



Congratulations on your new APA! pregnant or nursing mama!

Thank you so much for fostering with Austin Pets Alive! Foster families are crucial to our life-saving efforts. We truly appreciate you!

Your mama's name is: _____ A#: _____ Age: _____

For pregnant cats:

Approximate due date: _____. *(Please note that this date is simply an educated guess!)*

When your mama is done giving birth, please [email the Neonatal Foster Manager](#) and your [Foster Mentor](#). We will assign you a litter letter (ex: B7) and you can then give your kittens names that start with your assigned letter!

For nursing moms:

Kittens' info:

Name / A#: _____ Name / A#: _____

Name / A#: _____ Name / A#: _____

Name / A#: _____ Name / A#: _____

Pay special attention to this/these kittens, as they are most at risk:

Name(s): _____

Why? What to look out for: _____

! Please email your kittens weights to email@email.com
FRIDAY!!

every

Austin Pets Alive! — Neonatal Foster Program — Pregnant/Nursing Mom Fostering Overview

This packet is organized into two parts – the first part details our policies and provides info on how the APA! fostering process works; the second part provides instructions for the actual birth of the kittens (if you're taking home a pregnant cat), and provides details on how to care for mama and kittens throughout their stay with you!

Part One:

The #1 thing to remember when fostering kittens is: WEIGH, WEIGH, WEIGH!! The overwhelming majority of kittens who pass away in foster care do so because they were not weighed as frequently as they should have been!

WHO DO I CONTACT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?: Each foster family is assigned to a **Foster Mentor**. Your Foster Mentor is your springboard, your midwife/nurse, and your kitten therapist, all combined! Look out for their first email to you, as it will include info on scheduling appointments, links to all the important forms you'll need, and info on the entire fostering process. You'll receive this email within 24-48 hours after your training. *Look out for this email address:* email@email.com

NON-URGENT MEDICAL: If your kittens start to show **any** signs of mild-moderate illness – *sneezing, vomiting, mild-moderate diarrhea, not eating, runny nose, goopy eyes, hair loss, going outside litterbox, moderate weight loss (10 grams or less), fleas, etc* – **contact the medical team via email at:**
email@email.com **and CC** email@email.com

Be sure to include: the kittens' A#s, current weights, and a description of their symptoms. Use a descriptive subject! (ex: "Beatrix A12345678 has diarrhea", or "C15 kittens have fleas")

!!! FOR MEDICAL EMERGENCIES CALL ANYTIME DAY OR NIGHT **!!!**
555-555-5555 (9am–7pm Mon–Fri; 11am–7pm Sat–Sun) or **555-555-5555** (after hours)

For kittens, a medical emergency includes head slumped/ body limp/ unable to rouse (**Fading Kitten Syndrome**), **diarrhea** that is very liquidy, white, bloody, or black, any **rapid weight loss**, **mouth breathing**, **heavy/labored breathing**, red/brown **urine**, **vomiting and diarrhea** together or within a short timeframe, **seizures**. Any injuries sustained while in foster care also warrant a call to the medical hotline!

WELLNESS / VACCINES:

- Kittens need de-wormer given at **2-weeks** and **4-weeks** old. When your kittens reach this/these ages, please just stop by the clinic at TLAC to pick up your kittens' dose of dewormer. Make sure you know your kittens' APA! names and A#s. You will administer these oral meds at home.
 - At **6-weeks** old, your kittens will need to *come into the clinic* for their first kitten shots – this is the "wellness appointment". Book wellness appointments with our clinic using the [Wellness Appointment Request Form](#).
 - Book appointment well in advance, especially during peak kitten season (summer)!
-

MARKETING / GETTING YOUR KITTENS ADOPTED!: At 6 weeks, kittens' profiles go up on the APA! website and they'll be eligible for pre-adoption. **It is your responsibility, as their foster, to market your kittens through APA!**

- **Submit photos and bios** for your kittens using the [Kitten Information Form](#).
- You will receive emails about upcoming **adoption events** at Petco, Petsmart, etc. Kittens must be at least 6 weeks old, healthy, and vaccinated at least once to attend these events.

