kittens, paying special attention to their bums, will reduce cysts load and lower their risk of reinfecting themselves.

- Roundworms

Roundworms can be diagnosed by seeing eggs upon microscopic examination of stools. The treatment is an oral medication called strongid or panacur. After giving the medication it is not uncommon to see worms in stools or being thrown up. The Center for Disease Control recommends treating every 2 weeks. The worms can migrate out of other tissues and organs for months and are transferable to children without proper sanitation procedures being followed, like washing hands etc. We automatically administer a 6 week deworming protocol for all cats and kittens coming into our rescue. Its incredibly cheap and its proactive since almost all cats and kittens come to us with roundworms.

- Tapeworms

Tapeworms might be identified by visualizing segments of the worm in the stool. They look like grains of rice. Treatment is with oral medication called Droncit. Tapeworm often follows a flea infestation, from the cat swallowing fleas and is not considered life threatening.

- Ear mites

Ear mites (*otodectes cyanotis*) can't be seen without magnification. A cat with ear mites will scratch its ears (sometimes violently enough to cause bleeding), and shake the head when the ears are touched. The cat will also have dark brown, crumbly wax in their ears. Ear mites must be treated because they can lead to trauma or hearing loss. An ear mite infestation is treated with Ivermectin topically in the ears once, then again in 10-14 days. Home care includes ear canal cleaning with mineral oil or baby oil apply cleaning solution liberally to ear. Gently, but firmly massage the base of ear. Apply cotton BALL to remove excess solution. Repeat as necessary. Ear mites can spread to other cats, dogs, rabbits, and ferrets that are in close contact with the infected cat.

- Ringworm

Ringworm is not a worm but rather a fungus that is very common in kids, cats, gardeners, and wrestlers. Ringworm is not life threatening for a healthy cat, but it can spread from cats to other animals and humans. Ringworm is often identified when a cat is losing patches of fur or has a flaky patch of skin. If ringworm is suspected, treatment should begin immediately, although a fungal culture of the skin will be needed for a definitive diagnosis. The results of that culture take 7-10 days. The fungus is treated either topically or orally, depending on several factors including the severity of the infection, the cat's health status, and the cat's age. The treatment lasts for at least 6 weeks, or 2 weeks past clinical resolution. The cat will need to remain in foster care until treatment is completed. The room should be disinfected completely with a 10% bleach solution, including the carpet because the spores can survive in the fibers of the carpet. Consult a doctor if transmission to a family member is suspected. Consult a veterinarian if transmission to a household pet is suspected.

- Feline Upper Respiratory infection (URI)

A URI is a "kitty cold". It has similar symptoms to human colds and, although highly communicable between cats, will not affect other animals or humans. Several different microorganisms can cause a URI but only three can result in more severe symptoms than may require treatment. They are Rhinotracheitis and Calicivirus. They are transmitted via secretions from the cat's mouth, nose, and eyes. The irritation to these moist membranes causes characteristic sneezing and discharge from the eyes and nose. This discharge is usually light but occasionally the discharge is thick, the cat has a fever, and loses its appetite. The symptoms usually last from 7-10 days but can last for several weeks. Some cats become chronic carriers of URI's and have mild recurrences when under stress. Infected foster cats should be isolated until symptoms are gone. Any time a cat is exposed to different cats or is highly stressed; there is a risk of a URI. To help the cat with its cold symptoms keep the cat's nose and eyes clear of discharge by wiping with a warm damp cloth. You may also try to use Little Noses decongestant drops, available at CVS, to help clear up a runny nose. Humidify the room with a vaporizer or the shower to help thin secretions and clear congestion. Encourage the cat to eat and drink. Spend time consoling the foster cat with extra attention. Antibiotics such as Doxycycline, Amoxicillin and Clavamox are sometimes used to fight secondary bacterial infections when our consulting veterinarian believes it is appropriate.

