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Since 2004

Triage and General Care of Kittens and Puppies Starting with Neonates

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SNUGGLE Pet Rescue Triage and General Care of Kittens and Puppies Starting with Neonates

The following information has been compiled by our experienced Foster Care Volunteers since SNUGGLE Pet Rescue began in 2004. We always remain open to new and better ways of taking care of our fosters, which is why some of our practices have changed over the years. The information included in this handbook are our most current practices and we are confident they result in the kittens and puppies we care for having the best chance possible of surviving. Along with what we do, we rely on our veterinarians experienced in treating neonates and older kittens and puppies.

GETTING A NEW NEONATE OR YOUNG KITTEN OR PUPPY

When you get a new kitten or puppy, you need to begin by getting a carrier set up (see Environment Temperature Control on page 13). The first thing you do is give them a quick once over to assess their condition and if there is something obviously wrong that needs immediate attention. If they look okay and the carrier is ready, put them inside. This is done because many young kittens and puppies arrive cold and this is how we start to warm them up. If a litter comes in, they go into the same carrier and not separate ones. If you have not had time to get a carrier ready, wrap the baby in a blanket and hold them against your chest until you can get them into a warm carrier. DO NOT ever lay a kitten or puppy directly on a heating pad.

When the kittens or puppies have had time to warm up they are taken out one-by-one. In most cases we give new arrivals a vitamin B-12 injection for added support. The reason vitamin B-12 is given is because it is the most beneficial supplement because it increases appetite, increases brain function, decreases stress and anxiety and decreases diarrhea. Use the formula in the red bottle because it does not sting when administered. The injection is given subcutaneously as often as every other day using a Tuberculin syringe which is small so the kittens and puppies don't feel it. NOTE: If you do not have vitamin B-12 or if you have never given an injection to a kitten or puppy skip this for now.

Below are the steps SNUGGLE Pet Rescue takes when we receive a new kitten or puppy. NOTE: You may not be able to do everything listed but do what you can and only if you are experienced.

STEP 1: KITTEN AND PUPPY BODY TEMPERATURE

Taking tiny kittens or puppies temperature can be very stressful for them, so we only actually do this if they feel colder or hotter than they should. If you suspect their temperature is not normal, take the temperature anally. First you need to lubricate the thermometer with petroleum jelly to ensure it slides in easily. This makes taking a temperature less uncomfortable and prevents injury. NOTE: If you have never done this, skip this step and rely on feel. It will not be as accurate as taking their temperature but it will help you to determine if they are too cold or hot.

Normal Kitten Temperature	Normal Puppy Temperature
Between 100 and 101 degrees	Between 100 and 102 degrees

Kitten and puppy's whose temperature drops to 97 degrees or below are at risk of their organs being damaged. Bleeding from the mouth or nose may be a sign of this happening and they must be seen by a veterinarian immediately.

When a baby arrives and you learn it has not had anything to eat for too long a period of time, the natural instinct is to give them a bottle. NEVER feed a kitten or puppy if their temperature is under 99 degrees. When they get too cold, blood rushes to the brain to sustain life. If you feed them, the blood will leave the heart and brain to go to the stomach to process the food. This will cause a lack of oxygen to the brain and cause sudden death.

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STEP 2: DETERMINING THE AGE OF A KITTEN AND PUPPY

Knowing the age of a kitten or puppy determines how often it needs to be fed. The chart below will help you determine this by explaining what to look for at each stage of growth and behavior development. Just like human babies, kittens and puppies don't always keep to the schedule. Some do things earlier while others take their time.

Kitten and Puppy's Status	Approximate Age
No fur on hands or feet	Premature
Has umbilical cord attached	3 to 5 Days Old
Weighs 3 to 4 Ounces	Birth Weight
Eyes are closed	Less than 10 Days
Eyes are open	7 to 12 Days
Has teeth	3 Weeks
Walking	3 Weeks
Eye color around iris changing from blue	5 Weeks

