

Feeding Guidelines (Mom and kittens to 5 wks old)

Thank you for fostering! The information provided below will get you and your kitten(s) off to a great start. Please let us know if you ever have any concerns or questions.

AID	Name	Description	Today's Weight

Feeding Instructions:

Mom Cat

- **Dry:** Free feed dry kitten kibble.
- **Wet:** 1/2 of a 5.5oz can or a full 3oz can of wet food 3 times a day.
- **Water:** should always be available and should be refreshed twice a day.

Mom cat with Kittens 5+ weeks old

Once kittens are eating well on their own mom cat will not need as much food since she will not be nursing as much. Keep in mind mom will most likely eat whatever the kittens don't finish so balance this with how much she is being fed.

- **Dry:** Free feed dry kitten kibble.
- **Wet:** 1/4 of a 5.5oz can or 1/2 3oz can of wet food 2-3 times a day.
- **Water** must be **easily accessible** at all times. Please use a moderately shallow bowl (kittens should be able to easily reach head over lip of bowl to drink).

Bottle kittens

Kittens will be getting everything they need from mom for the first 4-5 weeks of life. It's a good idea to make sure smaller kittens get one on one time with mom and are nursing well. If you see a kitten struggling to latch on or meowing/crying contact the foster phone, 919-630-9680. Kittens under 4 weeks of age are very fragile and if they are not eating the recommended amount it can quickly become an emergency.

4-5 week old kittens

Dry: 1/8 cup of Mother and Baby Cat kibble soaked for 15 minutes and then mixed. Feed 2x a day. Kittens this small will eat wet food better than dry. All uneaten food should be thrown out at your next feeding.

Wet: 1/4 - 5.5oz can or 1/2 - 3oz can of wet food gruel should be offered 3-4 times a day. You will need to reduce bottle feeding when transitioning to wet food. All uneaten food should be thrown out at your next feeding.

Making gruel:

Mix ¼ can of wet food with 1 ounce (2 tablespoons) of warm water. It is okay to make gruel in advance (1 can wet food with ½ cup warm water) and refrigerate it. If you do this, you will need to warm up the gruel before feeding. Microwave for 6 seconds and stir well to avoid hot spots.

Transitioning kittens

Kittens are used to suckling for their food. It will take a little time for them to understand how to eat wet and dry food from a plate.

4-5 weeks

Make wet food gruel and place on a flat plate. You may need to use the back of a spoon to bring the food closer to the kitten's mouth. They are not used to lowering their head for food. You can also place a small amount of wet food on their nose and mouth. Once they understand what you are offering is food, slowly move the spoon down to the plate. Kittens will be very messy during this stage. Allow them to explore and discover the food. Just make sure to clean them up afterwards.

Some kittens take longer than others to figure it out. Be patient with them and keep trying. Remember to avoid sudden food changes as this can lead to vomiting/diarrhea.

Weighing Instructions:

Kittens should be weighed every day. If you do not have a kitchen scale and are able to purchase one please do so, this is an essential tool when fostering. If any of the foster kittens are not gaining weight or are losing weight, please call the foster phone, 919-630-9680. Kittens under 5 weeks of age can become critical quickly.

Kittens should gain 4oz per week. That's roughly ½ ounce per day.

2 weeks old = 1/2 lb. (8 ounces)

4 week old kitten = 1 lb. (16 ounces)

*Kittens' sizes may vary if they were malnourished upon arrival, but kittens should never lose weight or go more than a day without gaining any weight.

Let us know if you notice any of the following:

- Not eating
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Sneezing/coughing
- Discharge from eyes or nose
- Excessive crying
- Not playing with siblings
- Lethargy
- Limping
- Any abnormal behavior
- Weight loss

**FOR ANY MEDICAL ISSUES
OR EMERGENCY:**

Please call/text 919-213-1935

Mom should be eating well every day. Any lack of appetite is urgent. Contact us asap.

Setting Up Your Foster Room

Moms with young kittens need a safe space where they feel their kittens are safe. It is essential we provide them with this safe space. If their space is not set up correctly, it could lead to moms not nursing kittens, not eating (and then stopping milk production), or even panicking and injuring their kittens in an attempt to find a safe space.

So, what do we need to provide to make sure their space is safe and successful?

- Space should be away from any other animals in the household. They will treat any other animals as a threat to their kittens safety
 - Moms should never be able to see other animals in the house. If they can see other animals, they will assume their kittens are not safe and will obsessively patrol the space. This leads to them not nursing or caring for their kittens
 - Moms should not be able to easily hear any other animals in the house
 - Sound machines, calming cat music or white noise are essential
 - relaxmycat.com ; <https://www.youtube.com/c/relaxmycat>
 - <https://www.youtube.com/c/CalmYourCatRelaxingMusicandTvForCats>
- Space should be in a quiet area of the house in a smaller room
 - Larger rooms can cause mom to constantly move kittens around
 - Guest bathrooms are the best choices
 - We do not recommend keeping moms and kittens in wire kennels as this can be very stressful for moms and lead to lack of nursing and/or care
 - The one exception to this is feral mom with kittens
 - Ensure their space is in a quieter area (never laundry rooms or loud areas) and use sound machines to help prevent sound stress
- Mom should have enough open space on the floor to fully lay down to nurse
- Mom should also have enough space to take small breaks from kittens
 - Kittens are very warm and mom will need to occasionally take breaks to cool down again

Kitty-Proofing Your Foster Room and Home

Cat-proofing and especially kitten-proofing your home is much the same as child-proofing it! That means hiding or removing cords, removing small items that kittens can choke on, etc.

Your foster room should be COMPLETELY cleared out and only consist of basic cat necessities (i.e bed, food, water, litterbox, and toys). This means removing all toiletries and decorative items from the bathtub, counters, or any other surface the kittens can access. Kittens love to play with anything they can get their paws on and could be injured by heavy or sharp items.

We recommend starting your kittens in a non-carpeted, easily-sanitized room. This will help make regular cleaning easier and allow for full sanitizing between litters of kittens. We recommend a bathroom as your foster room. Remember to keep the toilet seat down.

Another great way to keep their space clean and make cleanup easier and faster is taping puppy pads down under litter boxes and going up the walls slightly. As kittens learn to use litter boxes, they can be

very messy. Taping puppy pads above baseboards and along the floor allows for fast and easy cleanup when messes are made.

Here are some photos of foster spaces:

