

Foster Care Manual

Kittens



1. Contents

1. INTRODUCTION	4
2. GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES	4
RSPCA ACT Foster Carers Network on Facebook.....	5
3. IMPORTANT QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF.....	5
FOSTERING REQUIREMENTS	6
4. TIME AND COMMITMENT.....	6
5. PREPARING TO FOSTER	7
6. PICKING UP FOSTER KITTENS	9
Introducing a Foster Animal into your home	9
7. RETURNING FOSTER KITTENS	10
8. KITTEN CARE	11
Daily Monitoring.....	11
Weighing Your Kittens.....	11
Feeding	11
Cleaning Schedule	12
Playtime & Mental Stimulation	12
Socialisation & Handling.....	12
9. HEALTH & HYGIENE	13
Veterinary Health Assessments.....	13
Monitoring for Signs of Disease	13
Diarrhoea	15
Worms.....	15
Vomiting	15
Eye Discharge	15
Sneezing/Nasal Discharge.....	15
Lethargy	15
Fleas, lice, & ear mites	16
Ringworm.....	16
Toxoplasmosis.....	16
Cleaning and Disinfection	16
Personal Hygiene.....	17

10.	Fostering a Mother Cat with Kittens	17
	When to Separate Kittens & Mum	18
	Maternal Neglect	18
	Maternal Aggression towards other animals	18
	Maternal Aggression towards people	19
11.	CRITERIA FOR POSSIBLE EMERGENCIES	19
12.	KITTEN CHEAT SHEET	20
	Appendix 1 - Kitten Ageing Chart	21
	Appendix 2 - Foster Kitten Agreement Form.....	24
	Appendix 3 - Foster Kitten Carer's Record	26
	Appendix 4 - Kitten Foster Carer Return Information Sheet	27
	Appendix 5 - Quick Reference Guide.....	28
	Appendix 6 - Neonate Kitten Record Sheet	31

1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of foster care is to place into temporary care those animals that are too young to be desexed, do not cope well in a shelter environment, are long term residents not currently available for adoption, or to relieve the shelter of animals for disease control and space control reasons.

The fostering of animals is an important and rewarding part of work that RSPCA ACT volunteers and staff undertake and gives those animals a wonderful start to life before moving to suitable, lifelong homes.

This manual will assist potential foster carers to decide if they can commit to becoming a foster carer and if they can abide by the conditions and requirements outlined in this manual.

2. GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES

Only approved foster carers (registered RSPCA volunteers and staff) are permitted to foster animals. The fostered animals remain the property of RSPCA ACT and the fostering program is conducted under the direction of the Volunteer Coordinator.

All fostering from the RSPCA must be approved by the Animal Care Manager or the Volunteer Coordinator.

It is the role of the Animal Care Manager to organise, monitor and record the fostering of animals in accordance with these guidelines and procedures and to ensure that a high standard of safety is maintained for both carers and animals and that all carers are provided with adequate support and information

To become a carer for RSPCA you must complete and sign the foster carer application and agreement forms. You will be given these forms at the same time as this manual. Read this manual carefully and fill in the application form if you wish to continue in the process of becoming a foster carer.

Before applications are approved, carers must undergo an interview with the Animal Care Manager and / or the Volunteer Coordinator and obtain a working with vulnerable people card. The interview is to discuss any questions you may have and for the coordinator to seek any further information required from the potential foster carer.

There are different types of animals for which you can become a foster carer:

- Pregnant animals or animals with litters
- Orphaned kittens requiring to be hand reared (neonates)
- Animals that are too young for re-homing
- Animals that have behavioural problems that require socialisation or other types of behavioural modifications
- Injured or sick animals receiving treatment

Foster kittens remain the property of RSPCA ACT at all times. The Society reserves the right to refuse permission to foster kittens and to remove kittens from foster care at any time should it be necessary to do so.

RSPCA ACT Foster Carers Network on Facebook

A Facebook page has been set up for foster carers to share photos and good news stories regarding their foster kittens. To be a part of this group you must agree to abide by RSPCA ACT's Social Media Policy and Code of Conduct and be a registered current foster carer.

Please be aware that this page is not for you to get medical advice - this must only be given by the RSPCA Veterinary Clinic. RSPCA staff do monitor the forum but as we are not on this site 24/7 do not expect urgent responses from staff or rely upon Facebook as a means of communicating with staff. RSPCA staff may delete posts that are not relevant to the care of your foster kittens or are in breach of RSPCA policy.

3. IMPORTANT QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

Before you decide to foster for RSPCA...

- Are you able to get to us quickly in an emergency? This means you must have transport readily available.
- Will you be able to spend quality time with the animals?
- On average, it is best to spend at least 2 hours a day with your foster animals. Socialisation can be as important as feeding them and keeping them clean.
- Will you be able to commit to appointments ranging from once a week to every three weeks whether or not they are ill?
- Are you aware that there is a great deal of clean-up and even possible damage to your home when you take a foster home? Foster animals can ruin new drapes, carpets and clothing. RSPCA will not be held responsible for any damage incurred while fostering an animal.
- Are you willing to work with our veterinary care system? Please understand that only our vets can treat foster animals free of charge.
- Can you commit to spending the entire foster period with the animal? If something unexpected happens, you will need to email foster@rspca-act.org.au or call 02 6287 8100 to inform us of an early foster return.
- Do you feel comfortable explaining to friends and family that these animals are not yours to adopt out and that they must go through the regular adoption process at RSPCA?
- Will you be able to bring the animal back at the end of the foster period? It can be difficult to let go once you have become emotionally attached.
- Are you emotionally prepared to handle the death of one of your foster animals? This can be very difficult, but the sad truth is that it sometimes happens. In this event, RSPCA should be contacted immediately.

FOSTERING REQUIREMENTS

We look for a safe, secure home environment with lots of love, attention and handling so our little ones return happy and well socialised and ready to go to a new home. Carers need to be aware that socialising is as important as keeping animals healthy.

Foster carers don't need to be home all day to look after their four-legged charges. However, they do need to provide love and companionship for at least a few hours a day so that they return to us well-socialised, and have the best chance of finding a forever home.

We recommend that kittens be contained in smaller spaces and in areas that are tile e.g. spare bathrooms, laundries or studies etc. and, as already mentioned, if the carer is able to spend a few hours a day with these babies it is sufficient. Tiled rooms are much easier to clean for disease control.