- Injuries

Carson Cats will give foster parents specific instructions for cats with wounds, fractured or broken bones, or which have had surgery. The challenge is to follow all the veterinarians instructions while keeping the cat clean and well fed. These cats usually need to be confined in a small space (like a crate) to limit mobility. Care must be taken that food; water, litter box, and bedding are easily accessible despite the cat's limitations.

Be alert for additional signs of illness because the cat will be stressed. Infection at a wound site or incision site will be characterized by excessive drainage that may be discolored or smell bad. Be sure stitches do not become loose. Active playing should be discouraged, but petting, brushing, and cuddling are all good activities for a recovering cat.

Giving Medications and Providing Home-Medical Care

- Giving a pill

Place one hand on top of the cat's head so the thumb and forefinger are on either side of the cat's jaw, then tilt the head back until the nose points up. The mouth should open a little. Hold the pill between the thumb and forefinger of the other hand and use the middle finger to gently open the cat's mouth. Drop the pill as far back into the throat as possible and quickly push the pill back in the mouth by putting your finger between the top and bottom canines. Do not put your finger in from the side of the cat's mouth because you are more likely to be bitten that way. If you prefer them, you may use a "pill poppers," which are easier for some people to use for giving pills. Close the cat's mouth, with the head still tilted back, and stroke the throat to encourage the cat to swallow. Release the cat when you are sure that the pill has been swallowed. Praise and comfort the cat when finished.

- Giving liquid medication
Liquid medication is drawn into a syringe for exact dosing. The cat is held in the same manner as giving a pill but instead of pushing the liquid straight back into the cat's mouth, slowly push the liquid into the side of the cat's mouth.
- Hiding medication in food
Ideally, medication is given directly to the cat. If the cat is stressed or aggressive, liquid medication or crushed tablets can be hidden in a small amount of canned food. Only mix the medication into a volume of food the cat will eat immediately.
- Taking a cat's temperature
A normal cat temperature is between 99 – 102.5 degrees. A temperature outside that range may be an indication of illness. If the temperature is below 99 degrees, place the cat on a heating pad. If the fever is over 103 degrees, remove the cat from a heating pad if one is in use. In either case, call for further instructions.

Authorizing Vet Visits

All medical care is provided by Carson Cats and its consulting veterinarians. Emergency care not affiliated with our rescue must be approved by Cyndi Zacko in advance of treatment. Carson Cats will not assume responsibility for any bill incurred without prior approval.

The following information may be useful in helping you decide what warrants a veterinary visit for authorizing visits to partnering veterinarians. 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 can be kept for charitable donation/tax write-off purposes.

SHOULD ANY OF THE FOLLOWING ISSUES COME UP, CONTACT CYNDI ZACKO at 310-721-5802 IMMEDIATELY FOR FURTHER ADVISE:

- Cats: fever (103.5 or above, rectally); respiratory distress (choking, wheezing, open-mouth breathing; shortness of breath; green secretions and/or bad odor from nasal area; not eating or drinking for more than a few days; extreme lethargy for more than a day or two; obvious distress, pain, or pronounced behavior changes.
- Kittens: any of the above cat symptoms in a young kitten, however, help should be sought much sooner, preferably the same day.

For kittens less than 2-3 weeks, open mouth breathing, not nursing or taking the bottle, and crawling away from the litter/mother are bad, often hopeless signs. Vet care will usually not help, may prolong the kitten's suffering. Euthanasia or letting nature take its course are often the best options. We will authorize euthanasia in these cases as it usually kinder to you and the kitten. We do require euthanasia performed in a veterinarian's office. 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 green. It can also be considered when the lingering symptoms seems to be the only thing delaying a kitten otherwise ready for adoption.

- Diarrhea - For adults, observe for a couple days to see if it resolves. Watch for signs of dehydration/lethargy. Contact Cyndi Zacko for instructions and medication.

For kittens, if energy lags, contact Cyndi Zacko and they will refer you to the vet if needed. In the meantime you can keep the kitten hydrated by using Pedia-lite. Kittens should only be given a drop on their tongue.

