

Raising newborn kittens may be the most challenging, time-consuming task you've ever attempted, and can be both intensively rewarding and heartbreaking. If you do not have the time or emotional stamina to deal with the potential of losing kittens you've invested your heart in, you might want to leave the job to people who are trained and experienced. The possibility of losing kittens is real. *This is not a result of anything you have done*, some kittens just are not healthy or strong enough.

## SUPPLIES

Fostering kittens will require numerous supplies, many of which you will be responsible for providing. *The cost of supplies may reach \$100.00.* You will need:

- Carrier
- Towels, wash cloths, unscented baby wipes
- KMR, bottles, nipples, syringes, bowls (NOTE: Please save UPC codes from KMR and return to DCAC – we will receive free products to cut down foster parent's costs)
- Pedialite, plain yogurt (with live cultures)
- Heating pad
- Litterboxes and litter (regular, not scoopable)
- Canned and dry kitten food
- Gram scale (optional)
- Toys (bean bags, stuffed animals, etc.)
- Neosporin/Panalog ointments
- Flea comb
- Humidifier (optional)

## FEEDING

You will need KMR milk supplement to start, which will be fed with a bottle or syringe if necessary. *The formula recipe is 5 scoops of water (one complete bottleful) to 2 scoops of KMR*, warmed to room temperature (in hot water, not in the microwave). Use 2 tablespoons of formula mixture per 4 ounces of bodyweight. The formula mixture may need to be adjusted according to the kitten's elimination patterns. Refrigerate unused portions and throw out after 24 hours. Feeding needs are dictated by age. This will mean middle of the night feedings! Follow this schedule for the first 5 weeks:

Weeks of Age	Kitten's Body Weight	Total Formula Per Day	Meals Per Day	Amt. Per Feeding
1	4 - 7 oz.	2 tbsp. or 1.1 oz.	6 ( <u>every 4 hours</u> )	¼ tablespoon +
2	7 - 10 oz.	4 tbsp. or 1.9 oz.	5 ( <u>every 6 hours</u> )	¾ tablespoon +
3	10 - 13 oz.	5 tbsp. or 2.6 oz.	4 ( <u>every 6 hours</u> )	1 ¼ tablespoons +
4	13 - 16 oz.	7 tbsp. or 3.5 oz.	3 ( <u>every 8 hours</u> )	1 ½ tablespoons +
5	16 oz. and up	9 tbsp. or 4.3 oz.	3 ( <u>every 8 hours</u> )	

WEEK ONE: Feed the kitten as much as it will eat, not exceeding ¼ tablespoon per feeding. (Tablespoons are marked on the bottle)

WEEKS 2-4: Continue feeding according to above chart. At week 3, begin introducing a gruel mixture of formula and canned kitten food in a bowl while still bottle feeding. Try smearing some gruel on their nose to encourage cleaning, and to make them realize that it is food in the bowl.

WEEK FIVE: Feed gruel to wean off of bottle. If they'll eat it, try a dry/canned food mixture. Some kittens like plain dry food, so offer both. Make sure they have fresh water at all times as well.

WEEK SIX: Kitten should be completely off of the bottle and eating the canned/dry mixture. Don't forget the water!

Boil bottles and supplies when dirty, and between litters of kittens.

## ELIMINATION

Newborn kittens cannot eliminate their bowels or urinate on their own, you will need to help them. You will need a baby wipe or soft cloth. After feeding...:

- Urinate the kitten by gently rubbing frontal area with a baby wipe or soft cloth. Hold them over a towel on your lap while doing this.
- Burp the kitten by gently rubbing belly or delicately tapping on their back.
- "Poop" the kitten by massaging the abdomen and bottom.
- At 3 weeks of age, introduce a litterbox in the corner of the kitten's cage. *Use regular litter - NOT scoopable.* While eliminating the kitten, hold them over litterbox. Also, place messes made in carrier in the litterbox to encourage kitten to use. Let the kitten walk in litter - this will spark their instinct to dig and cover their messes.
- Make sure the rear end is clean! Use baby wipes or damp cloths. If area becomes red or irritated, place a small amount of neosporin ointment to heal.

Before introducing the full-sized litterbox, try a shoebox lid or other low sided box that is easy to climb in and out of. Remember, the kitten should be pottyng a few times a day.

