



Asheville
Humane Society

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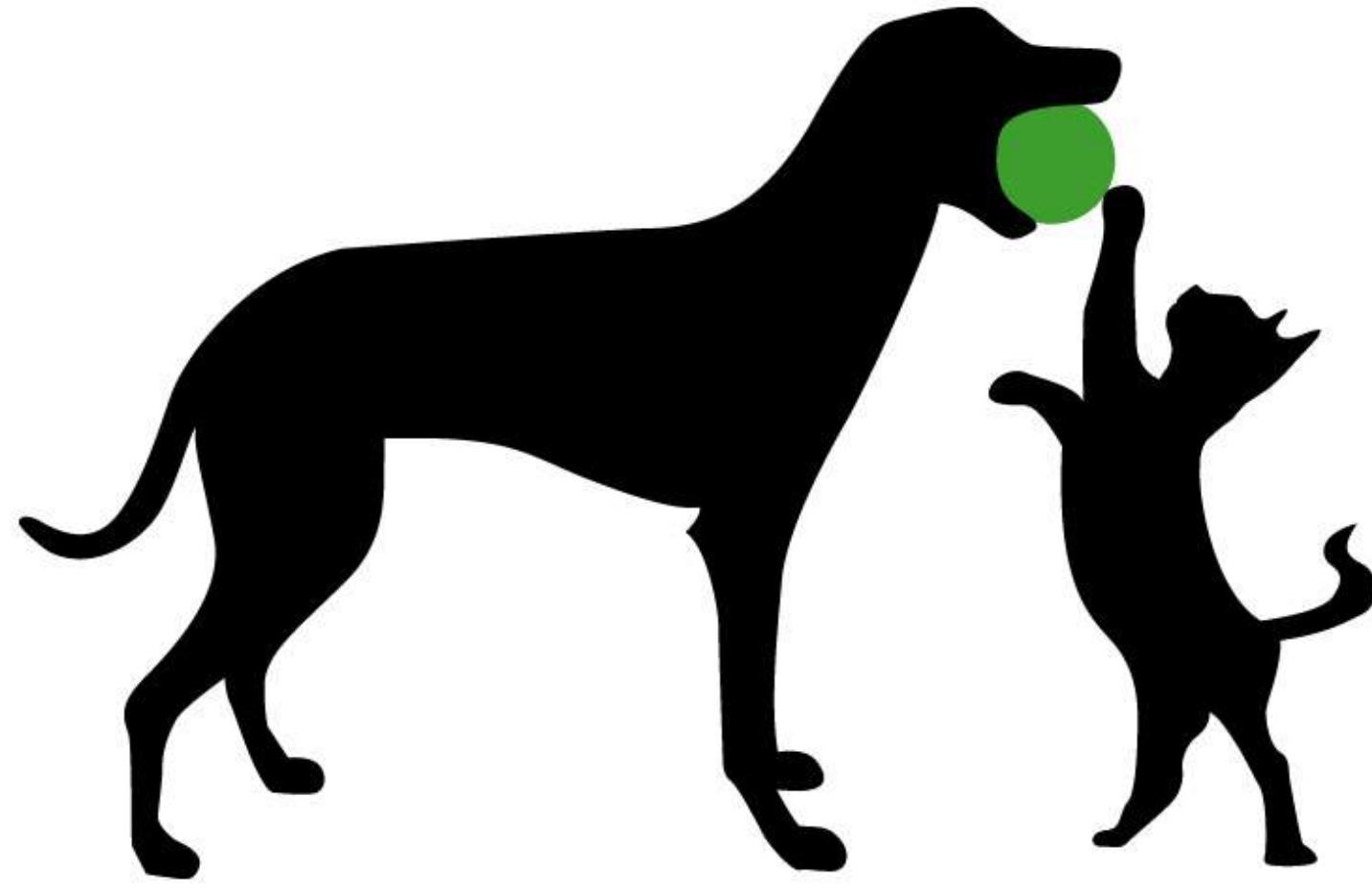


A close-up photograph of a cat's face, focusing on its large, expressive blue eyes. The cat has dark brown or black fur. The background is a soft, out-of-focus gradient of pink and purple.

NEONATE FOSTER MANUAL

Asheville Humane Society is about hope, not heartache. As Buncombe County's critical safety net since 1984, we are always here to save and protect every animal. We have mastered the art of saving lives within our walls and now we are going even further, helping our community's pets and their people thrive together. We are going beyond a no-kill community to ensure that each animal has the quality of life they deserve – a life worth living.

BEYOND NO KILL - A LIFE WORTH LIVING



Asheville Humane Society

Foster Program

Thank you for deciding to become a life-saving foster parent for the Asheville Humane Society! Our foster program allows us to save hundreds of lives every year, and it is all thanks to the dedication and care of over 300 wonderful foster parents.

The animals you will be helping are the most vulnerable of all - orphaned newborn puppies and kittens who have no mother to care for them. These babies need care around the clock to survive, and will rely on you to provide that care for them.

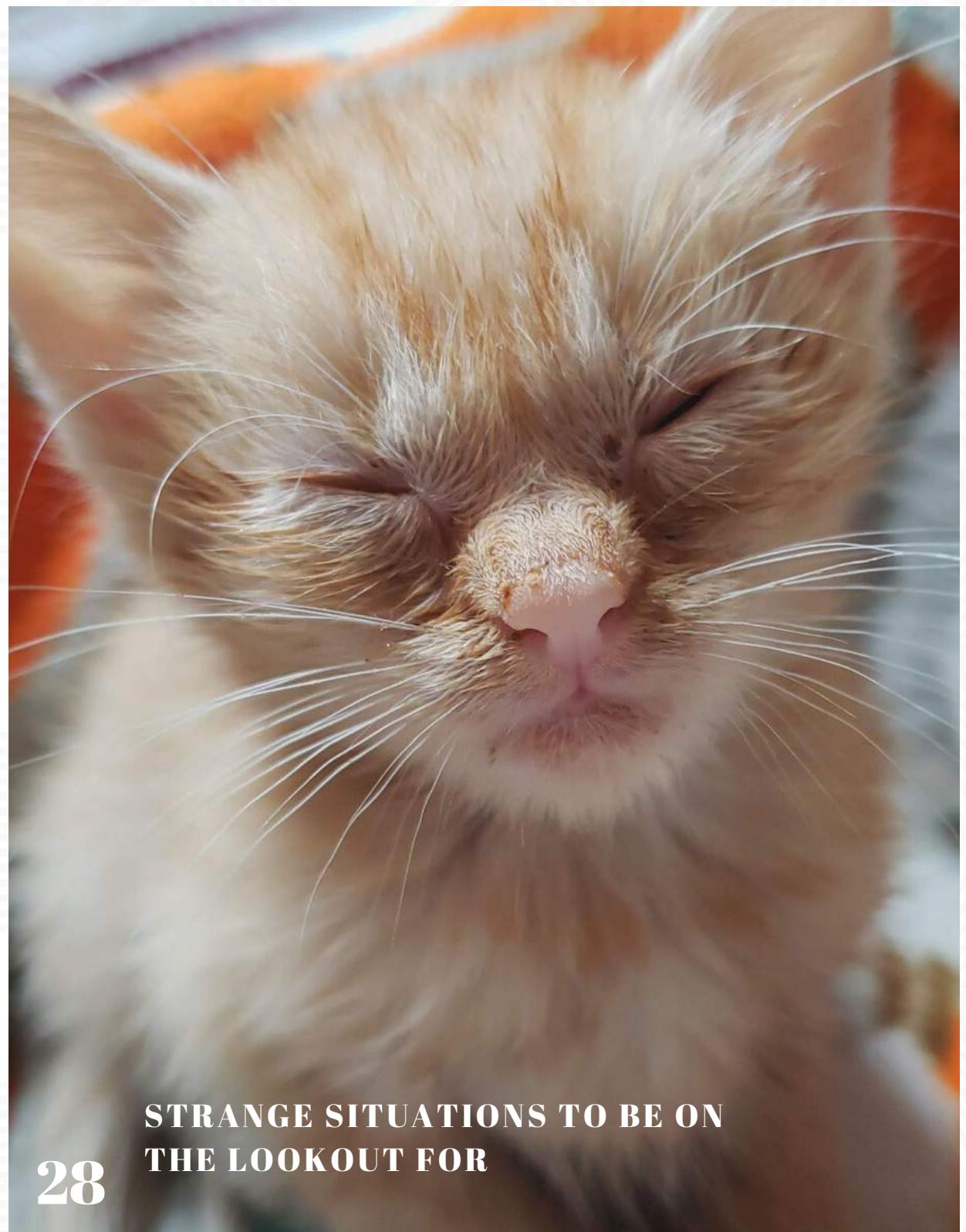
We can't promise it will always be easy; caring for newborn animals can be stressful, exhausting, and heartbreakin. Some animals, despite everyone's best efforts, will simply fail to thrive. But when your kittens or puppies grow up big and strong because of all of your hard work, it will be one of the most rewarding experiences of your life.