ADOPTION!: During “kitten season” (March-September), it can take up to a few weeks (after your fosters have been altered) for kittens to find their forever homes. This is why we require that, when they reach 8 weeks old and have had two rounds of vaccinations, you sign your kittens up on our [Adoption Center Request Form](#). Doing so ensures that your kittens will have a spot in one of our catteries in the case that they are not adopted while in your care!

Until they're cleared to enter the adoption center, the following are your responsibilities as their foster:

- Our adoption team will forward you all adoption inquiries that they've received through our website about your kittens. Please answer these emails promptly, in the order in which they're received.
- You will be responsible for setting up meet and greets with potential adopters! You can do these at your home, or at our Tarrytown cattery.
- Be on the lookout for emails about adoption events. These are generally held on weekends at pet stores such as Petco or Petsmart. Many fosters who stay to promote their kittens, as opposed to just dropping them off, have great success at these events!

Please ask your Foster Mentor if you have any questions about the adoption process!

SPAY/NEUTER: Kittens cannot come in for their **spay/neuter surgery** until they weigh **2lbs (906g)** and **are at least 8 weeks old**. Kittens who have their mama *generally* reach 2 pounds around 8 weeks old!

- Use the [Spay/Neuter Appointment Request Form](#) (included in your initial Foster Mentor email) and book appointment well in advance, especially during peak kitten season.
- If your kitten is sick or injured, please check with the Med Techs before making an appointment.

GRADUATION: When your kittens turn 8-weeks old, regardless of whether they are ready for **their** spay/neuter surgery, they will graduate into the Cat Program. This means:

- You will receive a welcome email from the Cat Foster Team (email@email.com)
This person will now be your first point of contact for any and all foster-related questions.

GETTING MAMA CAT ADOPTED:

Mom will stay in the Neonatal Program until she's spayed. The sooner her kittens are no longer nursing, the sooner she can be spayed; **she must not be allowed to let her kittens nurse for 2 weeks before her spay**. Her milk must dry up before surgery because the mammary glands are located so close to the incision site. You have a couple of options for dealing with this:

- **You can separate mama from her kittens** when you see that the kittens are eating enough gruel/kibble to maintain (and gain!) their weights (generally around 7-8 weeks). This ensures that mama is able to come in for her spay appointment around the same time that her kittens are being spayed/neutered. If you are in a hurry to get mama into the adoption center so you can foster more kittens, this is the best choice.
- **Let kittens nurse from mom until they're adopted, or mama kicks them off.** A lot of fosters find it very difficult/heartbreaking to separate mama from her kittens. If you're one of these fosters, do not despair! Allowing mom to nurse her kittens well after they require it is not going to cause any harm. Just keep in mind that the longer you allow mama to nurse, the longer you'll have to wait until she's able to be spayed. If you're in no rush to get rid of mama cat, this is the best option.

Basics for getting mama ready for adoption:

- [Schedule a spay appointment](#) for at least **2 weeks after separation** from kittens.
- [Sign her up for the adoption center](#). She'll need a few days in foster to recover from her spay.
- Don't forget to [submit photos and bio](#) for her so that she can find her forever home as well!

Program Contacts:

- **Staff Name** Neonatal Foster Manager: bbfostermanager@austinpetsalive.org
- **Staff Name** Assistant Neonatal Foster Manager: bbfostermanager@austinpetsalive.org
- Neonatal Foster Mentor Team: bbfostermentor@austinpetsalive.org
- **Staff Name** Cat Foster Manager: cat-foster-manager@austinpetsalive.org
- Cat Foster Mentor Team: cat-foster-coordinator@austinpetsalive.org

Cheat Sheet Table:

2 weeks old	4 weeks old
<input type="checkbox"/> Due for 1st de-wormer	<input type="checkbox"/> Due for 2nd de-wormer <input type="checkbox"/> Kittens <i>should</i> be ready to wean onto gruel
6 weeks old	8 weeks old
<input type="checkbox"/> Due for wellness check with 1st FVRCP vaccine and 3rd de-wormer <input type="checkbox"/> Photos and bios due <input type="checkbox"/> Available for pre-adoption on our website <input type="checkbox"/> Kittens should be eating independently <input type="checkbox"/> Request a spot for your kittens in the adoption center	<input type="checkbox"/> GRADUATION! Kitten moves from Neonatal Program to Cat Program <input type="checkbox"/> Due for wellness check with 2nd FVRCP <input type="checkbox"/> Eligible for S/N surgery when 2lbs & healthy <input type="checkbox"/> Eligible for entrance to adoption center: <i>ONLY IF 2+ VACCINES HAVE BEEN ADMINISTERED</i>
10 weeks old	12 weeks old
<input type="checkbox"/> Due for wellness check with 3rd FVRCP booster	<input type="checkbox"/> Due for wellness check with 4th (final) FVRCP booster and rabies vaccine

Austin Pets Alive! — Neonatal Foster Program — Supplies Needed

Pregnant/Nursing Mom: Required Supplies

- ☐ High quality canned kitten food for mom and to wean babies
- ☐ Hard kitten food for mom and to wean babies — Royal Canin Mother & Babycat (recommended)
- ☐ Bottle kit with nipples in case kittens need supplementary feeding
- ☐ Powdered KMR formula in case kittens need supplementary feeding
- ☐ Electric heating pad that **does not** shut off automatically
- ☐ Empty room/bathroom to isolate mom and kittens
- ☐ Digital scale (food or postal) that weighs in grams
- ☐ Litter box & non-clumping litter
- ☐ Secure pet carrier for transportation (cardboard carrier can be purchased from APA for \$5)

We will provide: oral syringes, a “[rice sock](#)” for transportation, informational handouts, and all necessary medications and treatments.

I have read & understand the list of supplies needed to foster neonatal kittens. I have all required supplies at home and/or will purchase the foster supply kit from the nursery. I understand that if I do not have these items, I will not be able to take kittens home.





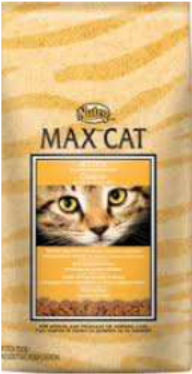


Foster signature

Date

Trainer signature

Date

Austin Pets Alive! — Neonatal Foster Program — Food Recommendations

Kittens age 0-4 weeks		<p>BB Formula: PetAg KMR® powder formula mixed 2:1 (2 parts water to 1 part powder). Serve warm.</p> <p>Each kitten should take in 5cc (or 5 grams) for every 100 grams of body weight at every feeding.</p> <p>This will only be necessary for underweight or rejected kittens.</p>
Kittens age 3-8 weeks (once canine teeth have begun to come in)	 	<p>Start putting out wet food mixed w/ water to an <i>applesauce consistency</i> when kittens are around 4-weeks old.</p> <p>This is the start of the weaning process – they should learn to eat on their own by watching mama!</p>
	 	<p>Kibble: Once your kittens have their canines, have kibble available at all times, along with a bowl of water.</p> <p>Royal Canin Babycat is what we feed kittens at the nursery as it's highly palatable and the extra-small kibble size is ideal for weaning kittens.</p> <p>Again, any brand of <i>premium</i> kitten kibble will do.</p>
Supplements for syringe gruel & gruel kittens	 	<p>Baby food: Mix ~tablespoon of baby food with gruel or kibble for finicky eaters! Also useful for encouraging new gruelies to eat on their own. Buy plain baby food with no spices. Ingredients should only be turkey/chicken and turkey/chicken broth.</p> <p>Tomlyn Nutri-Cal: Great for underweight kittens. Follow instructions on bottle and add appropriate amount to syringe gruel or gruel.</p>

Pro-tip: Adding a bit of plain canned pumpkin (not pumpkin pie filling!) to gruel or syringe gruel can help with minor diarrhea/loose stool.

Part Two:

Pregnant Cat Guidelines

Thank you so much for fostering a pregnant cat! This can be one of the most memorable, educational experiences that you'll ever have. Please read on to find an outline of what to expect during mama cat's pregnancy and what you need to do to prepare for her delivery.