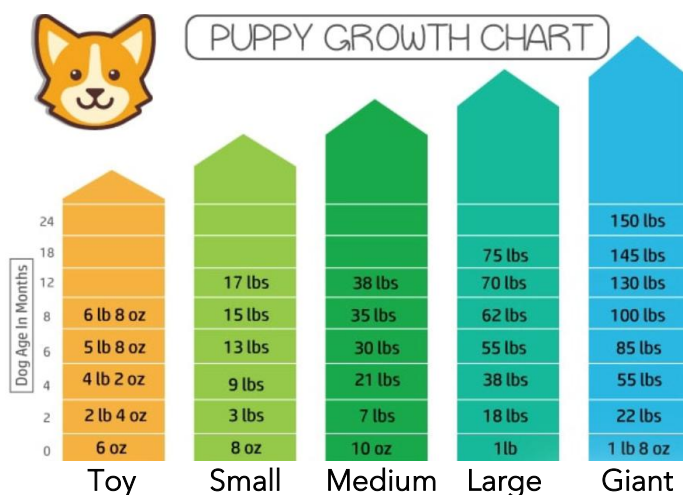
STEP 3: KITTEN AND PUPPY'S WEIGHT BY AGE

Kittens birth weight is approximately 3 to 4 ounces. In general, an average size kitten will double their body weight during their first week of life. They should gain $\frac{1}{4}$ ounce to $\frac{1}{2}$ ounce of body weight per day until they are five weeks old. At this age the kitten should weigh around 1 pound. Their weight will slowly increase after that until they reach their full adult weight at around eight months of age.

The kittens we get are usually underweight due to poor nutrition when their mother was pregnant. Some make up the weight over time but others remain on the smaller side.

Kitten's Age	Approximate Weight
01 Day	03 to 04 ounces
05 Days	04 to 07 ounces
10 Days	05 to 09 ounces
15 Days	08 to 11 ounces
20 Days	09 to 14 ounces
25 Days	10 to 16 ounces

Puppies come in a range of sizes so this chart will help you age them by size and weight.

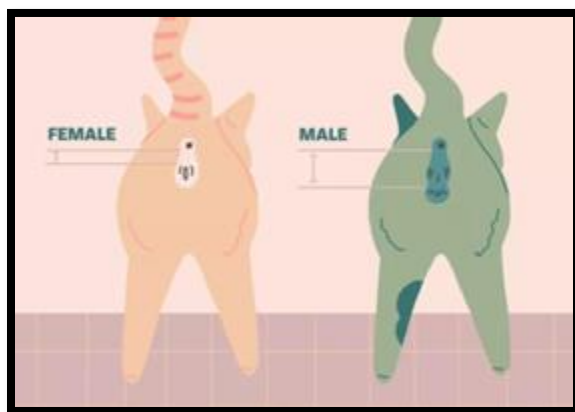


STEP 4: DETERMING THE SEX OF A KITTEN AND PUPPY

We often hear it's not easy to tell female kittens from male kittens at a young age. When determining the sex of them, put them on a flat surface with their head pointing away from you. Then gently lift their tail, keeping your other hand on the kitten or puppy so they can't move.

Female Kitten You'll find a small hole, which is the anus, near the base of the tail with a small slash or line directly underneath it which is the vulva. When looking at both they should look a bit like a lowercase "i." There is little fur between the anus and vulva because they are so close together.

Male Kitten You'll find a small hole, which is the anus, near the base of the tail. A bit further down is a second rounded shape which is the scrotum. Because the anus and scrotum are further apart there will be some fur between them. By 2 months, most male kitten's testes will have descended into the scrotum.



Puppies are much easier to sex than kittens. What you do is lay them on their back making sure you have a secure hold on them.

Female Puppies Their stomach is bare between their belly button and there is no raised lump. The genitals are located between the hind legs, beneath the tail and anus. The vulva is a fleshly mound shaped like a leaf and has a vertical slit in the middle.

Male Puppies The skin around the penis looks like a small lump and it is just below the belly button. The scrotum is located between the hind legs but typically won't be visible until a male puppy is 8 weeks old.

Just so you know, the presence of nipples cannot be used to sex a puppy because both females and males have them.

To confuse matters a bit more, kittens and puppies can be born with female and male reproductive organs. They are called Hermaphroditism and when they are old enough they have to be both spayed and neutered.

BASIC OVERALL EXAMINATION OF NEWLY ARRIVED KITTEN OR PUPPY

Following the initial information gathering for a new foster, a more thorough exam is done. The list on the next 3 pages explains what this entails, followed by more detailed information. If at any point you discover something that requires the kitten or puppy to be seen by a veterinarian, stop your basic overall exam and

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get them the professional treatment needed. With kittens and puppies as fragile as the ones that are found abandoned are, they can fade quickly, so every minute counts. NOTE: This information is more geared for rescue organizations and not individuals who have found or been given an abandoned kitten or puppy.