06 HOW TO SET UP A NEONATE'S HOME



13 FEEDING CHARTS - HOW MUCH FORMULA BY WEIGHT PER MEAL



28 STRANGE SITUATIONS TO BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR

3 Before You Start

How it works, picking up your fosters, and getting their space ready

7 The Basics

Frequency of care, heat support, elimination, and the importance of keeping things clean

11 Meal Time

What feeding a neonate consists of, and how to do it properly

14 Keeping Things Clean

What gets cleaned, and when

16 The Weaning Process

How to go from the bottle to the bowl like a pro!

19 Litter Box & House Training

Teaching your babies the appropriate places to go potty

22 Health Concerns

From fleas to ringworm - everything you might encounter when fostering neonates

26 Recheck Appointments

When they happen and what they're for

28 Strange Situations

Bizarre things you may experience

31 Final Steps

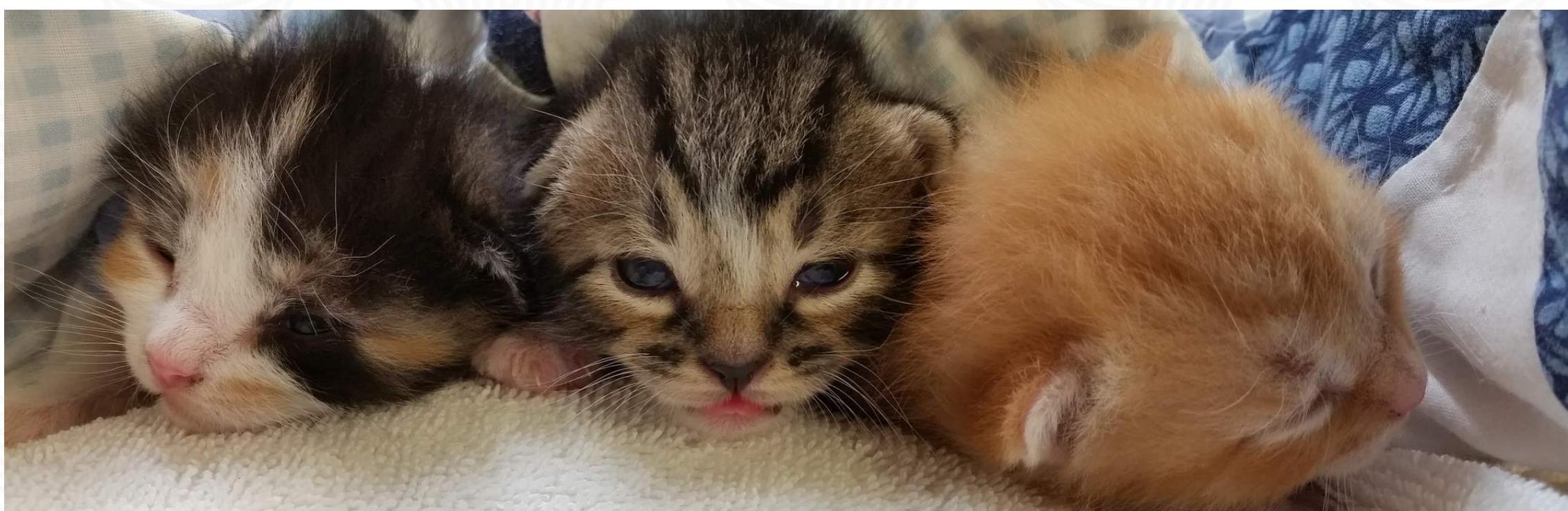
Bizarre things you may experience

35 Helpful Links

Video links that show the different processes involved

37 Emergency Information

Who to call for what, and when



Stay in the Loop!

- Asheville Humane Society Fosters Facebook page to talk with other foster parents & see pleas for immediate needs
- Check which animals need foster homes by visiting our foster-only website ashevillehumane.org/fosterdaily
- Check emails regularly for pleas for specific animals needing help
- Opt in to our urgent needs texting system by texting NEONATES to 828-521-2681
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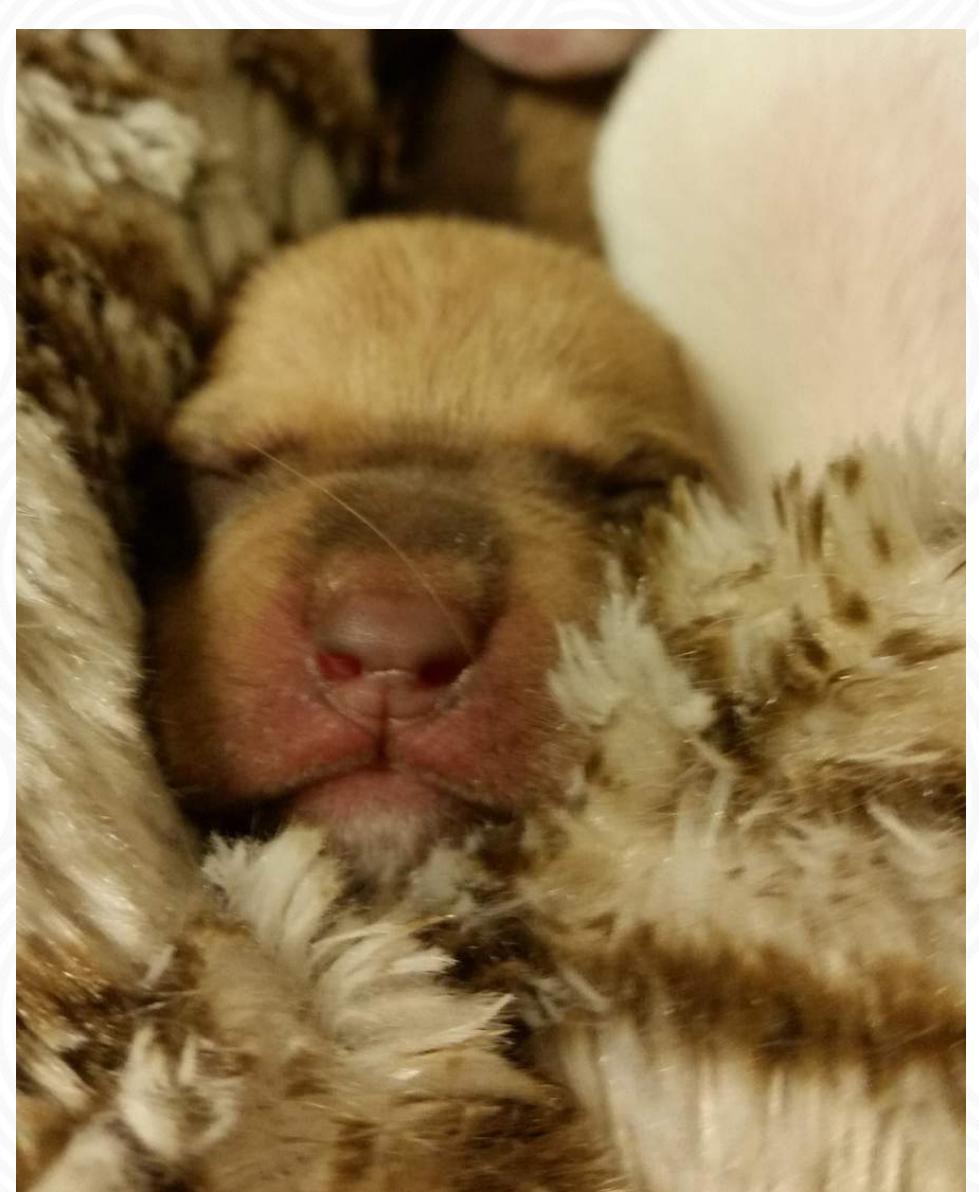
How It Works