If you have your own animals and prefer them not to interact with your visitors, yes, you can still foster. Some carers allow their charges full run of the house and this certainly helps with their socialising - remember though that carpeted areas are difficult to disinfect. However, not everyone is able to provide this - some resident pets will not tolerate visitors in their territory and others may stress too much. Don't think you can't foster if this is you. If you are able to provide a safe, restricted environment for little ones then it is still possible for you to foster.

If you have pets of your own, they must be fully vaccinated.

For foster families with children, we encourage sensible child involvement, but parents must assume responsibility

By fostering a kitten, you can make a huge difference in the life of that cat. Fostering is one of the most rewarding experiences you can have as an animal lover. It offers the best of both worlds to you - the love, affection, and gratitude of an animal without the lifetime of emotional and financial commitments. They will provide you with love, joy, and the satisfaction of having saved a life.

4. TIME AND COMMITMENT

A lot of commitment and effort is required in caring for foster animals. Many of the animals that require fostering have already been through stressful changes, so the carer may be faced with a period of adjustment where the animal, particularly older ones, may be unresponsive or afraid. This is usually overcome with time and patience.

It is important, especially for very young animals, to spend time interacting and playing with people and being cuddled. People who work full-time can foster animals, providing they are willing to spend quality time socialising their charges. You will also need time to feed young animals a minimum of three times each day. Cleaning can also be considerable!!

It is in the animal's best interest to stay with the same foster carer until they are permanently rehomed; transferring between foster homes is not ideal, so we appreciate that you carefully consider that you have the necessary time before committing to foster caring.

In some cases, due to unforeseen circumstances, it may be necessary for you to return an animal to the shelter. If this is to occur the Animal Care Manager should be notified as soon as possible so a replacement carer can be found. If you know you will be unavailable at any time during kitten season (eg: going on holidays) please advise the Animal Care Manager.

Caring for an animal means that an attachment will be formed. Giving them up, even when you know they are going to loving homes, can be difficult and an emotional experience. Make sure that you discuss this aspect of fostering with your family before making a commitment.

The fostering period can be anywhere from one week to ten weeks - each situation is different. Mums with new born babies rely on finding special foster homes. These carers should be prepared to keep all of them together for approximately five weeks, until mum can return to us for desexing and rehoming while her babies grow on solid food and learn some independence. Kittens need to weigh at least 800g before returning to us to be desexed. The kittens will need to be booked in for their desexing appointment.

The table below gives an indication to the time commitment which may be required.

Type of foster	Time period required	Hours per Day
Weaned kittens	1-5 weeks	2 hours
Mother Cat and Kittens	2 - 8 weeks	2 hours
Orphaned newborn or unweaned kittens	4-10 weeks EXPERIENCED CARERS ONLY	5 hours
Cats with flu	1-3 weeks	3 hours
Cats / kittens with behavioural problems	1 - 12 weeks but this can vary greatly depending on the problem EXPERIENCED CARERS ONLY	2+ hours
Sick or injured cats / kittens	1-12 weeks depending on type of illness or injury	2+ hours depending on type of illness or injury

5. PREPARING TO FOSTER

Preparing Your Own Pets: If you have pet cats in your home, review their veterinary records and update any vaccinations that may have lapsed (proof will be required). Your pets will also need to be desexed, up to date with worming and flea free.

If your own cat is under current veterinary treatment then you may not be allowed to participate in the foster program, depending on the circumstances.

Preparing Space for Foster Kittens: Foster kittens are to be kept indoors or in a secure outdoor enclosure at all times. They are not allowed to go free-roaming outside.

Outdoor enclosures must be escape proof, sufficiently warm, provide adequate shelter from the elements, and have a covered bed, litter tray and free access to fresh clean water. They should also be sufficient size for cats to move freely about in. Outdoor enclosures are not suitable for kittens under 6 weeks of age.

When keeping cats indoor they should be confined to one room of the house until they become familiar with it. Their litter tray and water bowls should also be kept in this room. When they start to venture into the house, they will have a familiar “safe” room to return to should they become frightened or stressed. All windows in the rooms that the cats have access to should be kept secure.

The flooring should be made of a material which is easy to clean and disinfect, such as hard wood, ceramic tiles, linoleum, or smooth concrete.

The kitten room needs to be “cat friendly” and “kitten-proofed”:

- Everything in the room should be easy to wash and disinfect or replaceable
- Remove anything that might fall on a kitten (even a book can cause serious injury)
- Be aware that kittens can climb into tiny holes and crevices and get stuck
- Remove any chemicals or cleaning agents
- If using the bathroom ensure the toilet seat is closed
- If using the laundry, ensure that the cupboards, washing machine lid and clothes drier are kept closed and that disinfectants and detergents are not able to be accessed by the kittens
- It should contain everything the kittens will need to eat, drink, eliminate, sleep and play
- Have at least one bowl for water, one for wet food, and one for dry food. It is best to provide more bowls if you have several kittens so no one has to compete for access to food
- Put the litter trays as far away as possible from food, water and bedding. Be sure to provide enough trays so that each kitten has a clean place to eliminate - one tray for every 2 kittens
- A secure sleeping area, such as a cat carrier with the door removed or a box on its side, will help the kittens feel safe—this is especially important for shy kittens
- Provide safe, disposable or easily sanitised toys to entertain the kittens when you are not with them, such as ping pong balls.

What We Will Provide: Foster parents receive Royal Canin food from RSPCA to feed to their charges as well as worming treatment and any medication they may need. For each new litter, you will also receive bedding, toys, litter and litter trays, tips for caring for your foster animals, identification numbers and weight charts. You can also contact RSPCA for advice via email or call. Please note the RSPCA does not cover the cost of carpet cleaning if foster parents decide to give their kittens access to carpeted areas. Also available to carers is a Veterinary Clinic service which is available 9.00am - 5.00pm 6 days a week should there be any health issues which occur during the foster period - please email foster@rspca-act.org.au or call for an appointment.

What you need to bring: 1 Litre container for kitten milk formula (if caring for neonates); 2 Litre container for Kitten Dry food; 10 Litre container for kitty litter.

6. PICKING UP FOSTER KITTENS

Usually fostering of only one litter at a time is permitted. Mixing litters of animals and overcrowding increases the risk of disease and can lead to stress, which in turn can lead to disease problems such as cat flu.

Very young animals cannot be fostered out by carers who cannot make arrangements for the animals to be cared for whilst they are at work; very young kittens require frequent feeding throughout the day - at least every 2 - 3 hours. These animals are at risk of contracting disease if homed at the shelter and it is in their interest to be fostered.

Carers who are unable to have someone attend to very young animals should take adult animals or older kittens that are more able to last through the day without frequent feeding.

When we have kittens available for foster care, the cattery staff will contact all appropriate foster carers to see who is available to take the kittens.