Anus and Genitals

Normal Condition	What to Look For	Actions to Take
Anus may be swollen, but there should be no blood or discharge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blood or discharge present Intestines protruding from anus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must be seen by a veterinarian
Genitals may be swollen, but there should be no blood or discharge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blood or discharge present 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must be seen by a veterinarian

Ears

Normal Condition	What to Look For	Actions to Take
Note: Kitten's ears and the ear canal don't start opening until they are 5 to 8 days old. The ears are fully developed and standing up when they are about 3 weeks old.		
If ears are still <i>closed</i> there should be no visible blood or visible parasites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parasites (fleas, maggots or ticks) Blood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Treat parasites with Capstar (see treatment chart on page 9) Burrowing parasites can cause bleeding so must be seen by veterinarian
When ears are <i>open</i> there should be no visible blood, parasites or unpleasant odor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parasites (ear mites, fleas, maggots or ticks) Blood Odor which indicates a yeast or bacterial infection cause by a fungus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Treat parasites with Capstar (see treatment chart on page 9) Burrowing parasites can cause bleeding so must be seen by veterinarian Ear mites are treated with Tresaderm because it is safe for kittens (it must be kept in the refrigerator) If tick is embedded must be removed by veterinarian so the entire head is removed or the kitten/puppy runs the risk of an infection that can develop into sepsis Yeast infections are confirmed by a veterinarian and treated with either an anti-parasitic, anti-fungal or antibiotics

Eyes

Normal Condition	What to Look For	Actions to Take
If eyes have <i>not</i> opened yet, the lids should be smooth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Redness around the eye Bulging around the eye Protruding eye 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must be seen by a veterinarian to check for possible infection or pressure may need to be released
In an <i>open</i> eye the pupil is black and the iris is blue in kittens and puppies - starts changing at 3 to 8 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any part of the eye that is white, cloudy or yellow 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cloudy or white eye could be because of cataracts Yellow could be a sign of jaundice Must be seen by a veterinarian
Eyes should not be crusty and there should be no discharge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crusty eyes Discharge from the eyes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gently wash with saline on a cotton ball and monitor If it persists must be seen by a veterinarian
If the eyes are open the pupils should look normal and not be dilated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pupil(s) are dilated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Possible neurological issue Possible heart condition Must be seen by a veterinarian if it persists

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Eyes (continued)

Normal Condition	What to Look For	Actions to Take
Pupils respond appropriately to light	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pupils do not respond to light 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drop a cotton ball near the eye and the kitten or puppy should turn to look If they do not respond may be partially or fully blind and need to be seen by veterinarian

Gums and Mouth

Normal Condition	What to Look For	Actions to Take
Solid roof of the mouth with no openings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Openings Cleft palate Defective shape 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must be seen by a veterinarian Use extreme caution when feeding May need to be tube fed
Gums are cherry red	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gums are less than cherry red Gums are yellow 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must be seen by a veterinarian Yellow gums could be jaundice
Mouth is moist and wet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mouth is dry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subcutaneous fluids (See treatment chart on page 9)
Mouth is closed appropriately	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mouth is open for breathing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Possible Upper Respiratory Infection Listen for lung congestion or labored breathing Try nebulizing Use caution with feeding If persists, must be seen by a veterinarian

Hydration

Normal Condition	What to Look For	Actions to Take
When skin is gently pulled up, it should return quickly into place when released	When skin is pulled up, it stays upright and does not return back into place quickly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Veterinarian visit to get Subcutaneous fluids (see treatment chart on page 9) Pull from bag with a 3 cc needle Warm in a glass of water before injecting

Nose

Normal Condition	What to Look For	Actions to Take
No discharge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discharge Chest rattling when breathing Having difficulty drinking and eating 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must be seen by veterinarian to diagnose an upper respiratory infection or pneumonia May require a stay at a veterinary hospital Treated with antibiotics Nebulizer can be used to help with breathing using saline only and <i>not</i> plain water

Skin

Normal Condition	What to Look For	Actions to Take
Skin has fur on all areas of the body	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bald patches are present 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Possible ringworm, injury, mange or mites Must be seen by veterinarian
Skin is free of parasites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fleas are present Ticks are present and are usually found between toes and in the arm pockets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capstar (see treatment chart on page 9) If tick is embedded must be removed by veterinarian so the entire head is removed or the kitten/puppy runs the risk of an infection that can develop into sepsis