Once the Foster Coordinator has accepted your foster application, you will be asked to join our Facebook Group “Asheville Humane Society Foster Parents” where weekly lists of animals in need of foster will be posted. If you decide not to join the Facebook Group, you will still receive emails of animals in need of fostering, but these will not be as frequent, and will only highlight specific animals. Available foster animals can also be seen at www.ashevillehumane.org/fosterdaily; we recommend saving this website to your bookmarks bar for easy access. Lastly, if you wish to receive text messages about our urgent neonatal puppy, nursing mom dog, or behaviorally advanced dog foster home needs, opt into our texting system by sending a message with the keyword NEONATES to 828-521-2681.

If you see an animal that you would be interested in fostering, email the Foster Department at fosteradmin@ashevillehumane.org with the animal’s name and ID number. They will then be in touch with you with details about the animal, and a date and time will then be scheduled for you to come and pick the animal(s) up.

Picking Up Your Fosters

When it comes time to pick up your foster animal(s), you will go to the Adoption Center, located at 14 Forever Friend Lane. There are a couple of dedicated Foster Parent parking spots to the right of the main entrance, but if these are already taken you may park in any available space. Upon arriving at the Adoption Center, we ask that you please stay in your car and call us at 828-776-1203 to let us know you’ve arrived. We will meet you at your car to hand over supplies, go over any special needs and/or medications the animal(s) have, and then, the exciting part – we’ll hand over the animal(s)!



Setting The Scene

Where to Keep Them

Neonatal kittens and puppies should always be kept in a small contained space such as a carrier with a warm Snuggie Disc. All foster animals will need to be kept in a quarantined area for the first two weeks of foster care to prevent the spread of any contagious diseases and protect your home for future fostering. Even the youngest babies can be harboring illnesses, so we ask that you keep their carrier in a designated spot of your home through the quarantine period.

Sick neonates should always be kept in quarantine until they are no longer contagious. Once a kitten or puppy is past the neonate stage at around 4 or 5 weeks old, they can be moved to a small space that's easy to sanitize, like a bathroom.



Housing

- Make sure neonates always have a properly heated heat source available - their little bodies lose heat quickly!
- Ambient room temperature should never be below 68 degrees
- Keep neonates in a small, contained space for the first 3-4 weeks, such as the carrier they are sent home in
- Keep one area of your home a designated neonate space, such as a counter or bathroom
- Ensure there is no draft in the designated space - even the slightest chill can be devastating to these delicate babies!

Preparing Their Space

Because neonates can harbor illnesses for up to two weeks that they aren't yet showing symptoms for, we strongly suggest their carrier is placed in a designated space within your home that is easily disinfected and is out of reach of curious family pets and children. This space will be where you feed and clean the babies as well, so make sure there is room to do so when selecting their safe spot. Before placing your neonates in their space, go ahead and get it all set up for their arrival using these guidelines:

- Disinfect the space before setting up. Use a bleach:water ratio of 1:32, and spray or wipe down the counter. Leave it visibly wet for 10 minutes before wiping down with a clean rag.
- Make sure the area is temperature controlled. Ambient temperature should never be below 68 degrees or above 85 degrees. If the area you intend to keep them in runs outside of these parameters, you will need a space heater/cooling unit to ensure they stay at a safe temperature.
- Make an appropriate space for feeding & pottying, and get all of your supplies organized and ready to go

As an alternative to cleaning with bleach, you are always welcome to ask the foster staff for some Rescue cleaner, which is what AHS uses to clean all animal areas on campus. This is a green, pet & fabric safe disinfectant simply made from accelerated hydrogen peroxide. Rescue is effective against Panleukopenia, the Parvo virus, Distemper, ringworm, and most other commonly seen shelter illnesses. You will receive a concentrated amount; simply mix 8 oz. with one gallon of water for use to disinfect. Spray on the surface and leave wet for 10 minutes, then wipe dry with a clean cloth. Unlike bleach mixtures, mixtures of Rescue have a very long shelf life, and are not light sensitive.



Picking Up Neonates

When you come to pick up your neonates, they will be in an open-top carrier that'll make it easy to access them at feeding times. There will be a pillowcase or blanket on the bottom to help with heat retention. On top of that will be a pink disc called a Snuggie Disc that will act as the neonate's heat source until they are able to regulate their own temperatures (which starts to happen around 4 weeks old)



The Snuggie Disc will be covered with another blanket to prevent burns and overheating. Your fosters will spend their days cuddled up next to a stuffed animal that will act as a surrogate "mom" in between meals



Finally, very young babies should have a blanket or pillow case draped loosely over top of their carrier to ensure heat retention.



Basic Neonatal Care



Frequency of Care

Depending on the age of your neonates, you'll be caring for them every 2-4 hours around the clock until they are eating solid food on their own. Newborns will be fed every 2 hours for the first week of their lives. Each week after that, you will gain one more hour of sleep. So, for the first week of life they'll be fed every 2 hours, for the second week they'll be fed every 3 hours, and so on. Between 4-5 weeks old, most neonates are ready to start the weaning process.



This is only a general baseline and it may vary for each individual kitten or puppy. It's important to meet each animal where they're at, even if it means feeding more or less frequently. As long as they're healthy, eager to eat when it's time, and they're consistently gaining weight, you can slightly tweak the schedule to fit their individual needs.

If you do not have a microwave, you can instead use a heating pad set on low. Fold the heating pad in half first, then place it in the carrier being sure to only cover half of the carrier and allow space for the baby to crawl off of the heat.

Heat Support

Neonates require an outside heat source until they are around 4 weeks old and have gained the ability to regulate their own temperatures. Neonates will always be sent home with a Snuggie Disc, which can be reheated in the microwave every 4-6 hours as needed.

When placing the disc in the carrier, **be sure to only put it on one half of the carrier, leaving the other side as a “cool side.”** This way, if the babies get too warm, they can crawl away from the heat source. Additionally, always make sure the Snuggie Disc is covered with either its fabric sleeve, or with a blanket or pillowcase before placing it back in the carrier. Snuggies fresh out of the microwave are VERY hot to the touch, and will cause severe burns to the babies' skin if left unprotected.





Elimination

Mother cats and dogs help their babies pee and poop by licking them. Without a mom to help them, we need to ensure they are successfully eliminating. Don't worry - you don't need to use your tongue! Instead, at each feeding you'll help potty your neonate by gently massaging their perineal area with a soft tissue, unscented baby wipe, or moistened washcloth. Neonates should pee each time they are stimulated, but may only poop once a day or once every couple of days.

When neonates first transition to formula, it is not uncommon for them to go a few days without pooping. This is generally okay unless the animal's belly is hard, they aren't eating well, or if they are obviously uncomfortable or in pain. Continue stimulating them before and after meals for up to a minute or two in an attempt to produce a bowel movement. If your neonate hasn't pooped for 72 hours, please contact the foster medical tech to schedule a medical appointment.