## CONCERNS

1 - Diarrhea - Stools should be firm and brown. A mustard color is ok, as long as the stool is formed.

*\*See attached chart if kitten experiences diarrhea*

2 - Constipation - If the kitten does not poop for a couple of days, add a bit more water to the formula mixture to increase bowel movements. If constipation continues, contact DCAC staff.

3 - Dehydration - Signs include dry or gummy mouth or skin that does not "bounce back" when gently pulled up. For 2-3 feedings, feed water or Pedialite only to rehydrate. Continue with formula once stools appear normal and the kitten looks better. If condition does not improve or worsens, contact DCAC staff.

4 - Vomiting - If kitten vomits immediately after eating, it has overeaten. If vomiting repeatedly, stop feeding and contact DCAC staff, *especially if vomit is yellow or frothy, or contains worms.*

5 - Upper Respiratory Infection (URI) - Signs include watery eyes, runny nose, and congestion. Clean eyes with a soft wet cloth, keep kitten clean, and use a humidifier if possible. Bathroom steam (from shower) will work as well. Contact DCAC staff.

6 - Not Eating - This includes eating less as well. Check for gas by rubbing belly and burping them, this may encourage them to eat. If diarrhea occurs also or not eating continues for a day or so, contact DCAC staff.

7- Suckling on Each Other - Kittens may try to nurse by suckling on each other. If suckling is occurring on genitalia, separate the kittens long term. For suckling on other areas, try Bangard or Bitter Apple spray to discourage. If a kitten being suckled on has irritated skin on the suckled area, treat with neosporin and call DCAC staff.

8 - Fading Kitten - Signs include refusing to eat, constant crying, and body getting cold and/or weak. Contact DCAC staff. If kitten perishes, contact DCAC as well.

9 - Fleas - If you notice fleas on your kitten, contact DCAC staff. Check kittens daily with a flea comb.

10 - Hair Loss - If you notice any hair loss on body, head, or tail of kitten, contact DCAC staff.

11 - Diseases (that people can catch) - Includes Rigworm, Toxioplasmosis, and Giarrdia. Always wash hands before and after handling kittens. Also, use separate linens for kittens - don't use your bath towels. Toxioplasmosis effects the fetus, so if pregnant, wear gloves and a protective mask. Cleanliness of the kittens area is very important!

12 - Diseases (that your pets can catch) - To protect from other diseases, keep kittens separate from your pets areas, and always wash your hands.

## HELPFUL HINTS

- If caring for a single kitten, be sure to give it warmth. A towel, stuffed animal, or something to snuggle should suffice.
- Hold the kitten on your lap while feeding - many kittens are more comfortable eating with their feet planted on something.
- Encourage proper suckling - occasionally pull the nipple away a bit during feeding, forcing kitten to reach for it and pull it back.
- Some kittens would prefer to chew the nipple than suckle from it. If this happens, try a different nipple or making the hole bigger. If that doesn't work, use a syringe.
- *NEVER* give your kittens cows milk. This will cause severe diarrhea.
- Most of all, your kittens need lots of love. Hold them and stroke them often. Stroking them from their head down their back to the tail imitates the pattern that the mother cat would use to lick them. Also try a "kitty massage", stroking their entire body - under the chin, shoulders, limbs, back, and belly. This is a great way to bond with your kitten. In addition to stroking and petting, grooming is a good way to socialize the kitten. This also helps them get used to having their nails cut, hair combed, and teeth looked at.

## DIARRHEA

- Yellow and loose
  - Mild overfeeding
  - Reduce formula by diluting 1/3 with water
- Greenish
  - Moderate overfeeding, unabsorbed bile
  - Dilute formula by 1/2 with water or Pedialite
  - Contact DCAC staff
- Grayish

- Major overfeeding
  - Depletion of enzymes
  - Use Pedialite solution instead of water
  - Contact DCAC staff
- 
- White Curdled
    - Getting no nutrition at all and is dehydrating
    - Stop formula, give only water or Pedialite (1cc per 2 ounces body weight per hour)
    - Contact DCAC staff

If you have any questions, feel free to contact the DCAC staff. (Another place to find more information is the website – [www.kittenrescue.org](http://www.kittenrescue.org).) We want this to be a rewarding, fun and educational experience for you. We greatly appreciate and thank you for your dedication of time, energy, and love.