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Skin (continued)

Normal Condition	What to Look For	Actions to Take
Skin is free of fly eggs which are also called Fly Strike	See information below under Parasites	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Gently remove with flea comb or tweezersUse Capstar (see treatment chart on Page 9)
Skin is free of Botflies	Botflies live under the skin and form a bulge with a hole in the center	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Veterinarian visitDO NOT attempt to remove the Botfly because it can release a toxin harmful to kittens and puppies

PARASITES

Fleas They are a serious issue because they feed on a kitten or puppy's blood and can cause health conditions such as:

- Hemobart which is anemia caused by infected red blood cells. Can require a blood transfusion.
- Toxoplasmosis parasitic infection can cause brain damage.
- Tapeworms which is caused by oral ingestion of fleas.

If a kitten or puppy is covered with fleas, take them to a veterinarian, especially if their tongue and gums are pale. The common medication used to treat these conditions is Doxycycline which is prescribed by a veterinarian.

To eradicate less serious cases of fleas do the following:

- Food Grade Diatomaceous Earth which can be bought at places like Walmart and Tractor Supply. This is lightly dusted on the kitten or puppy's body.
- Give Capstar Flea preventative before a bath (see the Treatment Chart on page 9 for dosage).
- Give the kitten a bath using Dawn Dish soap (see Bathing Instructions on page 12). Leave it on for 1 minute.
- Use a flea comb to remove fleas.

Fly Strike When the weather is warm and humid is when you should be sure to check for Fly Strike. The easiest way to tell if a kitten or puppy has Fly Strike is to examine them closely, and if you see any evidence of fly eggs or maggots, then it is highly likely they either have Fly Strike or they will develop it soon. Areas most commonly affected by Fly Strike include around the genitals and the base of the tail or lower back. These areas should always be thoroughly inspected if you are suspicious of Fly Strike.

If you can see a wound or maggots moving through a kitten or puppy's fur, that is an obvious indicator that Fly Strike is happening. They need to be seen by a veterinarian immediately. If you find small white or yellow particles stuck to your animal's fur then these may be fly eggs, and if you remove them from your pet's coat then you should be able to prevent fly strike from happening.

All kittens and puppies should be dewormed. Babies under 2 weeks are given Pyrantel or Strongid. Babies over 2 weeks can be given Panacur. Drontal can be used for tapeworms. Please note that Strongid or Panacur does not cure tapeworms.

FUNGAL DISEASE

Ringworm is the most common skin condition found on kittens and puppies. The fungus invades the superficial outer layer of the skin, nails and fur. The sign and symptoms of ringworm are circular areas of fur loss with scaly skin in the center and an advancing raised red edge around the circle. Ringworm should be diagnosed and treated by a veterinarian. Generally, topical ointments are given, but on occasion for severe cases, an oral medication may be given. Selsun Blue Shampoo or a mixture of Coconut Oil and Apple Cider Vinegar may also be applied.

If caring for and treating a kitten or puppy with ringworm *always* wear gloves. Use a new pair each time. Everything the kitten or puppy has come in contact with needs to be cleaned and disinfected. Bleach is best but be sure to rinse surfaces thoroughly with water after disinfecting (see Cleaning Protocols on page 13).

CONTAGIOUS DISEASES

NOTE: This information is geared for rescue organizations. After SNUGGLE Pet Rescue was hit with a Panleuk outbreak in the summer of 2025, we reevaluated all of our procedures to make sure we are doing everything we can to keep our fosters as safe as possible. After a conversation with our vet and the Director of the St. Charles County Pet Adoption Center to learn what their kitten vaccination policy is, we are now going to be vaccinating kittens that have been exposed or possibly exposed to Panleuk when they are fully standing which happens between 3 and 4 weeks. If their legs are still splayed out, we don't consider that to be standing. After a kitten gets their first vaccination the following two injections are given, two weeks apart.

In addition to the vaccinations, the kittens will get from our veterinarian an injection of Convenia, which is an antibiotic that will remain in their system for 2 weeks. This will give the kittens some added protection.

The possible Panleuk kittens will not be available to be adopted until they are 12 weeks old and have had all three vaccinations. Kittens who are *not* at risk of Panleuk will get two vaccinations, starting when they are also standing, and weigh at least 2 pounds which happens around 8 weeks. Then they are ready to be adopted. Their third vaccination will be done by the organization making them available for adoption.