Once the baby has finished pottying, clean the entire area -- including their tail and back legs -- with a fresh baby wipe. **This is a very important step!** We want to make sure we get all the urine and fecal matter off of their skin so they do not develop burns, ulcers, or infections as a result.



Feeding

Each meal should be tracked and recorded using the Neonate Progress Chart we will provide you. By tracking meals, you'll be able to clearly see if a kitten isn't eating as much as they should and you'll be able to address the problem quickly. See section labeled "Meal Time" for instructions on how to feed neonates.



Keeping Things Clean

Kittens and puppies are usually groomed regularly by their mothers. This keeps them clean and also helps them develop the skills to groom themselves. In the absence of mom, we can help by using a moistened toothbrush or an unused mascara wand to help dislodge stuck on food and fecal matter. Grooming sessions can also help babies wake up before meals and calm them back to sleep afterwards. A quick grooming session is often all that's needed to calm a fussy baby.

Each baby should be cleaned thoroughly after each meal time. Any formula, food, urine, or feces left on a neonate can cause fungal or bacteria infections, as well as ulcers and hair loss. It is often very itchy and uncomfortable for the babies.

To properly clean after feeding, moisten your cloth/toothbrush/mascara wand, and give a preliminary wipe down. Follow this with some wiping/brushing of the fur **in the opposite direction** to ensure you are getting all the way down to the skin. Be sure to clean off your grooming tool every couple of swipes by dipping it into clean warm water.

For more intense cleaning needs, like in the case of a “poo-splosion” or other big mess, you may need to use a warm wet washcloth to clean up as much as possible before using the toothbrush or mascara wand.



If you ever feel as though your baby needs a full bath, please consult the foster team first. Bathing neonates is a delicate task and must be done correctly in order to keep your babies safe.

Meal Time

AHS uses Breeder's Edge formula. This brand of formula cannot be purchased in pet stores and must be bought through the retailer online, so it is imperative that you alert the foster team when you begin to run low and **BEFORE** you run out completely.

Switching brands of formula can cause GI upset, and should be avoided at all costs.

Until the babies are beginning to wean at about 4-5 weeks old, they will be eating nothing but formula. Please follow the instructions on the formula's container closely to ensure it is mixed with the correct amount of water, as mixing formula incorrectly can cause diarrhea or constipation. When mixing, make sure all lumps are dissolved before putting it into the bottle or syringe so the nipple doesn't get clogged. Shaking the mixture with a wire whisking ball is the best way to fully break down any clumps. Don't use a blender, since it will actually break apart the nutrient molecules. Formula should be made fresh every 24 hours and refrigerated in between meals.



Please see the list of helpful videos at the end of this manual for a link to one about kitten feeding. The Kitten Lady on YouTube also has a wealth of wonderful tutorial videos that we strongly recommend watching!

To warm the formula prior to the meal, pour it into the bottle and place the bottle in a cup of hot water or a bottle warmer. Never microwave formula to reheat it -- this will kill the nutrients and probiotics. The formula should be just slightly warmer than body temperature, and can be tested by placing a few drops on the inside of your wrist.

If your neonate is under a week old and a kitten or very small puppy, you'll be feeding with a Miracle Nipple slipped onto the end of an oral syringe. If your neonate is over a week old and eating full meals eagerly and reliably, you can transition to a bottle. Miracle Nipples are recommended for kittens until they begin the weaning process. **It is important to note that the volume increments on most commercial pet bottles are incorrect! If you are needing to track amounts eaten, please pre-dose into the bottle by first pulling the formula up into a syringe.** Neonatal puppies are often too big for Miracle Nipples and will require some work to find the best fit nipple for their mouths. Typically, human baby bottles work well for puppies over 2 weeks old. For puppies under 2 weeks, please ask the foster team for a puppy specific nipple.

Fussy eaters may need encouragement; it can sometimes take several days before babies latch & nurse successfully. If your baby is not latching onto the nipple and actively nursing, they will need to be fed very slowly, drop by drop. If this is the case with your neonate and you are unsure how to feed them safely, please contact the foster team for assistance.

Babies should always be fed in a normal nursing position for them - on their stomachs. DO NOT hold your neonate vertically or on its back. This will cause the formula to go into the baby's lungs instead of their stomach, which can lead to aspiration and pneumonia.





kitten weight and feeding chart

AGE	WEIGHT	AMOUNT PER FEEDING	SCHEDULE
0-1 week	50-150 grams	2-6 ml	Every 2 hours
1-2 weeks	150-250 grams	6-10 ml	Every 2-3 hours
2-3 weeks	250-350 grams	10-14 ml	Every 3-4 hours
3-4 weeks	350-450 grams	14-18 ml	Every 4-5 hours
4-5 weeks	450-550 grams	18-22 ml	Every 5-6 hours
5-8 weeks	550-850 grams	(weaning; offer ample wet food)	Every 6 hours

It's important to remember that these charts are general guidelines. Each individual animal should be met where it is, and may need fed more or less frequently than these charts suggest.

Puppy Bottle Feeding and Stomach Capacity Chart

Puppy Weight (lbs, oz)	Puppy Weight (grams)	Daily Caloric Requirement*	Amount of Formula Per Day (ml)**	Amount Per Feeding (ml)*	Approximate Number of Feedings Per Day***
2 oz	57 g	11 kcal	13 ml	2 ml	6
4 oz	113 g	23 kcal	25 ml	5 ml	6
6 oz	170 g	34 kcal	38 ml	7 ml	6
8 oz	227 g	45 kcal	50 ml	9 ml	6
10 oz	284 g	57 kcal	63 ml	11 ml	6
12 oz	340 g	68 kcal	76 ml	14 ml	6
14 oz	397 g	79 kcal	88 ml	16 ml	6
16 oz (1 lb)	454 g	91 kcal	101 ml	18 ml	6
2 lb	907 g	181 kcal	202 ml	36 ml	6
3 lb	1,361 g	272 kcal	302 ml	54 ml	6
4 lb	1,814 g	363 kcal	403 ml	73 ml	6
5 lb	2,268 g	454 kcal	504 ml	91 ml	6
6 lb	2,722 g	544 kcal	605 ml	109 ml	6
7 lb	3,175 g	635 kcal	706 ml	127 ml	6
8 lb	3,629 g	726 kcal	806 ml	145 ml	6



Keeping Things Clean

Keeping the living space and your supplies clean is just as important as keeping your babies themselves clean! Keeping the baby's living space and feeding supplies clean is absolutely necessary for the health of your babies. Dirty bottles and nipples can lead to bacteria growth, and soiled laundry can cause fungal and bacterial infections on their delicate skin.



Bedding

Inspect bedding at each meal to make sure it is clean and dry since soiled bedding can breed bacteria. Even very young neonates can prompt elimination simply by moving around the carrier, so it's very important to check the bedding regularly at all ages.

Even unsoiled bedding should be changed every other day or so to ensure everyone is staying clean. You may either return used bedding to AHS in exchange for clean laundry, or wash it at home in a mild bleach solution.

Feeding Materials

Nipples and syringes should be cleaned thoroughly after each meal. Rinse the nipple in hot water to ensure all formula is cleaned off; any formula left on the nipple can create mold. Make sure the hole is not clogged and allow the nipple to completely dry afterwards.

