

HUMANE SOCIETY OF THE NEW BRAUNFELS AREA



CAT AND KITTEN FOSTER

Zac Turley
Cat Program
Coordinator
Foster@hsnba.org

CARE GUIDE

Dear Foster Family,

You are about to embark on a memorable live-saving adventure!

With YOUR help, HSNBA's foster care program provides temporary homes for cats and kittens that are sick, injured, orphaned, or nursing. You have made possible a program that saves of hundreds of lives each year. Your involvement gives kittens a chance that a shelter cannot - THANK YOU!

Fostering at-risk kittens is more than a time commitment - it's a commitment to saving a life.

But before you get started - there are several things you should know. Thank you for taking the time to review the requirements, expectations, and tips associated with fostering cats and kittens for HSNBA. Should you have questions or concerns regarding any of the information in the this guide, please let know and we'll be happy to find the foster situation that best for you!

The staff and animals at HSNBA can never thank you enough for your commitment to the shelters neediest animals.

Sincerely,

Zac Turley

Cat Program Coordinator

The first step in successfully fostering kittens is [communication!](#)

HSNBA uses the Maddie's Pet Assistant app to communicate with foster families 24/7. The app helps HSNBA staffers quickly answer your questions, triage medical concerns, schedule vaccinations, and track kitten weight.

You'll receive a welcome email from [Maddie's Pet Assistant](#) shortly after picking up your foster kitten(s). Follow the directions in the email to download the app and register your profile.

Participation in Maddie's Pet Assistant is required to foster kittens for HSNBA.



Thank you for fostering!

Whether you're a first-time foster or more experienced, you're bound to have questions along the way. To help support you, we created an app for that!

Introducing Maddie's® Pet Assistant!

From questions to challenges to adorable photos and videos, we want to hear from you!

It's easy – simply search for and download Maddie's® Pet Assistant, a FREE app from either Google Play or iTunes Stores. You will receive an email from your foster organization with login information.

To learn more, visit MaddiesFund.org/MPA



MADDIE'S®
Pet Assistant



Stay in Touch

We're so thankful you chose to foster kittens with HSNBA, and we're here to help you be successful. If there's anything we can do to help, please let us know.

Maddie's Pet Assistant

Maddie's Pet Assistant is our primary communication with foster families. The app helps HSNBA's staffers quickly answer your questions, triage medical concerns, schedule vaccinations, and track kitten weight.

Cat Program Coordinator

Please feel free to reach out to us at any time! We are here to help you. Email is best for non-emergencies.

HSNBA Office Hours

Monday-Saturday

9 AM - 5 PM

Sunday - Closed

Zac Turley

Office: [\(830\) 629-5287](tel:8306295287)

Emergencies: (681) 495 - 2502

foster@hsnba.org



Veterinary Information

VET CARE



- HSNBA does not have a vet on staff. However, we do our best to screen kittens for any health issues before sending them to foster. We also have a lot of resources at our disposal to help with common health complications, such as respiratory issues, diarrhea, vomiting, and more. We partner with multiple vet offices in town, therefore, we WILL NOT reimburse for any unapproved veterinary expenses.
- HSNBA is a nonprofit organization and does not have the ability to pay for any veterinary expense not approved by and schedule through HSNBA at an approved veterinary clinic. If you want to seek veterinary care outside of the HSNBA network, it MUST be approved by the foster coordinator and the foster caregiver MUST take responsibility for any charges.
- It is the responsibility of the foster caregiver to timely report any health concerns to the foster coordinator or HSNBA staff.
 - *How do I alert the foster coordinator?* You can alert the foster coordinator by emailing foster@hsnba.org or calling the shelter directly at (830) 629 - 5287.

SETTING UP A VET VISIT

After addressing your health concerns with the foster coordinator/HSNBA staff and receiving approval for a vet visit, you will be asked to call to setup an appointment at a time convenient for you. We will give you the options for which vet clinic to use (Creek View, Fischer, or Animal Medical Center) and any other pertinent information at that time. We can also call to set-up the appointment for you, however, it tends to work better when the foster sets it up so you can arrange it around your own schedule.