Kittens need to be placed in foster homes as soon as possible, so please respond as soon as you can - even if it is to say "No".

Whoever contacts the cattery staff first will get to foster the kittens. It is necessary to make an appointment for a specific time to collect them during RSPCA business hours.

If you are picking up foster kittens for the first time, be prepared to carry the supplies. The foster program will provide a box for you to transport the kittens in.

Introducing a Foster Animal into your home

Introducing a new animal to your home where you already have pets can take a bit of planning. Make sure that you have an area in which to separate animals if there is a problem. Some key points are:

- Newly introduced animals should not be left alone together unsupervised for the first few days.
- Never leave adult animals with kittens unsupervised
- Make sure your own dogs have some basic training. This way you will have some control over them if there is a problem.

7. RETURNING FOSTER KITTENS

Saying goodbye to foster animals can hurt. But most foster parents also say that the rewards of giving animals another chance in life far outweigh the pain of parting. And of course, there are always plenty of other kittens and cats waiting to fill their space!

Fostered animals must be returned at the agreed time to the shelter to be made available for rehoming. Following are some indicators for when an animal is ready to be rehomed:

- What was the agreed date on the Foster Care Form to return the kittens for desexing? If a date has not been organised, please email foster@rspca-act.org.au or call the RSPCA Veterinary Clinic on 6287 8100.
- Have the kittens reached their required weight of a minimum 800g? If not please email foster@rspca-act.org.au or call the RSPCA Veterinary Clinic to re-schedule.
- Has the animal recovered from its illness/injury?

Make sure you bring their ID numbers.

When you bring the kittens in for desexing, they are not immediately made available for adoption but are returned to the foster carer for a recovery period after their surgery. Before surgery, the kittens undergo a health check where the veterinary staff examine the kittens to ensure they are healthy and have reached the required weight for desexing. Please be aware that if the kittens have not reached desexing weight you may need to keep them in your care for a little while longer.

When you have been requested to return the kittens so that they can go up for adoption, please fill out the return form (this can be done in advance) so we have extra information to give to potential adopters and facilitate the adoption process. You can use one form for all kittens or if there are specific issues for each kitten separate forms can be used.

If you plan on continuing to foster, hold on to the food and kitty litter supplies but return all bowls, litter trays, toys, blankets and bedding so that they can be thoroughly disinfected. New supplies will be given to you with the next lot of kittens.

Please remember to thoroughly disinfect the room in which the kittens were contained before taking more foster kittens home. Start by removing everything the kittens slept on, ate from, played with and eliminated in. Scrub everything the kittens could reach (don't forget the walls) with a bleach solution (1 part bleach to 32 parts **cold water** – you should always mix the bleach with **cold water** to reduce any harmful vapours). Throw away any non-cleanable materials. This should prevent any new litters from catching anything that the previous kittens contracted.

RSPCA ACT retains ownership of the fostered animals until the animal has been rehomed. The rehoming of animals will be conducted in accordance with the shelter's policy for adoption.

8. KITTEN CARE

Daily Monitoring

It is important to monitor a kitten's health and weight daily. We recommend you have a "daily foster journal form" where you should record each kitten's weight, eating habits and overall health.

- Look over your kitten every day for any changes or potential medical problems.
- Check body and fur.
- Look closely at eyes, in mouth and ears.
- Weigh kittens and record weight on supplied record forms.
- Check energy levels.

Weighing Your Kittens

You should weigh your kittens at the same time every day and keep track of their weight gain/loss in the chart provided. Keep this log current, as it will be the easiest way to tell when you have a serious problem and need to seek help for the kittens! Ideally, your foster kittens should be gaining 10-15 grams a day. **If your kittens are not eating and are losing weight you must email foster@rspca-act.org.au or call the RSPCA Veterinary Clinic. You may need to bring the kittens in right away.**

Feeding

You will be provided with Royal Canin Kitten food from the shelter when you collect your foster kittens. Royal Canin are the sponsors of RSPCA shelters all over Australia and feeding other brands of food is in breach of our contract with Royal Canin. Royal Canin is a premium food and a complete diet so dietary supplementation is not required.

Ensuring that the kittens are being fed Royal Canin whilst in your care will give them a good start in life. When the kittens are returned and adopted, we can recommend to their new owners that they keep them on the diet that they are used to, which will mean less risk of developing diarrhoea.

The kittens should have access to Royal Canin dry food and fresh water at all times. Cow's milk should not be fed as it is too high in lactose for kittens and can cause diarrhoea. If treats such as chicken necks, tuna and raw meat are given they should not make up more than 10% of their diet as this can cause dietary upsets.

If your foster kittens refuse to eat the food you were given, contact the cattery staff or RSPCA Veterinary Clinic. The person you talk to will help you determine whether this is a medical problem or a preference issue, and will advise you of the next step to take. Do not attempt to make this decision yourself.

Points to remember:

- Kittens should be fed at least 2 times a day. Dry food can be left with them.
- Pick up dirty wet food dishes.
- Monitor appetites.
- Do not give them cow's milk.
- Fresh water should be available at all times

Cleaning Schedule

Litter trays must be provided at all times for toileting. Cats are fussy with their toilet habits so make sure that:

- The kittens can get easily in and out of the litter tray
- There is one tray for every two kittens
- The trays are to be completely emptied then cleaned in hot water and detergent on a daily basis. Dry the litter tray in the sun when possible. All faecal material should be removed as soon as possible (2 - 3 times a day).
- Keep litter trays well separated from food and water bowls.
- Clean all “accidents” well with enzyme cleaners - do not use ammonia-based cleaners as this will encourage the kitten to go back to that spot.
- Monitor for diarrhoea.

Playtime & Mental Stimulation

- Kittens should receive a minimum of two play sessions daily with interactive toys.
- Remember to discourage play with hands.
- Interactive toys should not be left unattended with kittens.
- Safe solo toys such as ping pong balls should be left out at all times.
- Change up the environment in small ways (eg cardboard boxes, move things around in the kittens’ room).

Socialisation & Handling

Emotional and physical closeness to you is as important to a kitten as food and warmth. Handle the kittens often, letting them snuggle. You'll be surprised how this early cuddle activity will stay a basic instinct as the cat grows into an adult. Playing with the kitten with a variety of toys is also important; this will help them develop motor skills and also help them bond to you.

Socialisation is extremely important for well-adjusted kittens. Introduce the kittens to other animals as soon as possible. Obviously never put any animal at risk of danger. Remember, when other animals are present, you must talk to and where possible touch them as much as possible.