Required supplies for pregnant/nursing moms:

- A box or tub large enough for mama to lie down and stretch out, such as an under-the-bed plastic storage tote. Mama should be able to get in and out easily, but kittens should not be able to get out.
- Electric heating pad that does not shut off automatically
- High quality canned **kitten food** for mom (and to wean babies)
- Hard **kitten food** (kibble) for mom (and to wean babies) — we recommend Royal Canin Babycat
- Bottle kit with nipples in case kittens need supplementary feeding
- Powdered KMR formula in case kittens need supplementary feeding
- Empty room/bathroom to isolate mom and kittens
- Digital scale (food or postal) that weighs in grams
- Litter box and non-clumping litter
- Secure pet carrier for transportation (cardboard carrier can be purchased from APA for \$5)

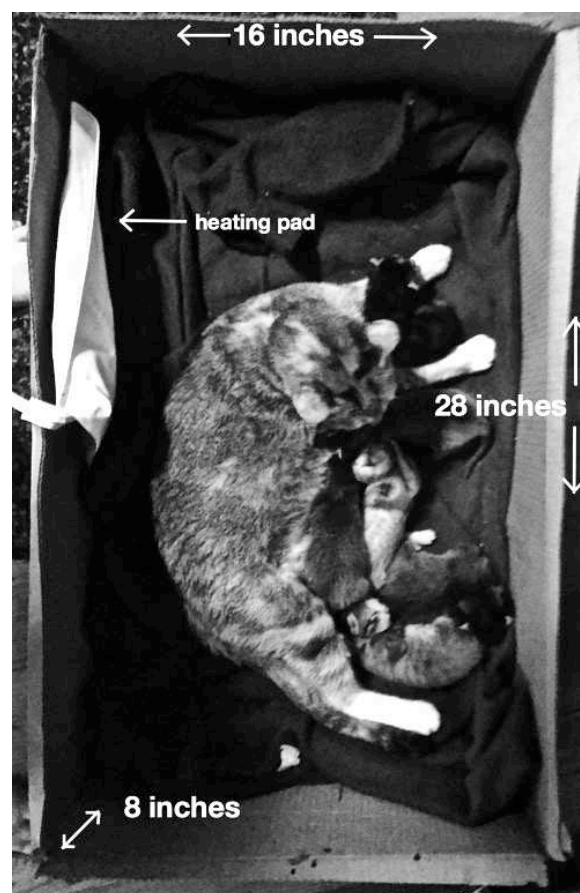
Preparation for birth of kittens:

The gestation period for cats is between 9 and 10 weeks. A couple of weeks before your cat is due to deliver, you need to prepare a “nesting box” – a safe and secure place for mama to deliver and care for her kittens. Mama cat should be isolated in a quiet area to get used to her surroundings for awhile so she feels safe and secure for the birth. During the couple weeks leading up to her kittens' birth, mama cat might exhibit some strange and/or uncharacteristic behaviors – some cats may become extremely affectionate, while others might become aggressive or fearful. Just remember that mama's hormones are raging during this time, so any out of the ordinary behavior is generally no cause for concern.

Pregnant cats should eat up to 4 times their normal amount of food and **should be eating kitten food for the duration of their pregnancy and while nursing kittens.**

Setting up a nesting box:

- There are many options for nesting boxes. You'll need a box that's wide enough to accommodate a heating pad on one side, while leaving room for mama to nurse on the other side without lying on the heating pad.
- Line a box with blankets or towels. The box should be high enough off the ground so that mama can get in and out easily, but her kittens cannot – 8-12 inches tall or somewhere around this height is ideal.



- You can offer more than one option with blankets in one corner and a box in another area.
- You can also place mama cat with her nesting box in a bathroom or small room with some light.
- You can even put the box in a bathtub, if using a bathroom, but be sure to cover the drain.
- Have heating pad only under blankets on one side of the box – your mama cat may be too warm if she has no other place to cool off.
- *Note:* Your mama cat may ignore the box until it's time for labor. If this is the case, just put her in it when the kittens are coming. She'll usually take to it just fine!