Please remember, if you ever feel lost or unsure, just reach out to us!

Vaccine Information



Vaccines

We all like healthy kittens, right? Well, the first step to having a healthy kitten is staying up to date on their vaccines and dewormer! Bringing your kittens in for vaccines is an ESSENTIAL aspect of fostering kittens with HSNBA. We like for all kittens, starting at 4-weeks old, to have vaccine boosters every two weeks until they are 18 weeks old or until they have received 5 vaccines. Whichever comes first!

When Do I Bring My Kittens In for Vaccines?

We like to make it as easy as possible for our fosters to get to HSNBA for vaccine updates! If your foster kittens are due for a vaccine then you can bring them to us **ANYTIME** we are open to receive the vaccine updates! However, for those who like the schedule, we have options for that as well!

I Want to Schedule a Time for Vaccine Updates, How Do I Do That?

We like to make things as easy as possible for our fosters so you are always welcome to come in at **ANYTIME** during open hours for vaccines. However, if you do want to schedule, you can reach out to our foster team at Foster@hsnba.org to schedule a time for vaccines!

Please remember, if you ever feel lost or unsure what to do, just reach out to us!

Time		
Are you able to devote the required time daily and weekly to your foster animal? (See Chart Below)	Yes	No
Are you able to bring your foster animal to the shelter for vet visits approx. every 2-3 weeks?	Yes	No
Are you able to contact HSNBA or bring your animal to HSNBA or the vet in the event of an emergency?	Yes	No
Space		
Are you able to separate your foster animals from your household pets for at least two weeks to protect them from illnesses and allow a proper adjustment period?	Yes	No
Are you able to handle cleaning procedures such as disinfecting your foster animal's area routinely?	Yes	No
Are you able to handle any potential home damage (carpet, clothing and/or furniture) associated with the animal?	Yes	No
Are you able to handle sickness or possible death of a foster animal?	Yes	No
Are you able to emotionally handle letting go of a foster animal after becoming attached once the foster period is over?	Yes	No
Are you able to handle the potential of foster animals carrying illness that could affect your household animals?	Yes	No

Time Commitments & Responsibilities

Type of Foster	Duration of Foster	Daily Commitment
Sick/Injured Cats	1 week - 2 months	1 - 2 hours
Weaned Kittens	1 - 4 weeks	1 - 2 hours
Kittens with Mom	2 - 8 weeks	1 hour
Bottle Babies	6 - 8 weeks	Up to 4 hours

The Kitten Room

Before you bring your little bundle of kitten joy home, make sure you have a suitable safe place for them to stay.

A bathroom works well and is our suggested first choice for the kittens. Whatever room you choose it should adhere to the following guidelines:

- A Temperature Controlled Space
- Separate from other household pets
- Can withstand kitten mess (litter box accidents, vomit, water, food etc.)
- Covered electrical outlets and wires
- No small items a kitten could ingest
- Light, either natural or artificial
- Secured windows
- Bleachable spaces are ideal



Kitten Tricks

Use glass or metal bowls as plastic bowls harbor bacteria.

House weaning kittens in the bathtub, you can remove kittens and bedding to easily clean up after meal time.

The Set Up

- Have food and water bowls available.
- Litter boxes should be as far away from food and water as possible
- Old towels make great bedding for kittens
- A “safe box” like a cardboard box turned on its side or small crate with the door removed with bedding in it.
- Provide safe, disposable or easily sanitized toys to entertain the kittens when you are not with them. Plastic jingly balls, ping pong balls, wine corks, plastic shower curtain rings, or balls of paper/foil can work well.