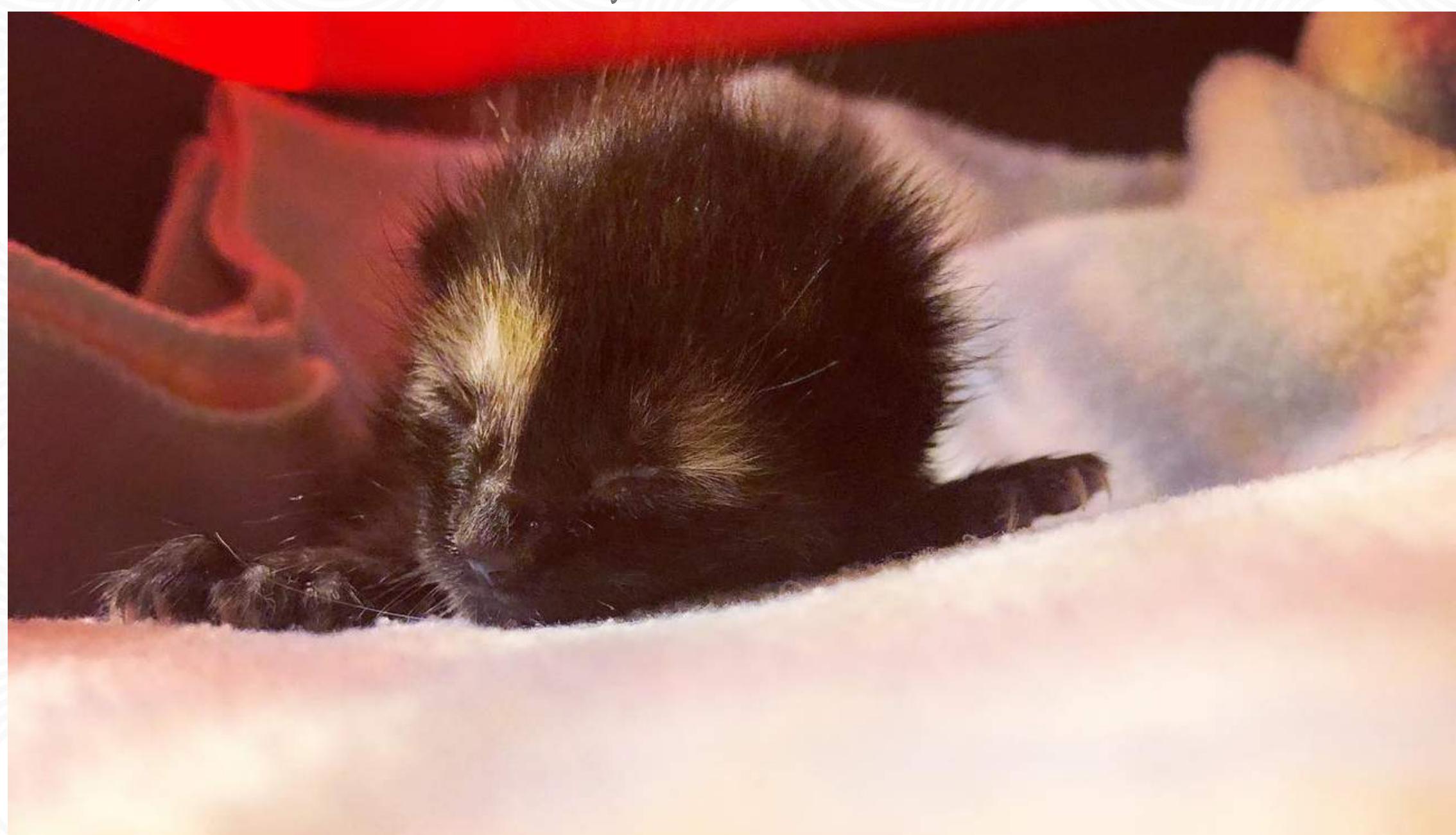
If syringes are being used to feed, the same syringe can be used for multiple kittens (assuming all are from the same litter) and multiple feedings. To clean the syringe, simply pull clean, hot, soapy water up into it and forcefully push it back out. Do this several times, then pull the plunger out of the syringe and rinse both pieces thoroughly. Keeping the plunger out of the body of the syringe, allow both pieces to dry completely between meals. Use a new syringe after 3-4 meals, or when there is no longer a smooth motion when pushing the plunger.





Continuing to use a syringe after the plunger has become sticky may cause you to accidentally force formula into a neonate's mouth too quickly and may cause them to aspirate. AHS will be happy to provide you with as many syringes as you need.

When feeding with a bottle, be sure to refrigerate any uneaten formula after each meal, and thoroughly clean the bottle after every 8-12 hours. Try to only make as much formula as you'll need for that time frame but if you have excess, dump it down the drain and wash the bottle out with a small amount of dish soap, hot water, and a bottle brush. Rinse the bottle until there are no more soap bubbles present and allow to air dry. Bottles can also be run through a dishwasher. Between litters, sterilize bottles and nipples by boiling them in water for 2 minutes, or return them to AHS when your kittens are weaned for us to sanitize them.



In addition to cleaning your feeding materials and bedding, it's important to give the carrier and snuggie disc a thorough check at each meal as well. Be on the lookout for any fecal matter or vomit that has dried on the plastic, even checking the lid of the carrier - neonates can be quite talented in their "decorating" methods! If any is noticed, clean it off with a rag and hot water or Rescue cleaner.

The Weaning Process

Kittens and puppies start to wean around 4-5 weeks old and should be successfully eating on their own by 6 weeks. The weaning period can be a messy, and can cause digestion issues as their little bodies adjust to a new type of food. It's a very exciting period though, and you deserve a pat on the back for getting these little helpless babies this far!



Begin the weaning process by slowly adding a small amount of provided pate-style canned food to the formula. Over the course of 3-5 days, make this mixture thicker by using less formula and more canned food. You will need to pick up a weaning nipple from AHS to successfully feed this gruel mixture to your babies.

Please do not cut the Miracle Nipples when beginning the weaning phase! The foster department has lots of cheaper nipples specifically for the weaning process that can be cut to allow for the thicker gruel mixture to flow appropriately through.



After this 3-5 day period, the gruel should be a pudding-like consistency and fed from a very shallow bowl or small plate. Babies may not yet understand how to eat the gruel mixture off of a surface, so they'll need some help. This process may take several days and may be frustrating; don't give up!

Always have a mixture of bottle-appropriate gruel prepared to offer to them after their attempts to eat out of a bowl. This will help ensure that they're eating enough until they are confidently eating the thicker gruel mixture.