Medical Emergencies to watch out for leading up to labor:

- **Any vaginal bleeding** during pregnancy is not normal and suggests that she is having a miscarriage. If this is occurring late in pregnancy (the 8th week) she may be delivering the litter prematurely and a cesarean section is likely necessary.
- **Greenish, foul-smelling discharge** can be a sign of a uterine infection – if you see this alert the med techs immediately at: email@email.com

*****Please note that if either of these two things occurs around the time of mama's due date, it is likely just an indication that labor is imminent – usually within 24 hours! *****

!!! FOR MEDICAL EMERGENCIES CALL ANYTIME DAY OR NIGHT **!!!**

[555-555-5555](tel:555-555-5555) (9am–7pm Mon–Fri; 11am–7pm Sat–Sun) or [555-555-5555](tel:555-555-5555) (24/7 after hours)

Labor

Several hours (and perhaps a whole day) of restlessness, grooming, nesting, pacing, panting, and crying indicates that labor has begun. Mama cat may purr during labor and when feeding her new kittens. When labor begins, there will be some brownish fluids, and a small amount of blood. Babies can be born head first or feet first (breach), and will be delivered in a thin amniotic sack, which usually breaks during birth. As soon as the kitten emerges from mama's birth canal, she should immediately bite/pierce the sack, and begin cleaning the kitten to encourage him/her to breathe. **If she does not do this, you will need to step in and break the sack, as the kitten is at risk of suffocating within seconds.** Wipe away the mucus and amniotic casing from the kitten's mouth and nose – once you do this, the kitten should cry out! At this point, the kitten is still attached to the placenta, which will be passed within a few minutes. Once the placenta is passed, the mother will bite the umbilical cord to cut it. Sometimes mama can take awhile to bite the cord, especially if other kittens are already out and nursing, so feel free to help her by tying the cord with string/floss and cutting it with a pair of sterile scissors. Usually, the mother will then eat the placenta.

Kittens are usually born every 10 minutes to 1 hour. **If mama is having contractions for longer than 2 hours** in between kittens, this could mean that a baby is stuck in the birth canal, which can be deadly for mama and all remaining kittens in utero. **If this happens, you need to call the appropriate emergency number immediately**, as mama will likely need an emergency C-section!

Some mama cats prefer to give birth in a dark, quiet place, far away from human contact, while others prefer to have their human right beside them, giving them pets and soothing them through this difficult process! She will generally let you know what she'd like – just pay attention to her body language and such.

****** If any kitten is stillborn, remove it from the nesting box as soon as possible. (This is very common.)

Once kittens are born and mama is nursing, she may like some food, which can be placed near her head, so she can eat without disrupting the kittens.

Medical Emergencies during/immediately following delivery:

- If at any point you see a **red protruding membrane (like an earthworm)** from the kitten's belly, this is actually its intestine & is a medical emergency
- **Dystocia** – Intense contractions for 60 minutes without a birth
- **Retained Placenta** – if the placenta is not passed, it can cause infection

Caring for New Mom & Kittens

Kittens generally **weigh between 80-120 grams** when they're born. Any kitten born **smaller than 70 grams** is at serious risk of fading away and will likely need to be supplemented with KMR and kept on a heating pad, separate from its littermates, until he/she weighs about the same as his/her littermates.

It is *not uncommon for the smallest kitten (runt) to pass away shortly after birth* – this is just nature running its course. There's often not much we can do. Oftentimes mama will set this runt aside from her healthy kittens to allow it to pass peacefully, so she can care for her kittens who are thriving. If a kitten is born weighing under 65 grams, there is often not much we can do – remember that this is the reason cats have so many kittens – some are just not fit to make it in this world.

It is possible that the new mother will want to move her kittens frequently. This is okay, as long as there is always a heating pad for the kittens to get to and the area is somewhat sequestered and free of hazards. More than likely, she is doing this in an effort to keep her babies safe. You can set up a few clean places with bedding ahead of time so the mom has safe options if she does move them.

Weigh newborn kittens twice a day – this is mandatory! If the mom seems protective or is moving her babies, wait until the day after they are born to weigh them. If she is comfortable with you there, place the scale right next to her while you weigh the babies. You should be seeing an average weight gain of 10 grams per day. If the weights stay steady for more than a day or you see a drop in weight, please contact your Foster Mentor at: email@email.com Even a small amount of weight loss in a kitten under one week old can be deadly, so please don't hesitate to reach out!