Supply List Nursing Queen & Kittens

- Kitten food
- Canned kitten food
- Non-clumping or pine litter
- Litter box
- KMR for supplemental feeding if needed
- Kitchen scale + bowl

Supply List Bottle Babies

- Bottles and nipples
- Heating pad
- KMR
- Kitten dry food & canned food
- Kitchen scale + bowl
- Nutri-Cal

Supply List Slurry Babies

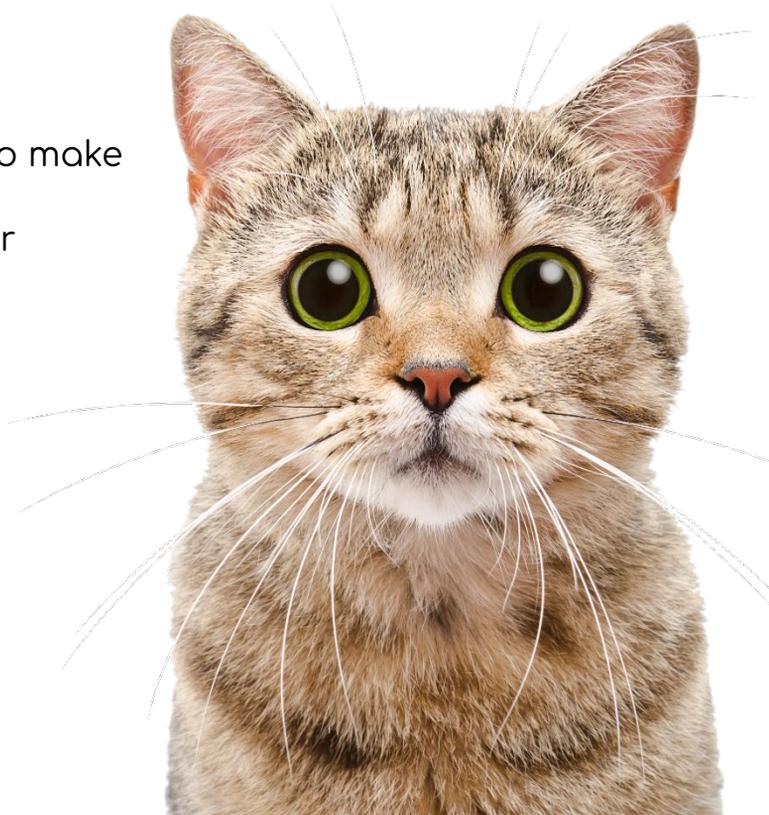
- Heating pad
- Dry kitten food
- Canned kitten food (pate)
- KMR to mix with wet food to make slurry
- Non-clumping or pine litter
- Shallow litter box
- Kitchen scale + bowl
- Nutri-Cal
- Pedialyte

Supply List Older Kittens

- Dry kitten food
- Canned kitten food
- Litter
- Litter box
- Toys

We have supplies!

Kitten food, canned food, litter and more can be provided by HSNBA. Feel free to stop by anytime and get any supplies you may need.



Kitten Tricks

Using a flea comb is a great way to remove dried feces, food, and fleas from kitten's fur

A rice sock heated for one minute in the microwave provides one hour of warmth

Do not give a kitten dairy products like cow's milk or cream. Use ONLY KMR formula.

Weigh kittens daily and track weight. If kittens are losing weight please reach out to the foster team immediately!



Isolation

Foster animals should always be kept away from the household animals for at least 2 weeks. This is to prevent the spread of disease, many animals appear healthy and while the shelter does its best to assess an animals health and communicate any illness concerns, sometimes underlying illnesses do pop up within a 14 day window. It also gives foster animals an opportunity to become comfortable in the home in a space that is small and secure.

Heat

Young kittens are unable to regulate their own body temperature. It's important to provide either an adjustable heating pad (low) or rice sock to help maintain the kitten's body temperature. Kittens should be able to easily move away from the heat source if they become too hot.

Feeding

Follow the feeding schedule provided in this manual and on your animal info sheet. Its also important to keep track of daily feedings and kitten weight gain.

Elimination

Young kittens, under 3 weeks of age, will need help urinating and defecating. To do so, gently rub a warm cloth or cotton pad on the anus and genital areas before and immediately after feeding. This will stimulate the kittens to urinate or defecate into the cloth or pad.

Cleaning

Kittens are usually groomed by their mother. In the absence of a mother, you must groom and keep the kittens clean. Use a warm damp cloth to stroke the kittens fur, this simulates how a mother would groom her cats. A small amount of Dawn soap can be used if needed. Rinse the kitten well. Dry kittens well so they don't get chilled.