While the kittens are with you, gradually expose them to all aspects of normal household living - children, other pets, visitors and noises such as televisions, vacuum cleaners and the like. Take them for little outings into different areas of the house whilst keeping them secure and protected in a cat carrier.

There is a trade-off between the risk of infection and the need to socialise a kitten. Ensure that all animals and humans who come into contact with the kitten are healthy (cats must be vaccinated). A poorly socialised kitten makes a poor pet and may be unable to be homed.

- Socialise kittens a minimum of 2-3 20-minute visits daily.
- Under-socialised kittens 3-4 20-minute visits daily.
- Encourage affectionate behaviour.
- Kittens should meet new people a few times weekly if possible.

- Medium or long-haired kittens especially may benefit from daily exposure to brushing in very small amounts.
- Gently handling paws in preparation for nail trimming.
- Exposure to being picked up.

9. HEALTH & HYGIENE

Veterinary Health Assessments

When kittens first arrive at the shelter they are examined by veterinary staff, weighed and wormed and if old enough they are given their initial vaccination.

If worming or other medication is prescribed whilst the animal is in care, the foster carer will be provided with the appropriate medication and must record the administering of the medication. Only give kittens medications which are prescribed specifically for them by the RSPCA veterinarians.

Animals fostered through RSPCA ACT will receive free veterinary treatment at the RSPCA Veterinary Clinic which has staff available 6 days a week. The RSPCA ACT will not reimburse foster carers for veterinary bills for procedures or services that have been performed by outside veterinary clinics unless authorised by the Animal Care Manager. To obtain permission, the Animal Care Manager can be emailed on: foster@rspca-act.org.au.

We understand that some emergencies do occur and you may need to take your foster animal to a veterinarian prior to receiving authorisation. In these circumstances, please contact Canberra Veterinary Emergency Services in Gungahlin on 6225 7257. Let them know you are calling about an RSPCA foster animal and they can provide advice or treatment for you. The Executive Manager of Animal Welfare must be notified via email as soon as possible in these circumstances.

If you have any health concerns with your kittens during RSPCA opening hours, please contact the RSPCA Veterinary Clinic via email at foster@rspca-act.org.au or call 6287 8100 for advice.

When you come in for medical appointments, please make sure to have identifying numbers of the kittens with you and that they are contained in a secure carry cage.

Monitoring for Signs of Disease

Due to the shelter environment and the fact that these kittens have very fragile immune systems, kittens are prone to catching colds and other diseases. These can range from mild to life-threatening in nature. Treatment depends on the type of disease, the welfare of the animals, and the time required for recovery.

Because of their age, their unknown histories and small body size, if a foster kitten becomes sick, they will usually deteriorate at a rapid rate (i.e., they can be normal one day yet become very sick in a matter of hours).

Healthy kittens have a lot of energy when they are awake. They are playful and will only spend a short time in your lap. The eyes and nose should be generally free of any discharge. The stool will be firm and well-shaped. Kittens eat a lot, but the amount they drink depends on how much wet food they consume (the more wet food, the less water). Kittens may sneeze occasionally. They may also scratch a little. These are normal kitten

behaviours. It is not always obvious when the kittens are sick. In nature, cats will hide any sickness so they don't appear vulnerable.

Non-specific signs of illness include:

- Failure to gain weight over a few days
- Stunting (failure to reach body sizes that are appropriate for age)
- Loss of weight over a couple of measurements (weighing daily is important)
- Persistently thin, ribby condition
- Inappetence - not eating or poor appetite
- Excessive and persistent weakness or sleepiness (a low-energy, listless kitten)
- Sudden death of one or more of a litter - should indicate an issue with the litter in general
- Excessive thirst (kittens in a litter excessively seeking water)
- Vomiting or diarrhoea
- Bloating of the belly and/or abdominal pain

Signs of cat flu include:

- Sneezing or coughing.
- Clear, watery or thick yellow / green discharges coming from the eyes and/or nose
- Ulcers on the mouth or tongue
- Difficulty breathing or heavy breathing
- Failure to feed or poor feeding (often trouble suckling)
- Fading - kittens losing weight over days (often a poor sign with very young babies)

Signs of gastro-intestinal problems (including parasitic disease):

- Diarrhoea (watery or custard-consistency faeces)
- Blood in the droppings
- Mucus (jelly-like substance) in the faeces
- Weight loss
- Straining to pass faeces
- Bloating of the belly
- Abdominal pain
- Redness and scalding of the anus-region
- Worms seen in the droppings (especially tapeworms)
- Excessive thirst

Other things that need checking:

- The eyes not opening properly when they should be open
- Deformity of the body or legs
- Sudden weakness, lameness or non-use of one or more legs
- Scalding and redness of the urinary (penis/vulva) or faecal (anus) area
- Redness or scabbing of the skin on the body or hair loss
- Seizures or incoordination - suggestion of neurological (nervous system) disease
- Faecal or urinary incontinence (releasing urine or faeces without apparent control)

If you notice any of these signs then you must contact the RSPCA for advice. RSPCA (ACT) is not responsible for any accidents that may occur in the foster carer's home or if you attend another veterinary clinic without approval. This is at the expense of the foster carer.

Diarrhoea – There are 3 types of cat stool: normal, soft and diarrhoea.

Normal stool will be firm and well-shaped.

Soft stools may be normal as the kitten's gut is developing. So long as the kittens are not losing weight and are actively playing and eating, we are generally not concerned.

Diarrhoea is completely liquid. It may appear that the kitten is excreting plain water or there may be some colour to it.

When you first notice soft stool or diarrhoea, you should contact the RSPCA Veterinary Clinic via email at foster@rspca-act.org.au or call 6287 8100 for advice. If an examination is deemed necessary, an appointment is to be made and the Diarrhoea History Form completed.

Worms (roundworms & tapeworms) are common in kittens. Generally, kittens are dewormed when they first come in to the RSPCA.

Roundworms look like spaghetti, and will come out in the litter box or in vomit.

Tapeworms are white and segmented. Occasionally you will see the whole worm, but more often you will see what looks like dried rice stuck to the kittens' hindquarters.

If you see any worms, please speak to one of the veterinary staff.

Vomiting is not serious unless it happens more than once. If your kittens keep vomiting, email or call the Veterinary Clinic. If the kittens ingested something poisonous, the faster it is treated, the better the outcome.

Eye Discharge – It is normal for kittens to wake up with a little dark crust in their eyes. If you notice that the kittens have yellow or green discharge coming from their eyes all the time, make a veterinary appointment. You can treat the symptoms of the eye infection by wiping the eyes with a warm, wet towel until it is time for your appointment.