We use PUREVAX® feline vaccines. They are known for their safety, purity and proven protection because they are a modified live vaccine designed to protect kittens and cats from various infectious diseases. They utilize genetically engineered technology to ensure safety and effectiveness and reduce side effects. The vaccines focus on preventing feline herpesvirus, calicivirus, panleukopenia virus and distemper.

For puppies the age protocol and number of vaccinations is the same as kittens, as is the standing requirement. There is not a PUREVAX canine vaccine, so instead they get DHPP, which protects against distemper, hepatitis/adenovirus and parvo/parainfluenza. The vaccine for Leptospirosis is not given to our puppies because of the risk of adverse side effects. They get it once they have left SNUGGLE Pet Rescue and are older.

TREATMENTS ROUTINELY USED FOR KITTENS AND PUPPIES

NOTE: This information is geared for rescue organizations. If you do not have experience in any of these areas, do not treat a kitten or puppy. Get them to a veterinarian. On the following page are the treatments we use regularly to care for our kittens and puppies. Some require a prescription and others don't and this is indicated.

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What Used	Treats	Dosage	Additional Information
Albon (P)*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coccidia Bacterial infections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Day 1 (.5mL/lb./2/day) Day 2 to 5 (.25mL/lb./day) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Used for the symptom of diarrhea caused by bacterial infections or Coccidia Antibiotic medication
Capstar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parasites such as fleas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crush ¼ tablet and mix with ½ cc of water Dose babies at .02 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fleas and parasites should begin to fall off within minutes of first dose
Enema	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Constipation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact Foster Care Coordinator 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only after 3 days of no bowel movement
Marquis Paste (P)*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diarrhea 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mix: 1 part paste with 2 part water Dose .01 for Newborns Dose .02 after eyes open 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dose once per day for 3 to 5 days Repeat dosage for up to 1 day after the stool is solid and formed
Panacur (P)*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gastrointestinal parasites that includes roundworms, hookworms and whipworms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> .2mL/lb./day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Used for the symptom of diarrhea caused by gastrointestinal parasites or Giardia Should NOT be used for babies under 2 weeks of age If tape worms continue to be present, must see a Veterinarian
Pedialyte	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Side effects of Diarrhea-dehydration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Substitute for water in dry formula mix 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Helps with rehydration
Pumpkin (Plain Canned), Rehydrated Organic Pumpkin or Plain Greek Yogurt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diarrhea 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can be fed as tolerated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Canned pumpkin can be used to treat diarrhea or constipation in cats
Simethicone Baby Drops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gas Indigestion Bloating 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1-3 Drops depending on size/age 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must be Magnesium free because it is toxic to kittens and puppies
Strongid (P)*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Round worms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Depends on weight 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can be used for kittens and puppies under 2 weeks old
Subcutaneous Fluids (P)*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Severe dehydration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 cc Normasol or Plasma Lite + B-12/12 hrs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give 1.5 cc using a syringe and needle Check to make sure the fluid is no collecting under the front armpit which means the fluid is not being absorbed Pull up the skin again to see if it return to normal or stays tented If it is still tented, give another 1.5 cc and continue to monitor

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What Used	Treats	Dosage	Additional Information
Vitamin B-12 Supplement (Red label only – not yellow label)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decreases diarrhea Decreases stress and anxiety Increases appetite Increases brain function 	.25 to .5 mL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most beneficial supplement Water Soluble Can be added to subcutaneous fluids Can be given via insulin syringe May turn urine red or pink Must be stored in a dark place

*Indicated item requires a prescription from a veterinarian.

HEALTH PRECAUTIONS

Kittens and puppies have a limited immune system, so be extra cautious in exposing them to germs. Always wash your hands before handling them. Furthermore, do not allow other people to handle your fosters, especially children, as they may pass on dangerous germs.

BOTTLE FEEDING KITTENS AND PUPPIES

Kittens and puppies should never be fed a bottle while on their backs as this could cause liquid to be deposited in the lungs which can cause pneumonia or death. We choose to hold our babies upright next to our chest with the baby's head upright and their bodies horizontally to the ground. Babies should be offered the nipple as their head is held steady. Once latched on, the kitten will begin to nurse vigorously which causes the ears to twitch. This is how you know they are eating well. Once they are finished drinking, they will stop and force the nipple out of their mouth with their tongue. We usually wait a few minutes and try to offer the bottle again in an effort to "top them off". Kittens, unlike puppies, will not overeat; they will stop eating when they are full.