Socialization

One of the best, and most important roles a foster parent plays in their foster kitten's life is socialization! Kittens should be handled regularly, several times a day. All handling should be a positive experience for them. You should spend time touching your kitten all over, especially their paws. Hands should never be used as toys! Play with your kittens using toys and not your hands, this prevents kittens from thinking they can scratch or bite fingers.

Litter Box Training

Around 3-4 weeks of age kittens are likely to start being interested in and able to use the litter box. This instinct is natural and most of the time kittens need little help with litter box training. Use a low lipped box, the foster department has some available for use, a deep serving tray works well too. Keeping the litter box clean is essential to develop good litter box habits. Just gently place the kittens in the litter immediately after a meal, they'll eventually get the idea. Be patient and consistent.

Vaccines and Checkups

Once your kittens receive their first vaccination, they will need to return every two week in order to have vaccines, dewormer, weights, and pictures updated.

Vaccines are incredibly important for kittens development and health. It is the foster caregivers responsibility to make an appointment with the foster team for rechecks and vaccines.

You can make appointment via the foster@hsnba.org email.



Kitten Tricks

Never force a kitten to dig in litter. This behavior sometimes takes some time to develop.

WEEKS	FEEDING	DEVELOPMENT
0-1	Bottle feed every 2-3 hours until kitten is full but not bloated. Overnight feedings can be every 3 hours, generally kittens should eat a ½ tablespoon or 6-8 ml every feeding	Kittens will sleep about 90% of the time and eat the rest of the time. Handle them minimally. Newborns are deaf and blind and are unable to maintain their body temperature.
1-2	Bottle feed every 2-3 hours until kitten is full but not bloated. Overnight feedings can be every 3-4 hours, generally kittens should eat a ½ tablespoon or 6-8 ml every feeding	Ear canals will open at 6-8 days, eyes open at 8-14 days. Healthy kittens will be round and warm and rarely cry. Kittens are still unable to maintain their body temperature.
2-3	Bottle feed every 3-4 hours until kitten is full but not bloated. Overnight feeding can be every 4 hours. Generally kittens should eat about 1 tablespoon or 15 ml each feeding.	Kittens will begin to crawl and stand. This is a great time to increase interactions with kittens and handle them more frequently. Kittens still unable to maintain their body temp.
3-4	Bottle feed every 3-4 hours. Overnight feedings can be every 5 hours. Kitten may start lapping from a bowl when closer to 4 weeks and will probably eat 15 – 25 ml per feeding.	Kittens begin to see well. They may start experimenting with cleaning themselves and using the litter box. They are still unable to maintain their body temperature.
4-5	Gradually start weaning kittens by offering formula in a dish. Kittens will not need fed at night and should be eating about 3 tablespoons at each feeding.	Litter box training can begin! Kittens become more active and will probably play with each other.
5-6	It's slurry time! Mix formula with wet food and offer 4 times today. Okay to introduce dry food and water.	It's all about socialization at this stage. Handle your kittens frequently touching their paws and tails. Enjoy play time with them!
6-7	Feed canned food 3 times daily. Free feed dry food and water.	Kittens start exhibiting cat behavior, grooming, playing etc. This is a good time to reinforce litterbox training.
7-8	Feed canned food 3 times daily. Free feed dry food and water.	Enjoy your last week or so with your babies, you've done a great job!
8+	Feed canned food 3 times daily. Free feed dry food and water.	Kittens should weigh 2 lbs. and be ready for spay/neuter surgery and adoption!

Type of Food

Bottle babies should never be fed anything but Kitten Milk Replacer or goats milk, unless preapproved by the Cat Program Coordinator or a veterinarian.

Powdered formula should be mixed at a ratio of 1 part formula to 2 parts water. It's important to follow mixing instructions on the packaging. Any mixed formula can be stored in a refrigerator for up to 24 hours. Any unused formula should be discarded after 24 hours.