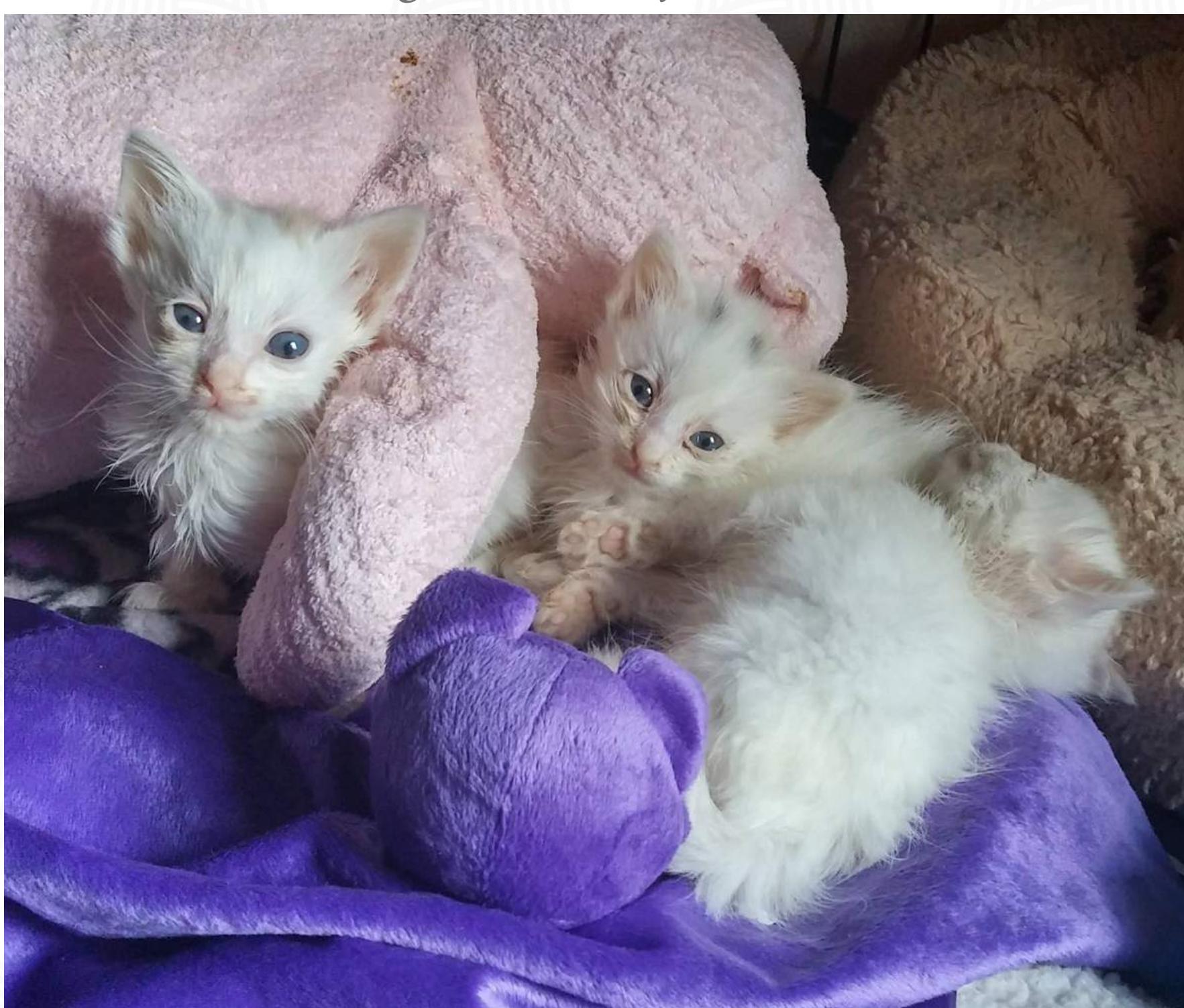
It's important to note that very messy babies will still need a thorough cleaning after every meal. If a wet rag isn't doing the trick, you can always give them a "bath" in plain warm water without any shampoo, leaving the sudsy scrub for the end of the day. Bathing with shampoo more than once a day will dry out their delicate skin



Kittens and puppies can become completely covered in their food at mealtimes during this weaning phase, so it is very important to clean them completely after each meal. Using a warm, wet rag, wipe down the baby's face, paws, legs, and chest, going against the grain of the fur to get down to the skin. Sometimes, a gentle scrub may be necessary to completely remove the food from the fur. Some animals will quite literally swim in their gruel meals, and daily full-body baths may be necessary. Please speak with the foster team if this is the case so they can give you a gentle shampoo to use. Make sure to have all your bathing supplies at the ready, as these babies are still quite delicate at this age and will chill very quickly once wet.

Once the babies are eating well and consistently out of a bowl or off of a plate, it's time to completely remove formula from their diet and introduce hard kibble. Moistening the kibble at first so it matches the consistency of the food they have been eating can help them transition. Moistening the kibble will cause it to spoil after a few hours though, so it will need cleaned out and replaced at every feeding. By 6 weeks old, they should be able to eat the kibble without it being moistened, and should be reliably and consistently eating wet food without any formula added to it.

When the puppies and kittens are between 6 and 8 weeks old, and are completely weaned, they should have constant access to dry kibble and should be offered canned food in small amounts, about $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{3}$ of a can per animal, 3-4 times throughout the day.



See the link at the end of this manual for a video on what the weaning process looks like, from start to finish!



Litter Box & House Training

Helping your foster animals learn the appropriate places to eliminate will go a long way when it comes time for them to find their adopters. Kittens may need help with the finesse of using a litter box, and puppies will need to learn to potty in a designated area.

Potty training can be an especially messy time, so feel free to request more puppy pads/litter and fresh bedding as often as you need to!





Litter Box Training

At around the time a kitten starts weaning, they should be upgraded to a larger living area -- like a small bathroom, animal playpen, or large dog crate -- and introduced to a litter box. Using a litter box is quite natural for cats, however, kittens will sometimes need a little help from us figuring it out since they don't have mom to show them. Some kittens will take longer than others to figure it out, but stay patient and follow the tips provided - they'll figure it out!

- Use a low-sided litter box that a small kitten can easily get in and out of
- Use an unscented, non-clumping litter in case your kitten gets curious and nibbles some of it
- Keep the litter box clean and attractive to the kitten by scooping frequently. The more often you are able to scoop the poop, the cleaner your kittens will stay!
- Help the kitten understand the box's purpose by placing their poop or a tissue with their urine on it in the box
- If you notice your kitten beginning to urinate/defecate outside of the box, gently (but quickly!) scoop them up and place them in the box
- Periodically place the kitten in the box and move their front paw in a scratching motion in the litter to mimic the action they'd take to cover their poop
- If your kitten regularly misses their box, temporarily make their living space smaller - they might just not be able to make it to the box on time!
- In some cases, specific "Kitten Attract" litter may be necessary
- Contact the foster team if accidents are continuing to happen after trying these tricks, as there may be an underlying medical issue.



Puppy Pad Training

Potty training puppies can sometimes be a little more challenging than litter box training kittens, but puppies usually catch on pretty quickly!

Once puppies reach 5 weeks old, have had their first round of vaccines, and have been medically cleared by the foster medical technician, they can begin learning to potty outside. For full instructions on potty training your puppy outdoors, please speak to the foster team.

Until the puppies are 5 weeks old and/or cleared to go outside, you can follow the guidelines below to puppy pad train them.



Canines are habitual creatures by nature - they just need a little help figuring out the schedule! They typically need to potty right after waking up, shortly after eating, and right after a big play session.

Start by placing just two or three pads in a designated space; avoid covering their entire floor space so they understand they have a designated space for pottying. Right after your puppy wakes up, place them on the puppy pads. They will likely wander off at first, but just be patient and continue to immediately place them back on the pads. Once they successfully potty, give **LOTS** of praise and a treat or two! Repeat this process after meal times and after play sessions and soon you'll see your puppy taking themselves to the puppy pads! Be sure to offer lots and lots of positive reinforcement any time your puppy uses the pad, as this will help them connect the dots that these strange, white squares are where pottying happens.

Never yell at or "punish" a puppy for eliminating off of the pads. This training method is antiquated and has been discredited - it will simply confuse and scare your puppy, and they will start associate peeing & pooping in general as something they get punished for. Positive reinforcement (praising when the correct thing is done) has been proven to be a much more effective and humane training method.

Health Concerns



Fleas

We ask that you please DO NOT give your foster animals flea or tick preventatives yourself - if you suspect your foster animal has fleas or have any concerns about preventatives please contact the foster department for a treatment plan.

All kittens aged 6 weeks and over who weigh 1.5lbs and over will receive a topical flea prevention upon intake to the shelter, and puppies who are 6 weeks and older and who weigh at least 4.0lbs will be given an oral flea preventative. Kittens under the age of 6 weeks and under 1.5lbs and puppies under 4.0lbs at 6 weeks are not safe to treat with our standard medications - these animals will need treated for fleas on a case by case basis. If you notice your foster kitten or puppy has fleas, alert the foster department ASAP, and begin brushing your foster with a flea comb and bathing them as directed by the foster department. Be sure that you dry each kitten or puppy entirely by using a hair dryer on the low setting before moving on to the next one and/or leaving them alone, and always make sure their Snuggie Discs are nice and warm before you begin bathing. Fleas can quickly cause other problems, such as tapeworms and anemia, as well as the possibility of getting into the carpets and upholstery in your home so be sure to contact the foster department at the first signs to begin treatment.

Panleukopenia & Parvovirus

Panleukopenia and the parvovirus most commonly affect young kittens and puppies without a good vaccine history and/or those with lowered immune systems. This disease attacks the rapidly dividing cells of the body, which include the GI system and the immune system. Symptoms include vomiting, bloody diarrhea, anorexia, and extreme lethargy.