APA! Neonatal Foster Program – Caring for Neonatal Kittens

*** **The two most important rules of Kitten Club:** Kittens must be **WARM** and have **FULL BELLIES** at all times! ***

The Basics

- Kittens must be kept in a safe and secure spot, and isolated from other pets (to prevent illness) for 7-10 days.
- Kittens must have access to a **heating pad (on low setting) at all times**.
- Do not give kittens baths unless absolutely necessary. If kittens get wet, they must be blow-dried until they are completely dry. Young kittens can very easily become hypothermic. As an alternative, use a hypoallergenic baby wipe to clean dirty kittens.
- You are required to keep track of kittens' weights, bowel movements, medications, and other health issues on your Daily Care Sheets.

For any questions or concerns about your kittens' weights or general development, please contact your Foster Mentor at email@email.com

Kitten Developmental Milestones

- Eyes open at 7-10 days (eyes will be blue until kittens are 6-7 weeks old).
- At about 2 weeks, they will start crawling around (can inch around as early as 4 days).
- At 3-4 weeks, they'll start to play with each other. The ears will start to stand up, and teeth will begin to come in.
- At 3-5 weeks, it's time to start the weaning process – kittens should be well on their way to eating independently and using the litter box.
- At 6 weeks they should get their first vaccinations from APA!, and go up on our website for pre-adoption.
- At 8-12 weeks, and/or whenever kittens have reached 2lbs (906g), they can be spayed or neutered, and go to their forever homes!

Setting up a Habitat as Kittens Age:

As the kittens get older, they're going to want to explore outside their nesting box – this generally happens around 4 weeks old! This is perfectly fine, but we want to make sure kittens are not allowed to stray too far from their mama and their heating pad!

Bathtubs are often great for this stage. Keep the heating pad available at all times, but still make sure that the kittens can move off of it. Place a small bowl of kibble, a saucer of gruel, and a stable, flat-bottomed cup of water in an accessible spot, away from their bedding.

At this point, the kittens will also want to play with toys! Feel free to give them plenty of plush dolls, balls, bells, etc. Just make sure there's nothing they could accidentally swallow or get tangled up in!

Kittens should be introduced to the litter box around 4 weeks old as well! They will generally learn from mama, so this process shouldn't be too messy! Fill a very shallow litter box (a box top or baking tin is fine) with non-clumping litter, and place it in an accessible spot away from the food dishes.

Around 6 weeks old, kittens will likely begin door-dashing and trying to escape whatever enclosure they're confined to. If you would like to give them free run of your home, please do so with extreme caution. Kittens can and will get into everything. Never leave them unsupervised, particularly when there are other pets and/or roommates where you live! Also, remember that the more space they have, the less likely they are to find their litter box!

Most importantly, especially once they are over ~4 weeks old, make sure you socialize your kittens as often as possible! This is crucial to their development – they need to learn to love humans! Introduce them to friends, children, other cats, friendly dogs, etc., but **always** make sure they're in a controlled environment and are being closely supervised.

Common Household Hazards for Kittens

Even the most experienced fosters sometimes overlook household hazards. The following is a list of things that we have seen cause injury to kittens.

- **Rocking chairs** - keep out of the kittens' area
- **Reclining chairs** - kittens can easily crawl inside
- **Toilets** - keep lids closed at all times
- **Bathtubs** - keep water drained at all times
- **Doors** - make sure that kittens are not behind doors that are being opened
- **Exits** - keep unscreened doors and windows closed at all times when not in use
- **Outdoors** - do NOT allow kittens to go outside, NO EXCEPTIONS!
- **Other cats** - can sometimes be asymptomatic carriers of viruses that are more harmful to kittens, or can be too aggressive with kittens
- **Dogs** - all dogs (but especially large dogs) can easily injure a kitten, often accidentally
- **Washers and dryers** - kittens can crawl inside of the machines unnoticed or get stuck behind them
- **Other appliances** - make sure that kittens cannot crawl behind or under refrigerators, ovens, etc.
- **Holes** - make sure any holes in drywall or cabinetry are plugged or blocked
- **Small objects** - rubber bands, strings, paperclips, and other small objects can be accidentally ingested
- **Chemicals** - make sure they are put away
- **House plants** - many are poisonous to cats, make sure they are out of reach
- **Electrical cords** - can be sprayed with bitter apple, covered with tape or "cord covers" to prevent chewing

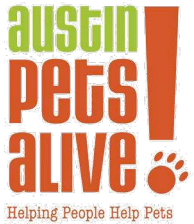
In the unfortunate event that one of your kittens has died, for any reason, please **contact us right away**. Please do not be embarrassed or afraid to reach out – these things happen. Kittens are fragile creatures, and unfortunately some of them are just not equipped to make it in this world.