Sneezing/Nasal Discharge – Occasional sneezing is quite common in small kittens. If the sneezing becomes frequent, examine the discharge coming from the sneeze. If it is clear, the infection is probably viral and medication may not be needed but it is important to monitor the kittens in case the problem gets worse. If the discharge becomes coloured (e.g. green or yellow), it is time to make a veterinary appointment because the kitten may have a bacterial infection. Be sure to monitor the kitten's breathing as well. If the kitten seems to be struggling to breathe or is breathing with its mouth open, email foster@rspca-act.org.au or call the veterinary clinic immediately (6287 8100) for an appointment. Also, be sure that the kittens are still eating, as a kitten won't eat what he or she can't smell.

Lethargy – Healthy kittens are normally active when they are awake. Sick kittens may have low energy and want to just sit in your lap. Each kitten is different, depending on their socialisation level, but if you notice a drop in the kitten's individual energy level, it is best to make a veterinary appointment. Some under-socialised kittens will have a tendency to move less because they are frightened, so it may be difficult to monitor their

energy level. If you are not sure whether your kitten is lethargic or just being quiet and still, please email or call RSPCA for advice. If a kitten can't be roused or seems weak, this is an emergency!

Fleas, lice, & ear mites – Many of the kittens we receive in the foster care system were born outdoors so they may come to us with fleas. If fleas are noticed at time of veterinary examination, the kittens receive a flea treatment. Kittens with fleas will scratch themselves a lot. If you see fleas on your foster kittens, email foster@rspca-act.org.au so that we can organise treatment for your kittens.

Lice are a different matter. You will not see the actual adult lice. Instead, you will see white dots on the kittens' fur. If you can brush the dots off, it is dandruff. If you cannot remove the dots, then it is probably lice. Make a veterinary appointment and the veterinarian will treat the lice. Lice are species-specific, and you cannot catch them.

Kittens with ear mites will scratch their ears and shake their heads a lot. Inside the ears you will see a dark discharge resembling coffee grounds. Make a veterinary appointment to get the kitten treated.

Ringworm – Normally the fur around the lips, on the eyelids, and on the ears is a little thin. This is nothing to worry about. However, if you notice hair thinning or completely coming out in patches, please make a veterinary appointment. Fur loss is the first indicator of ringworm, which is a fungus that can be spread to humans and other household pets. The young, the elderly, and people and animals with suppressed immune systems are most susceptible. While it is not fatal, ringworm is itchy to people and very hard to get out of your home. Wash your hands and any clothing that you wear in the fostering room with the kittens before touching your pets.

Ringworm may take months to treat and kittens can become potential carriers of this zoonotic disease. Kittens with suspected ringworm must be returned to the RSPCA Veterinary Clinic immediately for an appointment. Depending on the severity you may be able to continue to foster these kittens for treatment. You will not be able to foster healthy kittens for at least 6 months. RSPCA will not cover costs for treatment of your family or other pets if they contract ringworm from foster kittens.

Toxoplasmosis is a disease caused by a parasite which is specific to cats. It is of particular concern because of the risk to pregnant women and their unborn child. Because of this risk, pregnant women are not allowed to participate in the kitten foster care program.

Litter boxes should be cleaned daily as this reduces the risk of transmission. Always wear gloves when handling cat litter trays.

Cleaning and Disinfection

Each day litter trays should be cleaned in hot water and detergent. If food and water bowls require cleaning, they should be washed separately from litter trays. It is advisable to wear gloves when cleaning out litter trays.

Between batches of kittens, it is very important to return all bowls, litter trays, bedding and carry cages so that they can be properly disinfected. You will receive new items for your next batch of kittens.

Personal Hygiene

Below is a list of important hygiene practices which you are advised to follow to ensure your own health and safety:

- Ensure that you have a current tetanus vaccination
- Wear old, protective clothing that may be thrown away when dealing with sick animals
- Wear gloves when changing litter trays and when cleaning up faeces, urine or vomit
- Wash your hands after handling kittens and before preparing and eating food
- Do not allow kittens to lick your face or mouth
- Do not allow kittens to eat or drink off utensils used for serving food to humans
- Regularly clean bedding, sleeping areas etc. with disinfectants.
- Change and disinfect litter trays daily
- Disinfect scratches and bites thoroughly and seek medical advice. Seek assistance when handling animals whose dispositions are questionable
- Report any bites/scratches to the Volunteer Coordinator.

10. Fostering a Mother Cat with Kittens

A foster carer who wishes to foster a mother cat with kittens must have a quiet room where she can be contained away from the hub of daily activity. A home with no other pets is ideal, but if you do have pets, you should be able to prevent your pet from going up to the door of the private room. Mother cat fosters are not recommended if you have a dog, unless it is a very mellow and quiet dog or if your home environment is loud and/or active, such as with young children.

You will need to have the room set-up before you collect your foster mum and babies from the Shelter. The room needs to have one or two larger “safe spaces” (nests, boxes, etc) lined with towels or blankets as mum will want to choose somewhere nice and safe for her babies.

When you first let mum out, do not pat her or make too many advances, leave her alone with the kittens and let her have some time to explore her new home. Adult cats can take a while to adjust to new places, sometimes they may need a few days before coming out of hiding.

Proceed slowly with the mother cat as some can be very protective of their babies - let her come to you for pats and stop at any signs of discomfort such as swishing tail, tensing up, moving away, hissing or growling.

For the first few weeks of life the mother cat should do everything necessary for the kittens but that should not stop you from starting their important socialisation process - as long as mum is happy with you handling the kittens.

As soon as you notice the kittens showing interest in mum’s food (at about 3 weeks of age) you can start offering them either canned Royal Canin Kitten food or you can soak the dry biscuits. This should be offered to them 3 - 4 times a day. By about 5 weeks of age, they should be having no problem with eating dry biscuits. At this stage the mother cat should be returned to RSPCA for re-homing.

Fostering a mother cat and kittens is a very exciting and rewarding job as you will get to see intimately how a mother cat cares for her kittens and the stages of development in their relationship. We do not like moving a mother cat and kittens around from carer to carer if at all possible so you must ensure that you are available for the entire period if you wish to take on this responsibility.