Unfortunately, there is no way to test for panleukopenia or parvovirus before the animal begins showing symptoms. Treatment for these diseases consists of supportive care in the form of daily subcutaneous fluids, anti-nausea medications, antibiotics, and pain medications if we feel it is fair to the animal to do so. If you suspect panleukopenia or parvovirus, or see any of those symptoms, contact AHS immediately, at any hour. Please know that even with the best supportive care, some kittens and puppies may not respond to treatment and humane euthanasia may be the necessary outcome.

Panleukopenia and parvovirus are very prevalent in our area, and is part of the reason we strongly suggest a 14 day quarantine for all foster animals - even neonates.



Internal Parasites

Asheville Humane Society has a very thorough deworming policy, however some puppies and kittens will need multiple treatments of dewormers to kill all their parasites. The most common types of parasites visibly seen are tapeworms and roundworms. Tapeworms look like flat, large grains of rice, and can be found in the stool or on the the anus. Roundworms look like white spaghetti, and can be seen in the stool or in vomit. If you notice parasites, let the foster department know and/or bring a stool sample by the shelter to have a fecal test run on it so we can begin the proper treatment for the entire litter. Some parasites can't be seen by the naked eye, and a fecal test will need to be run at the shelter to look for parasite eggs. You can always send the foster medical tech photos of any concerning stool or parasites if you aren't sure.

Ear Mites

These pesky mites cause itchy and dirty ears in cats and kittens. If your foster has a large amount of black/brown discharge in their ears, if they are shaking their head consistently, and/or if they are scratching at their ears all the time, contact the foster department to schedule a recheck appointment. Ear mites require a specific medication so please do not attempt to self-treat if you suspect your foster may have ear mites.

Ear mites are transferable between cats, dogs, ferrets, and bunnies. Internal parasites and fleas can affect all species, including humans, so let the foster team know ASAP if you suspect your foster animal is struggling with either.

Diarrhea

It is not uncommon for babies, especially those weaning, to experience loose stool or diarrhea during their time in foster care. If your foster experiences loose stool more than once, please bring a recent (less than 12 hours old) sample by the shelter for a fecal test to be run by our medical department.

Diarrhea is caused by various things, but parasites, food changes, overfeeding, viruses, stress, and bacteria are the most common causes. Diarrhea can quickly lead to dehydration, so it is very important to begin treatment as quickly as possible. If your foster has loose stool more than once, or diarrhea, please contact the foster department to let them know.



Ringworm

Ringworm is a fungus that is found all over the environment. Most people and animals come into contact with it regularly throughout their lives, but those with lowered or compromised immune systems are at a higher risk of becoming infected. Signs of ringworm include portions of thin or missing hair with scabby, flaky skin. It is most commonly seen on the face, ears, legs, and paws.



Ringworm is treated with a topical Lyme-Sulfur bath given twice a week, and in more severe cases oral antifungals may be added. If you suspect your foster may have ringworm, please contact the foster department to schedule an exam and a fungal culture. The foster department will provide you with a treatment and cleaning protocol.

Ringworm is not as scary as it sounds! Some people may be concerned about their family or their own pets getting ringworm. There is, of course, always a possibility of this happening, but the risk is low if you pay attention to hand washing, cleaning, etc. If you did end up with a spot of ringworm, it is easily treated with an over-the-counter fungicidal cream such as Lamisil.



Please be aware that foster parents cannot accompany their foster animals back to the medical area, as this is a staff only portion of the building.

Recheck Appointments & How They Work

All animals in foster care will need to be seen periodically by our medical team. For the majority of animals, this will be every 2-4 weeks. For animals in long-term foster care, time between appointments may increase to once every 4-6 weeks. These appointments will be for a variety of things, ranging from boosters and weight checks to surgery site inspections and URI rechecks. The foster department will work with you to find the best date and time for you to bring in your animals for their rechecks. Once an appointment has been scheduled, you will receive an email alerting you to the appointment date, time, and details. You'll also receive a reminder email and a reminder text message a few days before your scheduled appointment. Please keep a close eye out for these emails! Appointment email notifications will come from SetMore, and may be filtered out by your spam blocker, so be sure to keep an eye on both your inbox & your spam folder.

When you arrive for your appointment, you will come to the Adoption Center (red building to the right). We have dedicated foster parking spaces to the right of the building, but if those are all taken you can park in any available space. When facing the building, you'll see a black gate to the right - go through that gate to the picnic table immediately to the left. Take a seat and give us a call at 828-776-1203 to let us know you've arrived. A staff member will be with you shortly to take your fosters back for their exam. We'll give you a call when we're finished & heading back to the picnic table. During inclement weather, you are welcome to stay in your car and call us - we'll direct you where to go to keep you and your fosters out of the elements.

Appointment email notifications will come from SetMore, and may be filtered out by your spam filter, so be sure to keep an eye on both your inbox & your spam folder. Appointment times are scheduled for a window of time depending on the type of appointment & the number of animals we'll be seeing, but please understand this is not a window for arrival time. This is the window blocked off in our schedule to talk to you, examine your foster animal, give treatments, fill medications, and enter notes. If you are running late to your foster appointment, please text or call a member of the foster department to let them know. If you cannot make your scheduled appointment, please give 24 hours notice if possible. We appreciate your promptness for scheduled appointments as this helps everything run smoothly. Thank you for understanding that we cannot always see unscheduled/walk-in appointments unless they are emergencies.

Vaccinations

All animals 4 weeks and older receive vaccinations upon intake to the shelter. Until they are 16 weeks of age they will receive boosters every 2 weeks. Cats will receive regular boosters of the FVRCP (feline viral rhinotracheitis, calicivirus, and panleukopenia) and puppies will receive their DHPPV (distemper, hepatitis, parainfluenza, and parvovirus). Puppies receive their Bordetella vaccines at 4 weeks old, and won't need their booster for this vaccine for another year. All animals receive their rabies vaccine at 12 weeks of age.



Dewormers

All animals will receive various dewormers depending on their age, starting at 2 weeks old up through 16 weeks. Some of the dewormers may need to be given at home. If you aren't sure how to draw up or give any medications, always let the foster team know and they can help.



Strange Situations

The following situations are ones you may find yourself facing at some point during your foster career. While they may not occur every time you foster, there's no telling when they may occur so it's best to be prepared at all times.

Sibling-on-Sibling Nursing

As strange as it may sound, this is a very real and very dangerous problem you may encounter, and it is something every neonate foster needs to be very vigilant about checking for.

siblings will nurse on each other for comfort (like a human child sucking its thumb), or if they are not getting enough to eat during mealtimes. Most often, the one doing the nursing will suckle on the genitals of its' siblings, but sometimes they will nurse wherever they can (bellies, sides, etc.). If you notice a kitten or puppy whose fur suddenly has little rosettes it in, or whose genital area is constantly wet and/or smells like urine, these are tell-tale signs it is being nursed on, and action should be taken immediately to find the sibling doing the nursing.

When siblings nurse on each other's genitals, two things happen - the animal doing the nursing fills up on urine and excrement, and therefore does not feel hungry at the next meal time and does not eat any milk/food. This leads to several health issues, most notably rapid weight loss. Additionally, the animal getting nursed on can develop a UTI and/or ulcerated genitalia, making elimination very difficult and painful. Occasionally, the genitalia become so ulcerated and infected that it becomes impossible for the animal to eliminate, and humane euthanasia is needed.



If you see (or suspect) your neos may be nursing on each other, please separate the baby doing the nursing immediately, and contact the foster team on the next available business day. It is vital that any separated animals are given a heat source, such as a snuggie disc (or a rice sock in a pinch), and are allowed supervised interactions with their siblings. Supervised interactions are best done right after a meal is given, so the baby doing the nursing is full and does not feel the need to continue suckling.