Premature babies may have breathing issues, difficulty maintaining body temperature and not be able to suckle yet which may require tube feeding. This can *only be done* by a trained person. If you have never tube fed a kitten or puppy *do not attempt this*. Take the kitten or puppy to a veterinarian or someone experienced in caring for neonates.

Puppies can be harder to bottle feed than kittens. One trick we have learned is to take your finger and rub it on the puppy's nose while the bottle is being offered. They will think someone is trying to take their food and in most cases a hesitant puppy will then begin to drink.

Age	Feeding Interval (Approximate)
03 to 05 Days	On Demand or Every 03 hours
01 week to 02 weeks	On Demand or Every 03 to 04 hours
02 weeks to 04 weeks	On Demand or Every 04 to 05 hours
04 weeks to 05 weeks	03 times per day
06 weeks to 08 weeks	03 times per day

Kittens and puppies up to the age of 4 weeks should be fed nothing but formula with a bottle or in some cases a syringe has to be used. We feed kittens KMR and puppies Esplac. We add the following to the formula:

- Colostrum (Goat) - Mix 2 teaspoons for every 2 cups formula
- Provable - Mix 6 capsules for every 2 cups formula
- No More Runny Poo - Mix ¼ dropper for every 2 cups formula

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We prefer using dry formula and mixing it fresh at every feeding. We do not recommend premixed liquid formula as the nutrients can adhere to the bottom of the container and may not be able to be mixed properly. The formula temperature should be warm, but not hot. We mix the powder with warm tap water. The liquid should be tested on your inner wrist prior to feeding. Cold formula should *never* be used. It should be at least room temperature.

If a kitten or puppy is allergic to formula they can be fed powdered goat's milk instead. Do not use liquid goats milk. It is mixed and heated the same way as the formula. NEVER feed kittens or puppies cow's milk.

When kittens and puppies are about 3 weeks old, we add Baby Rice Cereal with Iron and Zinc to the formula. We mix it at a ratio of 1 part cereal to 2 parts formula. Then the water is added at a ratio of 2 parts of the formula/cereal mix to 1 part water.

SNUGGLE Pet Rescue does not buy bottles that are found in most pet or feed stores and places like Walmart. We will provide the bottles and nipples but for your information this is where we purchase the ones that have been proven to be far superior to the store bought kind.

Provider	Items to Order
Perfect Pets Nursing Supplies 734-461-1362 https://www.shop.wombaroo.com/Nursing-Supplies_c3.htm	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Soft Feeding Bottle (WF-BOTSOFT)• Order the and Small Hard to Feed Nipple (WF-TP)
Henry's Healthy Pets 540-745-3334 https://www.henryspets.com/	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Silicone Mothering Nipples

FUSSY KITTENS AND PUPPIES

Kittens and puppies should not continue to cry if their needs have been met. However, there are puppies who feel it necessary to cry no matter what you do for them. If a kitten or puppy continues to cry check to see if they are cold, still hungry or maybe they need to be stimulated again. If this does not stop the crying, then start to determine whether they might be in pain. If you suspect they may be, contact a veterinarian.

STIMULATING KITTENS AND PUPPIES

Kittens and puppies are unable to urinate or defecate without stimulation until approximately 3 weeks. Therefore, if they are not with their mother who normally takes care of this, they will need to be stimulated. We use the water from a kitchen faucet set at a warm trickle. The baby can be held stomach down or back down with the anus and genitals under the trickle of water. Using the cotton ball, lightly massage the anus and genitals. Usually, they will urinate and defecate within 10 to 40 seconds. They should be stimulated after every meal. However, they may not urinate or defecate every time. On average, kittens and puppies should defecate daily. Stool should be formed and mustard yellow (see the Fecal Chart on page 12). If a kitten or puppy does not urinate in 24 hours or defecate within 72 hours get them to a veterinarian right away.

To be on the safe side after a kitten's first pee and poop on their own, continue to stimulate them after every feeding for a week. This way you know they are getting everything out of their system.

FECAL CHECK

Consistency and color of bowel movements are quite telling in the determination of health and wellness. Foul smelling excrement may be an indication of parvo or panleukopenia and the kitten should be seen by a veterinarian immediately.