Feeding Tips

- Only use clean nipples and bottles
- Feed kittens one at a time. Place them on a countertop and allow them to stand on all four paws while eating. This simulates how they would nurse from a mother cat.
- Never feed a kitten while on its back. This can cause kittens to aspirate the formula into their lungs.
- Stroking kittens can help them eat
- Pull lightly on the bottle, this promotes strong sucking.
- Never squeeze the bottle to force formula into the kitten's mouth.
- After feeding burp your kitten by gently rubbing its back.
- After feeding stimulate your kitten to urinate and/or defecate.
- Fill out the daily weight and feeding record
- Don't try to feed kittens when you're in a rush. Relax and enjoy the special time to bond with them.

Kitten Tricks

Do not warm bottles in a microwave. Fill a mug with hot water and place the bottle in the water. Formula should be warm on the back of your hand but not hot.

Open cans of dry formula **MUST** be kept in a refrigerator!

Whenever possible, nursing queens are fostered together with their litters. A queen and her babies can provide a fun and worthwhile foster experience!



The Perfect Space

Nursing queens should have a separate room away from other activities in the house. Spare bathrooms and guest bedrooms are ideal for her.

Mom will need a few days to adjust to her new space, try not to disturb her too much. Your space should provide her a nesting box for her to feel secure during nursing and relaxation. A carrier with the door removed, or cardboard box turned on its side with a towel draped over it works well for this.

Mom & Her Kittens

For the first few weeks, mom will do everything necessary to take care of her kittens. Kittens start nursing very soon after birth. In addition to feeding, mom will also stimulate kittens to defecate, groom kittens and provide lots of attention and warmth.

Feeding & Litter Box

Producing milk for a litter of kittens requires a lot of energy! Queens should be offered free choice of Purina Kitten Chow at all times.

Mom should have a large litter box with high walls to use. The litter box should have walls high enough for kittens to be unable to climb into it. While nursing, mom may have very loose stool, unless she becomes dehydrated or is coupled with lethargy, this is normal.

Kitten Tricks

Be sure to keep mom & kittens separated from other pets in the home. Mother cats need a quiet area to raise their kittens.

Weaning Kittens

Weaning is the process of transitioning kittens from the mother's milk to solid foods. Kittens will start showing interest in hard food around four weeks and may start pushing mom away to get to the bowl. The process can take up to three weeks.

Possible Problems

Maternal Neglect – In very rare cases, kittens die from poor maternal care. Some cats lack maternal instinct and in other cases it's nature's way of handling sick or weak kittens. Environmental stress can also contribute to a mother not caring for her litter. It is vitally important to monitor both the health of the mother and each kitten in her litter. Some kittens may need extra support (bottle feedings) depending on how attentive mom is to the entire litter.

Maternal Aggression – As mom protects her kittens, it is common for her to be aggressive towards humans or other animals. Do not introduce her to your household pets as it adds too much stress to the environment. If you're concerned about maternal aggression, consult Maddie's Pet Assistant.



Kitten Tricks

At about five weeks of age kittens will begin reducing the amount of mother's milk they intake.

- Mom spending ALL of her time away from the kittens
- She does not groom or nurse them frequently or at all
- Kittens that are crying frequently. Healthy kittens almost never cry.
- She is unresponsive when the kittens cry

Feral & Under Socialized Kittens

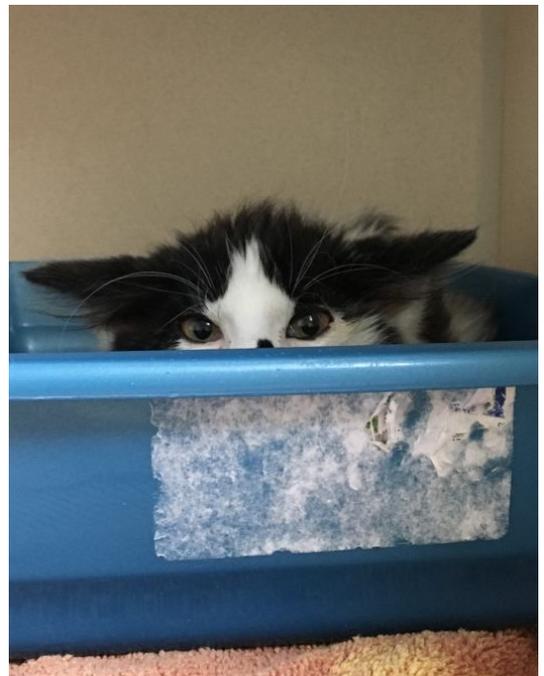
Under socialized, neglected and frightened kittens can be the most challenging shelter animal to foster, however their transformation can be one of the most rewarding foster experiences.