Use the following chart to determine who to contact:

<p>If a Kitten UNDER 8 Weeks is Lost</p> <p>Please email email@email.com immediately—we will help you find the kitten.</p>	<p>If a Kitten OVER 8 Weeks is Lost</p> <p>Please email cat-foster-email@email.com immediately—we will help you find the kitten.</p>
<p>If a kitten UNDER 8 Weeks has Passed Away</p> <p>Please email email@email.com immediately. CC email@email.com</p> <p>email@email.com Describe what happened. Label a plastic bag with kitten's name and A#. Wrap the kitten in a towel and place inside the bag. Put in freezer. Wait for further instructions from the medical clinic.</p>	<p>If a Kitten OVER 8 Weeks has Passed Away</p> <p>Please email cat-foster-email@email.com immediately. CC cat-foster-email@email.com and email@email.com Describe what happened. Label a plastic bag with kitten's name and A#. Wrap the kitten in a towel and place inside the bag. Put in freezer. Wait for further instructions from the medical clinic.</p>

Fading Kitten Syndrome

You are **not** receiving this handout because Fading Kitten Syndrome is a common occurrence, but rather because if you ever encounter this condition, **YOU** will need to take action **IMMEDIATELY**. The worst thing you can do for a fading kitten is to take him/her to your vet – most kittens will not survive the car ride. **YOU** are this kitten's best chance at making it.



Fading Kitten Syndrome is a life-threatening emergency in which a kitten “crashes” and begins to fade away. Kittens under 3 weeks old and/or kittens who are, or were recently sick, are most susceptible to FKS. Oftentimes, it occurs in kittens who have been eating poorly, and losing, or, not gaining, weight. This is why it is **VITAL** that you weigh your kittens every time they're fed. *Although it is rare, FKS can also occur in healthy kittens at any age.*

Symptoms of FKS:

- Extreme lethargy — unable to stand or hold head up, not responding when touched
- Body feels cool to the touch (not just insides of ears – all over)
- Panting or gasping for breath
- Meowing/crying out in distress

If you see these symptoms, it is crucial that you take the following steps NOW:

Step 1: GET KITTEN WARM

Grab your heating pad and a towel. Place the towel over the heating pad, and place kitten on top of towel. Roll heating pad up to create a “kitten burrito” – like you're swaddling an infant. Leave the kitten's face exposed, and do not remove kitten from the burrito even if he/she struggles and cries to get out! Make sure the heating pad is still on the **low** setting.

* If you don't have a heating pad, (fosters are now *required* to have a heating pad) you can either:

- a) Keep your dryer running full of towels. Grab a new hot one every 5 minutes and wrap it around the “burrito” towel. After 5 minutes, trade that towel out for a new hot one. Don't remove the “burrito” towel.
- b) Fill 2 socks full of rice, tie the ends so it doesn't spill out. Throw them in the microwave for 3 minutes. Keep them next to the kitten on the outside of the burrito towel. Every 30 minutes reheat one sock and leave the other next to the kitten so she doesn't cool off.

Step 2: GET KITTEN'S BLOOD SUGAR UP

Grab a small bowl and fill it with either corn syrup (Karo, etc), or sugar water. The more sugar content, the better. Make sure you have your syringe handy. Warm the contents up in the microwave for a few seconds until the liquid is a bit above room temperature. You will administer this sugar water (with the syringe) to the kitten while he/she is in the burrito. **Give the kitten about 1 drop every 3 minutes.**

Step 3: CALL MEDICAL TECHNICIANS

[555-555-5555](tel:555-555-5555) (9am–7pm Mon–Fri; 11am–7pm Sat–Sun) or [555-555-5555](tel:555-555-5555) (after hours)



Supplementing Protocol for Nursing Kittens

Thank you so much for fostering a nursing mom and kittens with Austin Pets Alive! We truly appreciate you!