When to Separate Kittens & Mum

If all members of your feline family are healthy and well-socialised, we recommend that the mothers stay with their kittens until they are about 5 weeks of age and eating solid food. It is suggested by removing the mothers at this age it reduces the chance of mother cats passing on cat flu to their kittens if they are a “carrier” cat. However, sometimes there are medical or behavioural reasons to separate mom from kittens earlier. These include:

- Mum is not taking care of the babies. Work closely with foster and medical staff to determine this; warning signs include not nursing, not responding to the kittens’ crying, staying away from the babies that are under 5 weeks, and not grooming the babies.
- Mum is under-socialised or has other behaviour concerns, and is not readily handleable by people. Mum may also prevent kittens from being handled if she has maternal aggression, or if the foster parent is scared to approach. We do not want kittens picking up on this behaviour pattern (imprinting) so we will want the babies separated from the mum as soon as medically advisable. We also may want to get the mum back to the RSPCA earlier so cat behaviour staff can work with her behaviour issues.
- Mum is taking care of the babies, but there are medical concerns for the mum, or the babies, which warrant separation. This is not very common; our veterinary staff will alert you to this if it is necessary.

Maternal Neglect – About 8% of kittens die from inadequate maternal care. The deaths are usually due to hypothermia if the kitten strays away and is not retrieved, or improper/inadequate nursing at birth and after. Maternal neglect has several causes—some cats seem to lack maternal instincts. In some cases, it is nature’s way: if kittens have birth defects or are otherwise weak at birth, the mum may ignore them, or as discussed below, cannibalise them. In many cases, it seems that environmental stress plays a role, and thus it is very important that the environment be kept quiet, calm and with few visits. Cats should primarily be left alone the first 2 weeks postpartum except to feed, clean, and check in on the babies a few brief times a day.

You will need to watch daily for signs that a mother is neglecting her young, especially in the first few weeks. Call us if:

- The mother spends all her time away from the kittens.
- She does not groom or nurse them frequently.
- The kittens cry and mother seems not to respond.

Maternal Aggression towards other animals – Aggressive behaviour towards cats or dogs is very common in mum cats, as they are trying to protect their young. Please do not try to introduce these foster cats to other animals. This can be very stressful and offers no advantages. Please block any avenues they may have for seeing other cats or dogs, and strictly enforce separation from your resident pets.

If, for some reason, the mum cat sees another animal and is upset, quickly remove the source of anxiety (cover up window, etc.) and leave the room. Do not attempt to comfort or reassure the mum cat or babies. Come back in 20 minutes or so to check on them.

Maternal Aggression towards people – Occasionally, mother cats have strong protective instincts against humans as well. They may hiss, growl, or strike out if you approach the kittens. At the RSPCA, we try to screen for these behaviours but sometimes they will develop down the line. If faced with this situation, move very slowly around the mum cat and the nest. Wear a long-sleeved sweatshirt to protect yourself as you clean around her. Try to bribe her with tasty treats such as chicken baby food. Speak in a soft, reassuring voice, and try not to react if the mum cat hisses or growls. **DO NOT** correct the cat by spraying her with water or undertaking other types of correction. Remember, she is acting out of a natural instinct to protect her young, and if you act in a threatening manner, her behaviour may escalate. Call RSPCA at the first sign of maternal aggression for individual advice and evaluation of your situation. In some cases, we may advise the return of mum and kittens, or just the mum, depending on the age and health of the kittens.

11. CRITERIA FOR POSSIBLE EMERGENCIES

Emergency situations may include:

- Continuous weight loss over several days
- Continuous diarrhoea over a 24-hour period and the kitten is lethargic and not eating
- Continuous vomiting over a 12-hour period
- Bleeding of any kind—nose, urine, stool
- Any trauma—hit by a car, dropped, limp, stepped on, unconscious
- Difficulty in breathing/blocked airway
- Lethargy
- Dehydration (sunken eyes, skin is not elastic and will tent when pinched)
- Coughing or sneezing should pose no immediate problems unless accompanied by blood or symptoms such as lethargy or dehydration.

NOTE: If the kitten has vomiting or diarrhoea, but is still active, eating and drinking, it can probably wait until the next day to receive help.

Please contact the RSPCA Veterinary Clinic via email to foster@rspca-act.org.au or call 02 6287 8100 if your kitten exhibits any of the above signs.

12. KITTEN CHEAT SHEET

SITUATION	WHAT TO DO
Category 1 Diarrhoea Kittens are having very soft / watery stools but are eating and energetic with no weight loss	Pick up some I/D prescription diet can food and skip one meal or fast for 12 hours. These kittens will most likely get better with minimal support.
Category 2 Diarrhoea Kittens are having very soft to watery stools, are eating and energetic but losing weight	Fill out a Diarrhoea History Form and make an appointment with the veterinary clinic. You may pick up some Royal Canin prescription diet can food whilst awaiting your appointment. These kittens may be admitted to the veterinary clinic for further observation and treatment.
Category 3 Diarrhoea Kittens are having watery stools, lethargic and losing weight	Email foster@rspca-act.org.au or call the veterinary clinic immediately for an appointment. If there are no appointments available, complete a Diarrhoea History form and the kittens can be dropped off at the veterinary clinic. These kittens may be admitted to the veterinary clinic for further observation and treatment. If this occurs outside of RSPCA Veterinary Clinic hours, please contact Canberra Veterinary Emergency Services in Gungahlin on 6225 7257.
Category 1 Cat Flu Kittens' eyes look weepy and are red or having green/yellow discharge	Make a veterinary appointment. In the meantime, use a cotton ball or soft cloth to gently clean the eyes (don't rub!) of any discharge and apply a warm compress for a few minutes once or twice a day.
Category 2 Cat Flu Kittens are sneezing and having thick or yellow/green discharge	Make a veterinary appointment. Warm up the wet food, if kittens can't smell the food they don't eat. These kittens may be admitted to the isolation ward for treatment however it is better that they stay with their carer for treatment.
Category 3 Cat Flu The kitten seems to be struggling to breathe or is breathing with its mouth open	Email foster@rspca-act.org.au or call the veterinary clinic immediately for an appointment. These kittens will be admitted to the isolation ward for treatment. If this occurs outside of RSPCA Veterinary Clinic hours, please contact Canberra Veterinary Emergency Services in Gungahlin on 6225 7257.
Monitoring Weight Kittens are not losing weight, but are not gaining weight	If the kittens are energetic, eating well and not having diarrhoea, keep monitoring the kittens and if they do not gain weight in 48 hours or if their appetite or energy level drops, email or call the veterinary clinic.
Vaccinations Kittens are due for vaccinations	Kittens are due every 3 weeks for vaccinations with the first vaccination at 4 weeks (around 400 - 500g). Please email foster@rspca-act.org.au or call the RSPCA Veterinary Clinic to make a vaccination appointment.