Whenever possible HSNBA tries to place undersocialized kittens in foster to give them an opportunity to be happy house cats. In the event that we're unable to socialize a kitten they are generally placed in the barn cat program.

Do's and Don'ts

Do

- Make sure all human interactions are positive.
- Offer good "high value" food from your fingers or spoon resting on your fingers
- Play therapy! Sometimes releasing a kitten's instinct to play and hunt can be a great bonding moment.
- Go slowly and be patient
- Keep them in a small space, under socialized kittens have a tendency to like to hide, it can be very hard to find them if they have the run of the house.
- Use a towel to wrap them "burrito style" if they're hard to handle



Don't

- Put yourself in danger of being bit. Use a towel or gloves if your kitten appears to be willing to bite you.
- Don't worry if your kitten doesn't seem to be making progress. Just be patient and give it more time, some kittens are hard nuts to crack.
- Don't get angry or strike the kitten. It's very important to keep every interaction as positive as possible.
- Don't be in a rush when handling the kitten. They need slow calm movements that assure them they won't be harmed.

Upper Respiratory Infection (URI)

URI's are one of the most common kitten illnesses. They are caused by contagious viruses and bacteria.

Common signs to look for:

- Sneezing and discharge from eyes/nose
- Congested breathing
- Loss of appetite
- Lethargy
- Dehydration

If you notice any of these signs please notify HSNBA by email at foster@hsnba.org



Fading Kitten Syndrome

Occasionally a kitten that appeared healthy will suddenly stop thriving. They will stop growing, socializing and acting normally. They will begin to lose weight and may start crying often. When this happens, they fade quickly and even with medical intervention generally don't survive.

There is no understood cause for this condition and it is not something the foster parent has or hasn't done that causes it. Remember a kitten that fades is not your fault.

In the unfortunate event that a foster pet passes away

First, remember it is not your fault. If an animal does pass away in your care please contact HSNBA at [\(830\) 629-5287](tel:8306295287) or email Zac at foster@hsnba.org

Diarrhea

There are three types of cat stool, normal, soft and diarrhea. Normal stool is firm and has a defined shape. Soft stool is not firm but still has some shape. Diarrhea is liquid. Diarrhea is common in kittens and can be caused by parasites, viruses, bacteria, food changes, stress, or overfeeding.

Diarrhea must be monitored as it can quickly lead to dehydration. If the kitten is active, mild diarrhea that occurs for less than 24 hours is generally not a concern. Consult the Maddie's Pet Assistant app for more on diarrhea.



Kittens With Ringworm

Parasites

Cats and kittens can sometimes get tapeworms either in their feces or on their anus. These look like grains of rice. Roundworms look like spaghetti and can be seen in the litter box or in vomit. Parasites are commonly found in the stool of kittens. If you notice parasites, document your observation in Maddie's Pet Assistant, and we'll contact you with a solution.

Eye Discharge

It is normal for kittens to have little pieces of crust in their eyes after waking up. If you see continuous yellow or green discharge, or the eyes are swollen or closed, document your observation in Maddie's Pet Assistant, and we'll contact you with a solution.

You can use a warm damp cloth to gently wipe the affected eye.

Ringworm

Ringworm is a contagious fungus that can spread to other animals and humans. A sign of ringworm is thinning hair or patches of hair loss. Ringworm is difficult to remove from your house and is easily spread..

Kitten Tricks

Pumpkin is great to help make a kitten more regular. It will help to soften hard stool & firm up loose stool. It can be mixed with wet food.