SNUGGLE Pet Rescue Triage and General Care of Kittens and Puppies Starting with Neonates

Color	Texture	Indication
Brownish to Mustard Brown	Firm or well formed (tootsie roll)	Normal
White	Loose	May not be absorbing formula
Yellow	Pudding or Soft Serve Ice Cream	Possible Coccidia or Worms
Green or Green with Blood	Pudding or Soft Serve Ice Cream	Liver or Kidney function issues/possible Giardia

TRANSITIONING PUPPIES AND KITTENS TO SOLID FOOD

Kittens and puppies can begin to transition to solid food at 4 to 6 weeks. It is critical to monitor them to make sure they are eating enough. Please note that when transiting kittens and puppies to food if they do not eat regularly, they can become hypoglycemic. Signs of this are acting drunk, disoriented or lying listlessly on their side. If kittens or puppies show signs of this, take action immediately.

If you suspect a kitten or puppy is hypoglycemic what you need to do first is confirm whether they are unconscious, which is done by touching their eye and putting your finger in their ear. If there is no response use a Q-tip or your finger dipped in store bought Karo Syrup which is rubbed on their gums and the roof of their mouth. After you have done this, check their eyes for responsiveness and watch to see if their ears start wiggling as they regain consciousness. They may be very angry and growl as they wake up, but this will pass. If they are *not conscious* give them 1cc of Karo Syrup and monitored closely.

We feed our kittens Purina One Kitten dry and wet food or Royal Canin Mom and Babycat dry and wet food. Royal Canin does cost more but the dry food pieces are smaller making it easier for a kitten to chew. For puppies we use Purina One Puppy wet and dry food or Royal Canin Mom and Baby Puppy wet and dry food. SNUGGLE Pet Rescue will provide the food for our fosters.

We start off placing in a flat bowl wet food with a little bit of formula poured over it. Kittens should be directed to the food or scoop a tiny bit on your finger and place it in the kitten's mouth to encourage them to eat. Next we transition to a wet and dry mix still with formula poured on it. Then pull the formula once they are eating the wet and dry mixture. This will normally take 3 to 4 days. They are typically fed wet food 3 to 4 times a day until they reach the age of 12 weeks. After that switch to just dry food and have it always available for kittens. Don't forget to always have water available too.

BATHING KITTENS AND PUPPIES

To clean kittens and puppies Dawn Dishwashing Soap is used. This is the safest and most effective choice. The water should be warm and not hot. Definitely not cold water because you don't want kittens and puppies getting too cold. When you bathe them *do not* immerse them in water. The best place for their bath is the kitten sink, using a sprayer to get them wet and rinse them. If you don't have a sprayer, use a cup to pour water over them. Always be careful to avoid their face. If it is dirty, use a warm washcloth.

After their bath towel dry them really well. If they still are damp, you can use a blow dryer on the very lowest setting and hold it far enough away from the kitten that you don't run the risk of getting their skin too hot. If you are using a blow dryer for the first time, don't immediately direct it towards the kitten. Turn it on for a couple minutes so they can start getting used to the sound. Also, test the temperature and distance on your own arm first. If a kitten is too freaked out, then continue to towel dry them making sure you change out the wet towel for a dry one.

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ENVIRONMENT TEMPERATURE CONTROL

SNUGGLE Pet Rescue houses our kittens and puppies in a plastic pet carrier with a top and front opening door. This makes it much easier to clean the carrier and access the babies inside. The carrier is covered with a specially made carrier cover or bath towel to prevent drafts. The inside of the carrier bottom is lined with a cotton baby receiving blanket. If you do not have this type of blanket use a fabric that the kittens or puppies cannot get their nails caught in.

The most common reason for kittens and puppies passing away is they are too cold. They cannot start regulating their own body temperature until they are approximately 3 weeks old. It's not until they are 8 weeks old that they can completely regulate their temperature. For this reason it is important to not only maintain a kitten and puppy's correct body temperature at all times but also the temperature around them. We control the temperature inside the carrier by using a heating pad placed underneath it. NEVER lay a kitten or puppy directly on a heating pad to get it warm.