If the concern is about one or two kittens in a litter, have them seen by the veterinarian. However, it may be necessary to take the entire litter to the appointment. Discuss this with Cyndi Zacko.

- Lethargy -suspect dehydration first and contact Cyndi Zacko for assistance.

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 symptoms are unchanged after completing a course of antibiotics, or worse after 3-5 days on antibiotics, then another visit may be needed. Call Cyndi Zacko because some vets might prescribe something else with just a phone call from Cyndi if the animal was just seen a few days before. 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.

HOW TO GET YOUR FOSTERS ADOPTED

Adoption Fairs/Event

Carson Cats plans weekly adoption events at each Saturday and on Sunday at the Torrance and El Segundo Petsmarts. Coordinate with Cyndi on when you want to take your fosters.

Torrance Petsmart
3855-59 W Sepulveda Blvd
Torrance, CA 90505

El Segundo Petsmart
730 S Sepulveda Blvd
El Segundo, CA 90245

Home Adoptions

Many Fosters prefer to adopt their kittens and cats out of their home. This is a great way for potential adopters to see the environment that their new kitty has been living in and also get to know the foster in a more relaxed environment. Carson Cats makes it easy for Fosters to advertise and network their cats and kittens. All this is required is that you take a nice photo of your foster and email it along with a short description to our advertising volunteers. Your foster will be posted on Petfinder, Craigslist, Face Book, Adopt-a-Pet and even YouTube should you have a nice video to post. Potential adopters will then be able to talk to you directly about the kitten or cat that they are interested in adopting.

How to Post on Petfinder and Adopt-a-Pet

Carson Cats is a program of Stray Cat Alliance. As such, we post our Fosters on the Stray Cat Alliance petfinder and adopt-a-pet sites.

To post your kitties, see login and password information below. We encourage videos. We also encourage you to post cats together if you want them to be rehomed together.

Petfinder Website login: <http://www.petfinder.com/admin>
username: CA809
password: celtic (lower case)

Adopt-a-Pet:
Account number: 1175
User name: cyndizacko
Password: YQGPBN
To login, please go here:
<http://portal.rescuegroups.org/login?accountNumber=1175>

Screening questions for potential adopters

If you are comfortable with screening potential adopters, familiarize yourself with these suggested screening questions and re-screen before deciding if a potential adopter is an appropriate match for your foster feline. Pre-screening does not guarantee that a potential adopter is right for a cat; it's merely the first step in assessing a potential match.

Screening is a great opportunity to educate people who might not be aware of some issues that affect the well being of an animal. Some potential adopters will appreciate the information they learn and you may feel confident that they will become responsible cat owners. Others will persist with an opinion that you do not feel is in your foster cat's best interest. Ask open-ended questions about their plans for adding a new feline to their household. Here are some important questions to consider:

- **Do you have any other cats or pets?**

It's nice to see little kittens go to homes either with a sibling or another cat to keep them company, unless the kitten will not be alone all day. The shelter has an excellent handout on introducing a new cat or kitten to resident cats and dogs.

- **Have you had cats or other pets in the past? What happened to them?**

Hit by a car or "not sure" are answers that send up red flag!!

- **Who is your regular veterinarian (if they have other pets)?**

Having a regular vet is a sign of responsible pet ownership. If they say their pet has never been sick, ask them where they've been getting them vaccinated. Some people don't believe in vaccinating adult cats that are indoor-only, but in general most pets should be current on their vaccinations.

- **How many children do you have? What are their ages?**

Small kittens will probably do best in homes without children under the age of six. However, it most definitely depends on the child and you should insist on any small children, if there are any, under about the age of eight coming with the parent to visit the kitten so that you can see how they interact with the cat.

- **Will the cat be indoors only?**

Statistics show that the lifespan of an indoor cat is doubled! If adopters plan on letting a cat out, please remind them of all the many dangers of being outside, including cars, wildlife, poisonous substances, and troubled people. Also, NO adopter should plan on letting a small kitten outdoors for quite some time unless it's on a leash *and* harness.

- **Owning a pet is a lifetime commitment!**

Please remind potential adopters that cats can live over 20 years, and that this is a lifetime commitment! What will they do if they move, travel, have children, or when the cat gets sick? .

- **Some additional open-ended questions:**

- Why are you interested in THIS cat/kitten?
- Why are you interested in a cat/kitten at this time?
- Cats have a natural need to scratch. Some people handle this by providing scratching posts, others allow scratching anywhere, some people opt for declawing, and others learn to trim claws. How do you plan to deal with this?
- Will this kitty get any outdoor time? (Again, if you advocate indoor only or supervised outdoor time, asking in this way may get a more honest answer).

These are just a few suggestions. If you are not comfortable interviewing potential adopters, feel free to direct potential adopters to Cyndi at cyndizacko@carsoncats.com

When the adopter is not a good match

The purpose of the screening process is to determine whether the potential adopter and their home environment would be a good match for our cats or kittens. Sometimes, during the adoption counseling and screening process, there will be indications that there will not be a good match between the potential adopter and a cat or kitten.

Reasons for denying an adoption

While not an all-inclusive list, the following are some reasons for denying an adoption:

- The potential adopter has no visible means of providing financial support for a pet (e.g., currently unemployed and no other family members to provide support).
- The potential adopter wants an outside cat.
- The adopted cat or kitten will be left alone for long periods.
- The potential adopter is determined to have the cat or kitten declawed.
- The adopted cat or kitten will be incompatible with another pet in the potential adopter's household.
- There is insufficient space or inappropriate situations in the potential adopter's home that would affect the care and welfare of the pet.
- The cat or kitten does not bond with the potential adopter.
- The adopter is on the Carson Cats Do Not Adopt (DNA) list. *Please check with your Foster Coordinator.*

How to handle when adopter is denied

Denying an adoption is a delicate situation that can be fraught with misunderstanding and poor communication. Many people will perceive a denial as a judgment about themselves and their ability as a Pet Parent. Carson Cats reserves the right to refuse to adopt a foster pet to anyone for any reason. If you find that you do not want to adopt your foster to the potential adopter and you do not want to confront them you may use the following:

"Thank you for your application. I will have to pass this along to the Carson Cats Board of Directors for approval. Once the decision has been made someone will be contacting you."

You can then call Cyndi Zacko and explain the situation. She will help you evaluate what is to be done and will more than likely make the denial call herself. You will want to make sure to let her know why you have reservations and it will then be handled with the potential adopter

Getting ready for your next Foster

Now that you've successfully adopted out your foster cats and kittens, it's time to prepare your home to receive your next fosters. The main issue that needs to be addressed in the home is proper sanitation and hygiene that reduces the risk of transmitting diseases. Washing hands with soap and water before and after touching foster cats will help minimize the risk of transferring infections. Both before foster kittens arrive at the foster home and after they leave, the entire room should be cleaned with dish soap and water. All surfaces should be cleaned with a mild bleach solution. Everything should be sanitized with a 10% bleach solution and ready to be used by another foster cat.

- Avoid all other cleaning products because some can cause diarrhea and vomiting and many are highly toxic to cats. Lysol, Pine Sol, 409, Spic & Span and many other cleaning products are deadly to cats. Even using Simple Green and Vinegar has been known to cause diarrhea.
- The most common disease organisms seen at the rescue are viruses, bacteria, parasites and fungi. It is important to consider all objects with which a foster animal may come into contact and disinfect accordingly. This will help protect your companion animals and any future foster animals.

- All surfaces may not be easily cleaned, but thorough washing and/or vacuuming helps in decreasing the numbers of environmental pathogens.
- Products like Febreze® are generally safe to use in a home with animals, although, some animals can have allergic reactions. Use these products with discretion.
- Wash items used by the foster such as: Towels, bedding, blankets and sheets, fabric toys, leashes and collars.