Appendix 1 – Kitten Ageing Chart

ONE - FOUR DAYS

- Eyes & Ears Closed
- Pigment bright pink
- Umbilical cord present
- No gag reflexes
- Weight 100 - 130g



FIVE - SIX DAYS

- Eyes Closed
- Ears beginning to open
- Pigment bright pink
- No gag reflexes
- Weight 130 - 140g



SEVEN - EIGHT DAYS

- Eyes Closed
- Hearing some sounds
- Begin crawling, unable to hold full body weight
- No gag reflexes
- Weight 140 - 160g



NINE - ELEVEN DAYS

- Eyes begin to open
- Hearing some sounds
- Crawling
- No gag reflexes
- Weight 160 - 190g



TWELVE - FOURTEEN DAYS

- Eyes opening
- Hearing some sounds
- Crawling
- Weight 190 - 210g



FIFTEEN - SIXTEEN DAYS

- Eyes open with some sight
- Hearing natural sounds
- Walking Begins
- Weight 210 - 245g



THREE WEEKS

- Vision nearly normal
- Hearing
- Walking
- Begin introducing canned food
- Social play begins
- Begin grooming
- Incisor teeth begin erupting
- Weight 330g



FOUR WEEKS

- Vision normal
- Hearing
- Walking
- Eating canned food
- Introduce dry food 24/7
- Social play
- Begin grooming
- Eye colour may begin changing
- Canine teeth erupting and/or present
- Weight 430g



FIVE WEEKS

- Eating canned food
- Introduce dry food 24/7
- Social play, stalking, pouncing
- Begin grooming
- Eye colour may begin changing
- Lower pre-molars present
- Weight 540g



SIX WEEKS

- Eating canned food
- Introduce dry food 24/7
- Social play, stalking, pouncing and good eye-paw coordination
- Grooming
- Eye colour changing to adult colour
- Introduce to other species
- Weight 650g



SEVEN WEEKS

- Eating canned food
- Introduce dry food 24/7
- Social play, stalking, pouncing and good eye-paw coordination
- Grooming
- Eye colour changing to adult colour
- Introduce to other species
- Weight 775g



EIGHT WEEKS

- Eating canned food
- Introduce dry food 24/7
- Adult motor skills
- Grooming
- Adult eye colour present
- Adult sleeping patterns
- Adult social skills
- Adult Body Temperature
- All deciduous teeth present
- Weight 900g



Appendix 2 – Foster Kitten Agreement Form

Kitten Foster Care Agreement

Thank you for volunteering your time with the RSPCA ACT Foster Program.

The rules listed below are designed to help you nurture and support kittens that are too small or sick to be adopted into their forever homes.

Declaration

I, _____, agree to foster cats/kittens for RSPCA ACT and to care for them as directed by the RSPCA ACT.

I have received and read the RSPCA ACT Kitten Foster Care Program Manual and agree to abide with the guidelines as explained in the document.

I understand that fostered cats/kittens remain the property of the RSPCA ACT and that they will be returned to the Society when requested to do so.

I agree that I will not attempt to arrange the adoption/sale of any cat/kitten fostered to me, nor will I seek to adopt any such cat/kitten myself unless authorised by the Executive Manager of Animal Welfare or the Animal Care Manager.

I understand that the RSPCA ACT is not responsible for any damage caused by the foster cats/kittens to any person, person living in my home, animal, animal living in my home or property (including damage to me or my home).

I also agree to the following:

- To allow inspection of the cats/kittens and the area in which they are kept at any time;
- To provide clean, dry, comfortable housing and bedding and adequate space to accommodate all cats/kittens without overcrowding;
- To keep cats/kittens indoors or in a contained outdoor enclosure and to keep them safe at all times;
- To feed the cats/kittens and maintain their hygiene in accordance with the Kitten Foster Care Program Manual guidelines;
- To return the cats/kittens for their scheduled Veterinary appointments and to return them at the end of the foster period;
- To monitor the cats/kittens for any signs of illness or injury and to email foster@rspca-act.org.au or call the RSPCA ACT Veterinary Clinic as soon as possible;
- To email foster@rspca-act.org.au or call the RSPCA ACT Veterinary Clinic if my foster cats/kittens haven't eaten for more than 24 hours;
- To email foster@rspca-act.org.au or call the RSPCA ACT Veterinary Clinic if my foster cats/kittens are experiencing diarrhoea for more than 24 hours;
- To give my foster cats/kittens only medications prescribed by the RSPCA ACT Veterinary Clinic or Canberra Veterinary Emergency Services;

- To return to the RSPCA ACT Veterinary Clinic any cat/kitten which requires veterinary treatment;
- To return to the RSPCA ACT Veterinary Clinic any cat/kitten which dies in my foster care;
- To abide by the decisions of the RSPCA ACT Veterinary Clinic, Executive Manager of Animal Welfare or the Animal Care Manager:
- To use an approved carrier to transport my foster cats / kittens to and from the RSPCA;
- That I will not give the care of my foster cats/kittens to anyone else at any time if I am unable to care for them but to return them to the RSPCA;
- To clean and disinfect all supplies used by my foster cats/kittens before using them with a new group of fosters;
- To clean out and disinfect my designated cats/kittens' space before introducing a new group of fosters (this is extremely important to keep your fosters healthy).

I hereby acknowledge that I have read and fully understand the importance of the above rules. I agree to all parts of the RSPCA ACT Foster Agreement. I have also read and agree to follow the rules set out in the Foster Carer Facebook Page Guidelines. Should I have questions, I will contact the RSPCA ACT for clarification.

I understand and agree that I will return the animal(s) on the scheduled date or on demand whichever is sooner. I understand that any and all placements will only be made through RSPCA ACT Adoption Centre and are subject to the same guidelines as any other adoption.

If I am unable to comply with this agreement, I understand that it may lead to a termination of my fostering with the RSPCA ACT.

Foster Carer Signature		Date	
Animal Care Manager/Executive Manager of Animal Welfare		Date	

Appendix 3 – Foster Kitten Carer’s Record

FOSTER KITTEN – CARER’S RECORD

Animal’s Details

Carer’s Name: _____

Kitten ID Numbers: _____

Estimated length of foster care needed: _____

Veterinary Record

Vaccination and Worming Schedule (weight guide is for when kitten is due for treatment)

		Weight Guide	Date Given	Product	Actual Weight	Initials (Staff or Carer)
Vaccination	1 st	400g				Vet clinic staff only
	2 nd	700g				Vet clinic staff only
Worming	1 st	200g				Can be given by carer
	2 nd	400g				Same time as vacc
	3 rd	600g				Can be given by carer
	4 th	800g				Same time as vacc

Unscheduled Vet Check Visits

1 st	Reason and date	Initials	4 th	Reason and date	Initials
2 nd	Reason and date	Initials	5 th	Reason and date	Initials
3 rd	Reason and date	Initials	6 th	Reason and date	Initials

Medications Dispensed

Date	Reason for Medication	Type, Amount and Dose of Medication Dispensed	Date completed

Date booked in for desexing (800g): _____

Appendix 4 – Kitten Foster Carer Return Information Sheet



Animal ID(s): _____

KITTEN FOSTER RETURN INFORMATION SHEET

Instructions

Please fill out this return form (this can be done in advance) so we have extra information to give potential adopters and facilitate the adoption process. You can use one form for all kittens or if there are specific issues for each kitten separate forms can be used.