The optimum environmental temperature for kittens and puppies under 3 weeks is 85 to 90 degrees. When they are 3 weeks old slowly acclimate them to an environmental temperature of 80 to 85 degrees. This is done by gradually lowering the heating pad setting under their carrier from 4, down to finally turning it off. The *only* type of heating pad we use is a 24 hour one that will not shut off. This is *extremely* important because you don't want the heating pad to turn off in the middle of the night between feedings. The heating pad is placed under the carrier. When you set the carrier down on the heating pad, put about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the carrier on the heating pad. The remaining $\frac{1}{4}$ that is not on the heating pad is at the back end of the carrier. Set the heating pad to the number 4 setting which creates an optimum environment temperature. If you need to set it slightly higher to reach the ideal temperature, NEVER set it above 6.

Additionally, we place a warmed woobie, which is an IV bag, inside the carrier so the kittens and puppies can snuggle up against it as they would their mother to stay warm. DO NOT put a woobie inside a carrier without it being in a protective fabric sleeve. If you do not have an IV bag you can use a sock filled with uncooked beans or rice (not instant rice). DO NOT use a zip lock bag or any other type of bag filled with water.

The woobie is warmed in a microwave on high for 2 minutes and 30 seconds. Socks are warmed for 2 minutes on high. A still partly warm woobie or sock can be rewarmed in the microwave on high for 1 minute and 30 seconds. The warmed woobie or sock should be tightly wrapped in a fleece cover and placed against the back wall of the carrier. Make sure the woobie or sock is flat so a kitten or puppy cannot wiggle its way underneath it, get stuck and maybe suffocate. We keep the woobie in the carrier until our kittens and puppies are between 3 and 4 weeks old.

CLEANING PROTOCOLS

When you are caring for any type of animal you want to always be sure they are in a clean and healthy environment, especially when there is the possibility of an infectious disease being introduced. SNUGGLE Pet REScue has always put cleaning as a number one priority. If we got lax doing this, it can have life-threatening effects.

After the Panleuk outbreak we switched to using a cleaning and disinfecting product called REScue that is used in veterinary hospitals. It comes in liquid form and wipes and can be purchased on Amazon.

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The things we clean include:

Surfaces Any surface that our fosters come in contact with are disinfected using Clorox Disinfecting All Purpose Cleaner without Bleach. NOTICE: WITHOUT BLEACH. After letting the spray sit for a couple minutes wipe the surface clean with a wet paper towel.

Carriers The same disinfecting spray without bleach is used for the carriers too. They are cleaned as often as necessary. Sometimes we even clean them several times a day if there are kittens who like to make messes inside. Be sure to also rinse the carriers with wet paper towels after the cleaner has set on them for a few minutes.

Playpens Our kittens transition from a small carrier to a medium one and finally to a playpen. We put on the bottom of the playpen a layer of pee pads covered with a washable waterproof pad that are used in baby cribs or for the elderly. The bottom pads are thrown away and the top one is washed.

Litter Boxes With kittens we use disposable litter boxes when they get older and are moved into larger carriers. What works well are disposable aluminum pans. These can be cleaned but the surface is not smooth, so it is hard to sometimes remove all the waste. When the kittens are moved to a playpen or a room where they are no longer confined, we use regular litter boxes. They are emptied and cleaned every few days, depending on how many kittens are using them. These are cleaned using disinfecting spray WITH BLEACH. After the spray has set for a couple minutes use wet paper towels to remove the spray.

Laundry Anything that is washable that comes in contact with our fosters is washed and we always add bleach. Be sure to change the blankets inside the carrier if they have been peed on to prevent urine burns.

CAUTION Bleach can be very dangerous if not used properly around animals so always use extra caution and rinse thoroughly. When done with the container, be sure the cap is on tight.

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS FOR ANIMALS

When you have orphaned kittens and puppies in your home or shelter you are responsible for evacuating them during a disaster or an emergency. If you go to the SNUGGLE Pet Rescue website you will find Disaster Preparedness information that you need to review and take the steps to put in place a plan for your fosters and your own animals. If you wait to create a plan after something happens, it's too late!

SNUGGLE Pet Rescue has provided this information as a suggested guide for what to do when caring for orphaned kittens or puppies. We in no way encourage individuals to do the things to help them that should be done by a veterinarian or an individual experienced in caring for neonates or very young kittens and puppies. We are here to help and if we can take the kitten or puppy you have we will, but we may not always have the available space in our fosters homes, especially during the very busy summer months.

If you would be interested in attending one of our Basic Triage and Daily Care for Kittens and Puppies Starting with Neonates classes, go to the How You Can Help Page on our website and click on the link below.

[SNUGGLE Pet Rescue Foster Care Program](#)

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