When to discard rather than launder: This laundry-protocol seems to be sufficient even for some of the more resistant germs; however in some cases you may consider discarding rather than laundering. This is particularly true if you have heavily contaminated items especially when from animals with confirmed, or strongly suspected, infections of Canine Parvovirus, Feline Panleukopenia or Ringworm (dermatophytosis)

The reason is that these are germs which are very easily spread. There might be a risk that even a good laundry protocol will not kill all of them, but even more because the transport and handling of this dirty laundry may easily result in contamination and further spread of the disease.

If you have any questions about cleaning up after a sick foster, please contact Cyndi Zacko at 310-721-5802 or cyndizacko@carsoncats.com.

Cleaning to Remove Pet Odors and Stains

It may happen and your foster cat or kitten has left “scent marks” of urination and/or defecation on your floor or furniture. To successfully retrain the cat or kitten to avoid these areas and remove these smells and stains, follow these basic steps:

Find all soiled areas using your nose and eyes. Or you could use a black light which will show urine stains. Turn out all lights in the room, use the black light to identify soiled areas and lightly outline the areas with chalk.

- To clean soiled carpet and furniture:

1) Soak up as much urine as possible with a combination of newspaper and paper towels. The more fresh urine you can remove before it dries, (especially from carpet), the simpler it will be to remove the odor. Place a thick layer of paper towels on the wet spot and cover with a thick layer of newspaper. Stand on this padding for about 1 minute. Remove the padding; repeat until the area is barely damp.

2) If possible, take the FRESH, urine soaked paper towel to the the cat’s litter box, and let the cat or kitten watch you do it. This will help to remind the cat or kitten that eliminating is not bad.

3) Rinse the affected zone thoroughly with CLEAN, COOL WATER. After rinsing, remove as much of the water as possible by blotting or by using a vacuum designed to pick up liquids.

4) Neutralizing (enzymatic) cleaners will not be effective on the area if you have previously used other cleaners or chemicals. You must first rinse every trace of the old cleaner from the carpet.

5) To remove all traces of an old chemical, consider renting an extractor or wet-vac from a local hardware store. This machine operates much like a vacuum cleaner and is an efficient, economical rinsing method.

6) Now that the area is clean, use a high quality pet odor neutralizer available at pet supply stores (look for “enzymatic” cleaners). Test the affected surface for staining first, then read and follow the instructions carefully.

7) If the area still looks stained after it is completely dry from extracting and neutralizing, try any good carpet stain remover available.

8) If the urine has soaked down into the padding underneath the carpet or into wooden baseboards, cleaning will be more difficult. You may need to remove and replace that portion of your carpet padding.

9) Make the appropriate bathroom area attractive to the cat and teach it where you want it to urinate and defecate. The retraining period may take a week or more. It took time to build the bad habit, and it will take time to replace that habit with a new, more acceptable one.

10) Another option is to use Kennel Odor Eliminator (K.O.E.) - Animal rescue volunteers and kennel workers have reported wonderful success and ease with a product called Kennel Odor Eliminator which is highly concentrated and is mixed with water in a spray bottle. The product can be found online through shopping sites such as Amazon.com

THANK YOU FOR VOLUNTEERING!

WE WOULD AGAIN LIKE TO THANK YOU FOR OPENING YOUR HOME AND HEART TO HOMELESS CATS AND KITTENS. WE HOPE THAT YOU FIND THIS MANUAL HELPFUL. PLEASE ALSO KNOW WE ARE HERE TO SUPPORT YOU IN EVERY WAY IN HELPING TO FIND HOMES FOR ALL OF THE CATS AND KITTENS IN OUR FOSTER CARE.

SINCERELY,



Carson Cats P.O. Box 960 Hermosa Beach, CA. 90254