When it comes to nutrition for neonatal kittens, mom's milk is best! And your kittens are the lucky ones who arrive at APA! with a mom. They're getting extra immune support and nutrition that orphans don't get. What's more, nursing kittens cause mom to produce hormones that stimulate milk production. It's a virtuous cycle!

You've heard it before: WEIGH, WEIGH, WEIGH! Well, in the case of nursing kittens, weighing too frequently can make it seem like a kitten needs to be supplemented when in fact she does not. What matters is a kitten's weight gain (or loss) over a 24-hour period (this is different than with orphans!). If your nursing kittens are healthy, they only need to be weighed once a day.

We want to do all we can to encourage kittens to nurse. Supplementing can disrupt the virtuous cycle, causing moms to not produce enough milk, and kittens who are bottle/syringe fed are at risk of aspirating formula (see below). Nevertheless, there are certain instances when it may be necessary to supplement nursing kittens to give them a boost until they are gaining weight on their own, such as upper respiratory infections, insufficient milk production from mom, too much competition from siblings at the milkbar, and premature birth (kittens weighing under 70 g).

Because we want to avoid supplementing if at all possible, always contact your mentor before beginning to supplement!

You'll remember from training that you can give your mom a day or so alone with her kittens before weighing them for the first time. Moms produce colostrum for roughly 24 to 48 hours before they begin producing milk, and it is essential for kittens to nurse at this stage because of the immune support that colostrum provides. You may see a slight weight loss (a couple grams) the first day or two. This is normal and no reason to panic. **However, if you are concerned that a kitten is losing too much weight or have any other questions, email your mentor!**

The goal of supplementing is right in the name. It is intended to give the kitten a boost until the kitten begins gaining weight from nursing, not to replace nursing. We therefore only supplement twice a day and discontinue supplementing once the kitten begins to gain weight again.

We supplement kittens with PetAg powdered KMR® formula (kitten milk replacer). Because an abrupt switch from the mother's milk to KMR® formula can be hard on the kitten's digestive system, we start supplementing with a ratio that is more dilute than what the label calls for:

Ratio of water to KMR®	Time
8 to 1	2 feedings
4 to 1	2 feedings
2 to 1	Until kitten is gaining weight from nursing or can be syringe fed gruel, as the case may be

Ideally, you will only be supplementing at the 8:1 ratio since the goal is to get the kitten to gain enough weight on its own just from nursing.

How to make formula:

Feed PetAg KMR® powdered formula from bottle and/or oral syringe. Mix powdered formula (unless otherwise advised) with water at the correct ratio (see table above). Shake well or blend to dissolve lumps! Store mixed formula in the fridge up to 48 hrs.

All kittens must eat 5% of their body weight at each feeding. All kittens must be weighed before and after feeding!

Feeding instructions:

- Warm formula up in the microwave until it is warmer than body temperature but not hot. Make sure to stir or shake to eliminate any hot spots. The kitten also needs to be kept warm during feeding and should be wrapped up in a towel or blanket, and preferably on a heat source like a heating pad set to Low.

- Feed kitten upright or on belly in a prone position, NOT on his/her back like a human infant!

- Gather kittens' feeding charts and some warm towels.

- Bottle-feed the kitten first. Some kittens take a while to latch on, so be patient! If kitten does not gain its 5% via the bottle, proceed w/ syringe feeding. Only use 1mL syringe.

Watch for formula coming out of kitten's nose or a rasping "wet" cough. This is called aspiration, which means the kitten has ingested formula into her lungs and is in danger of "drowning." If

one of your kittens is aspirating, you need to do two things:

1. Immediately email email@email.com and email@email.com

2. Wait for about an hour to make sure all of the formula has come out of the kitten's nose and then continue feeding.

- Weigh kitten periodically throughout feeding process – the kitten is only done eating when she has gained her 5%.

- Thoroughly clean off any formula on kitten's fur and dry kitten off. (Formula will stick and is very hard to remove if it dries and is also painful for the kitten!)

- Weigh and record after-food weight!