Information

How long did it take for your foster kittens to adjust to your home?	
How many kittens were fostered together?	
Where did you keep your kittens?	
How did your kittens handle being confined?	
Do they have places they liked / hated to be scratched / patted?	Liked Hated
Were your kittens exposed to other pets or small children? Explain the situation and reactions	
Was there any noise / situation that made your kittens uncomfortable?	
Are your foster kittens completely litter trained? If not explain where they were going.	
What makes these kittens special? Any endearing habits?	

Check all that apply:

- Very vocal
 Sedate / mellow
 Very active
 Shy of strangers
 Wants lots of attention
 Likes to be held
 Likes to be groomed
 Playful
 Lap cat
 Doesn't like to be picked up
 Outgoing
 Frightened by loud noises
 Nips if handled too long


Other Comments:

Appendix 5 – Quick Reference Guide

Important contacts

- For any medical concerns or advice, email foster@rspca-act.org.au or call the RSPCA ACT vet clinic: 6287 8100
- For after-hours authorisation for medical treatment, email: foster@rspca-act.org.au (before 9pm)
- Kitten birth notifications, email: foster@rspca-act.org.au
- Volunteer Coordinator: volunteers@rcpca-act.org.au

Timeline

- 
- Birth to 2 weeks (weight at birth approx. 100g) - *Neonates*:
 - Orphan bottle feeding: Divetelact only every 2 - 3 hours
 - Orphan kittens must be stimulated to eliminate
 - Email RSPCA ASAP after the birth to advise number of kittens born. Sex of kittens is not required at this stage (ID numbers will be sent to you for the kittens)
 - Kittens need to be weighed daily (weights recorded on chart provided)
 - First worming treatment (Felex paste)
 - 3 weeks old (weight approx. 300g):
 - Introduce wet food and dry food soaked in warm water and/or Divetelect, then mashed
 - Orphans: continue Divetelact but reduce number of feeds
 - Water available at all times
 - Toilet training begins (carers need to collect litter and trays from cattery)
 - 4 weeks old (weight approx. 400g) - *Juveniles*:
 - Eating wet food, introduce dry food
 - Orphans: finish Divetelact
 - Due for first vaccination and worming
 - 4 weeks old & up:
 - Socialisation must begin for normal behaviour in kittens to develop
 - Supervised exposure to dogs, other cats, small animals, children, and strangers
 - Introduce kittens to various foods such as raw chicken wings, kangaroo mince, chicken mince, sardines, tuna etc to prevent fussy eaters. These foods should not make up more than 10% of their diet
 - 5 weeks old (weight approx. 500g):
 - Further socialisation such as supervised & secure outdoor time, more time around children
 - By end of week 5, mothers are ready to leave kittens and return to the shelter
 - 7 weeks old (weight approx. 700g)
 - Due for 2nd vaccination and worming
 - To be booked in for desexing when 800g
- CONGRATULATIONS** your foster kittens are off to their forever homes!

Potential indicators of an unhealthy kitten

Foster carers with young kittens should keep an eye out for the following symptoms, as these may be an indication of underlying illness (treatable or otherwise) or failure to thrive. It is important for foster carers to get their kittens checked by a veterinarian as soon as any of the following signs are noticed so that they can be examined and treated accordingly (early detection generally results in more favourable outcomes for the animal/s concerned):

Non-specific signs of illness:

- Failure to gain weight over a few days
- Stunting (failure to reach body sizes that are appropriate for age)
- Loss of weight over a couple of measurements (weighing daily is important)
- Persistently thin, ribby condition
- Inappetence - not eating or poor appetite
- Excessive and persistent weakness or sleepiness (a low-energy, listless kitten)
- Sudden death of one or more of a litter - should indicate an issue with the litter in general
- Excessive thirst (kittens in a litter excessively seeking water)
- Vomiting or diarrhoea
- Bloating of the belly and/or abdominal pain

Cat flu signs:

- Sneezing or coughing.
- Clear, watery or thick yellow / green discharges coming from the eyes and/or nose
- Ulcers on the mouth or tongue
- Difficulty breathing or heavy breathing
- Failure to feed or poor feeding (often trouble suckling)
- Fading - kittens losing weight over days (often a poor sign with very young babies)

Signs of gastro-intestinal problems (including parasitic disease):

- Diarrhoea (watery or custard-consistency faeces)
- Blood in the droppings
- Mucus (jelly-like substance) in the faeces
- Weight loss
- Straining to pass faeces
- Bloating of the belly
- Abdominal pain
- Redness and scalding of the anus-region
- Worms seen in the droppings (especially tapeworms)
- Excessive thirst

Other things that need checking:

- The eyes not opening properly when they should be open
- Deformity of the body or legs
- Sudden weakness, lameness or non-use of one or more legs

- Scalding and redness of the urinary (penis/vulva) or faecal (anus) area
- Redness or scabbing of the skin on the body or hair loss
- Seizures or incoordination - suggestion of neurological (nervous system) disease
- Faecal or urinary incontinence (releasing urine or faeces without apparent control)



Appendix 6 – Neonate Kitten Record Sheet



Kitten ID# and Name: _____

NEONATE KITTEN RECORD SHEET

Kitten Weight Chart

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	
400																															
380																															
360																															
340																															
330																															
320																															
310																															
300																															
290																															
280																															
270																															
260																															
250																															
240																															
230																															
220																															
210																															
200																															
190																															
180																															
170																															
160																															
150																															
140																															
130																															
120																															
110																															
100																															

Daily Monitoring Record

<i>day</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
<i>date</i>															
Eat															
Drink															
Urine															
Faeces															
Worm															
F3															
Vet Check															
Meds															
Carer Notes															

<i>day</i>	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
<i>date</i>															
Eat															
Drink															
Urine															
Faeces															
Worm															
F3															
Vet Check															
Meds															
Carer Notes															