Kitten Tricks

Cat and Kittens coming into the shelter should always be in a carrier.

Kittens who are young and cute get adopted MUCH faster than older kittens/cats.

It's hard to say goodbye, but leaving your kittens at the shelter after surgery is the FASTEST way to help find their forever homes.



Spay/Neuter Surgery

All animals adopted from HSNBA must be spayed or neutered before they are eligible for adoption.

When Will My Kittens Be Ready for Adoption?

Kittens must be at least 2.5 pounds before they are eligible for spay/neuter surgery. *It is very important to get kittens spayed/neutered quickly after reaching the 2.5 pound mark - the younger and cuter they are the faster they will be adopted!*

How Do I Schedule Surgery for My Foster Kittens?

Most of the time, we will give you the options for upcoming spay/neuter during vaccine/wellness visits! However, if you noticed your kitten is approaching surgery weight then you can always reach out to us to get them added to the schedule.

What Happens After Surgery?

It's adoption time! It is VERY IMPORTANT kittens go up for adoption directly after surgery. We always suggest for fosters without adopters lined up to keep their kittens here at the shelter after surgery, however, we do have options for finding homes from within the foster home, too. *We will sometimes ask fosters to take kittens home after surgery if we are full and can't house them. In these cases, we will reach out when a cage opens up.*

Kitten Tricks

Use the sanitize cycle on your dishwasher & washing machine to easily clean food bowls, toys and bedding.

Cardboard scratching posts are inexpensive and can be recycled between litters.

Routine Cleaning While Kittens are in Foster

You should plan on fully cleaning foster areas including, litter boxes, bowls, and bedding at least once per week.

Hard Surfaces

All surfaces (floors, walls, litter boxes and food/water bowls) should be cleaned with a solution of gentle soap and warm water at least once a week. They should be thoroughly rinsed and dried prior to kittens having access to the area.

Bedding & Soft Materials

Bedding for foster animals should be removed and replaced at least twice weekly. More often if soiled with vomit, urine or feces. Bedding should be washed in a washer with hot water with detergent but no fabric softener.

Cleaning Between litters or During Disease Outbreaks

Your foster area as well as everything your foster animals used during their stay should be fully cleaned and disinfected after your foster animals have been returned. Anything that can not be cleaned or disinfected should not be used for other litters. We suggest using bleach mixed 1 part bleach to 10 parts water to remove any lingering disease or contaminants between litters. Be sure to remove any organic matter (fur, hair, litter, dirt, etc.) before using bleach. *Dawn dish soap is best for removing organic matter prior to using bleach to disinfect.*

For disease outbreaks keep the foster animals in a crate in another isolated area of the household while you clean the room and other supplies. Be sure to thoroughly rinse all surfaces after the bleach application, and wash with gentle soap and water as well to be sure all traces have been removed.





What happens next?

Congratulations you've made it to the kitten finish line! Your kitten has grown so much in the last few weeks and is now over 2.5lbs, social, happy and scheduled for surgery. You've done a great job in getting your kitten to this point and we know saying goodbye is hard. Take a minute and give yourself a pat on the back. Once your kitten returns to the shelter they will most likely be made available for adoption immediately.

Can Foster Parents Adopt?

You bet! Foster parents have the first choice for adoption!

What if a friend/family member wants to adopt?

Great! With all the love you've put into fostering, we know you'll find the best home possible! In the event you find a good adopter for your kitten, please let our foster team know ASAP by calling or emailing us at foster@hsnba.org

On to the next litter!

You already miss having kittens in your home, don't you? You can prepare for your next litter by cleaning and disinfecting your foster room. The time between foster animals is a good time to make sure all your bedding, toys, food bowls etc. are in good condition and disinfected.

Feel free to contact the foster team and see if there is any animals they have an immediate need for, and let them know you're available for the next litter!

Kitten Tricks

Fast track adoptions for your foster animal by promoting your foster pets on social media!

Great pictures fast track adoptions!

- Know your pet
- Get on their level
- Use the right lighting and setting
- Be patient
- Have fun!

Thank you for fostering!