My Neonate Won't Suckle

Sometimes you may wind up with a neonate who just can't seem to get the hang of nursing from an artifice nipple. This can be a very frustrating experience, so the biggest thing to remember is to keep your patience with the baby, and keep drip-feeding it until it has had a full meal - no matter how long it takes. These babies are very delicate, and will need all the help they can get.

Chances are, if your neo isn't wanting to latch on the nipple they may also be fighting you by turning away and pushing at the nipple with their tiny paws. It will likely be easier on you and significantly less frustrating if you wrap these babies up in a "burrito wrap" when it's time to feed them - safely swaddling their legs and paws against their bodies. Holding the burrito'd baby in one hand, use your other hand to gently push the nipple into their mouths and push the formula out - literally drop by drop. Keep the baby in as normal of a feeding position as possible when you are doing this, as the chance for aspiration increases when drip feeding. Watch & feel for your neonate to swallow before dripping more formula into their mouths, to make sure they can keep up. This method usually results in a significant milk mustache/beard, so it is just as important to gently, but thoroughly, clean off their faces afterwards making sure to clean down to the skin. If you wind up needing to drip feed your babies for more than two or three meals, please contact the foster department for assistance.

How to Burrito Wrap:

1. Lay a hand towel or wash cloth horizontally across the back of your neonate, with the middle of the long edge of the cloth landing at the base of their head
2. Holding the cloth against their back, take one of the loose edges and pull it tight across the chest to the opposite side, tucking it under the opposing loose end
3. Continuing to hold the cloth in place, take the remaining loose side and cross it over the chest, on top of the previously crossed end
4. If there is excess cloth towards the tail end of your baby, fold it up towards the head, tucking the tail and hind legs up against the body
5. The towel should be loose enough that your neonate can still breathe and swallow, but not so loose that they can move their legs

Burrito wrapping is very easy, but finding the correct tightness can take some practice. Give it a try every so often, even if you don't need to have a neonate wrapped. Before you know it, you'll be able to burrito wrap in your sleep!



There are local & internet support resources available:

- Bright Star Studio, Hendersonville; <https://honoringourpets.com/monthly-pet-honoring-memorial-service/>
- 4 Paws Farewell Pet Loss Grief Support; <http://4pawsfarewell.com/pet-loss-support/>
- Day By Day Pet Caregiver Support; <https://daybydaypetsupport.com/>
- The Association for Pet Loss & Bereavement; www.aplb.org
- The Pet Loss Support Page; <https://www.pet-loss.net/>

My Foster Passed Away

As hard as we try to save every life, unfortunately there are some that just don't make it. Should you discover that your foster animal has passed away, please alert the foster department via text or phone call as soon as possible (during business hours).

In most cases, you are more than welcome to bury your foster animal if you would like, or you can bring their body back to the shelter. There are also a few pet cremation organizations in the area if you would like to have your foster pet cremated; our team is always happy to walk you through this process if desired. In some cases, our medical team may request the body be returned to the shelter building so a necropsy can be performed to determine cause of death, so please always check with the foster department before burying your foster animal.

Losing an animal is never an easy thing, especially when it's an animal you have been fighting so hard to save. Should you feel the need for help with your grieving process, please don't hesitate to reach out to any member of the foster department. We will always be here to help you however we can.

What Happens Next?

We all fall in love with our foster animals, but the ultimate job of any foster parent is to get them ready for their next big adventure - adoption. While it can be incredibly difficult to let them go, the goal is to say goodbye. This next section will go over what to expect when your foster animal reaches this point in their journey, and lets you, the foster parent, know what next steps your foster animal is taking before they go home with their new family.



If you've fallen completely smitten with your foster animal, and wish to adopt them, let the foster team know! We lovingly call this "foster failing," and we happily provide adoption fee discounts to foster parents.

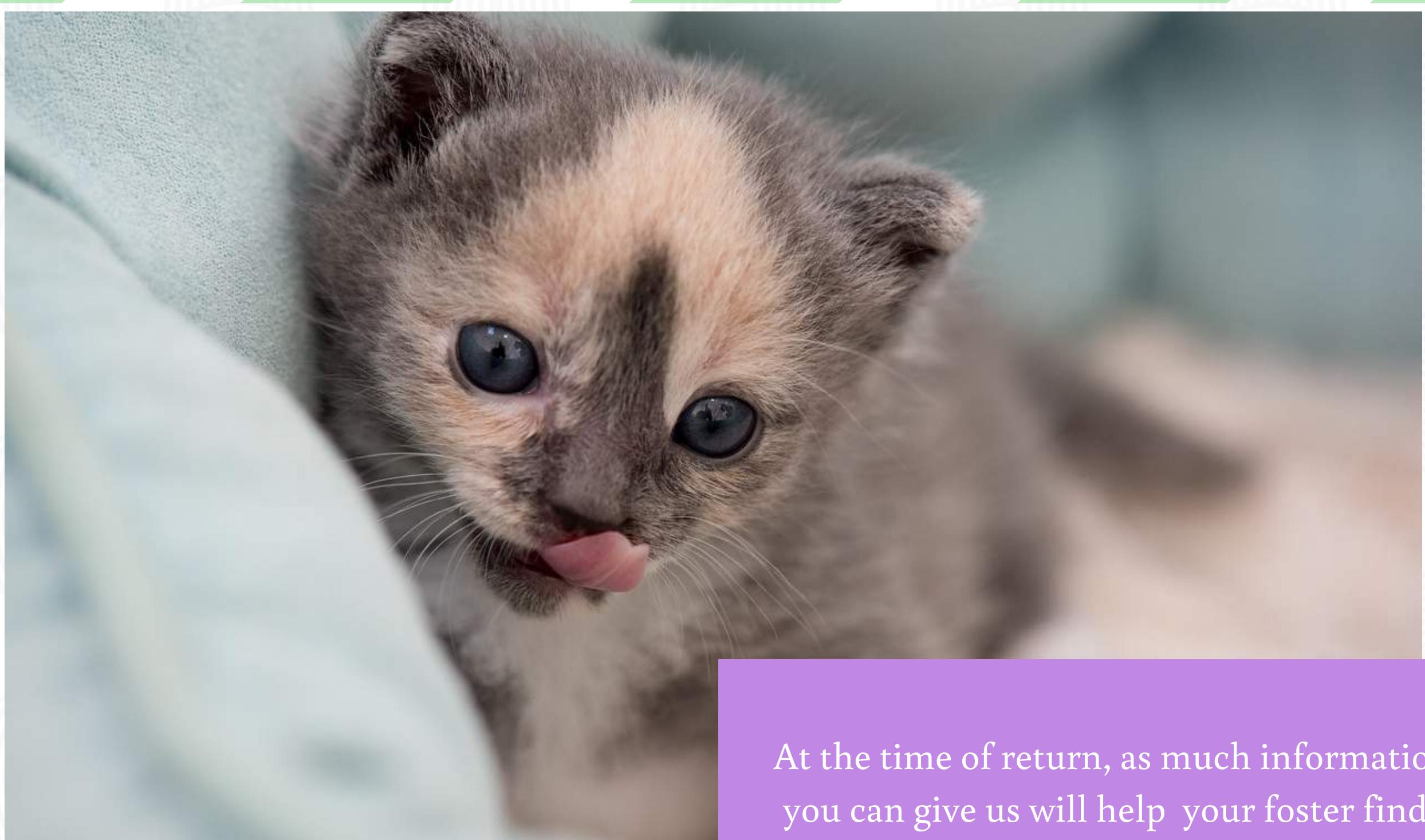
Returning Your Foster

When your foster is ready to be returned to the Animal Shelter and placed for adoption, the Foster Manager will work with you to schedule a return appointment. Kittens are returned when they weigh 2.0 lbs and are free from any illnesses. Barring any health issues, puppies are almost always ready to return for spay/neuter by the time they are 8 weeks old.

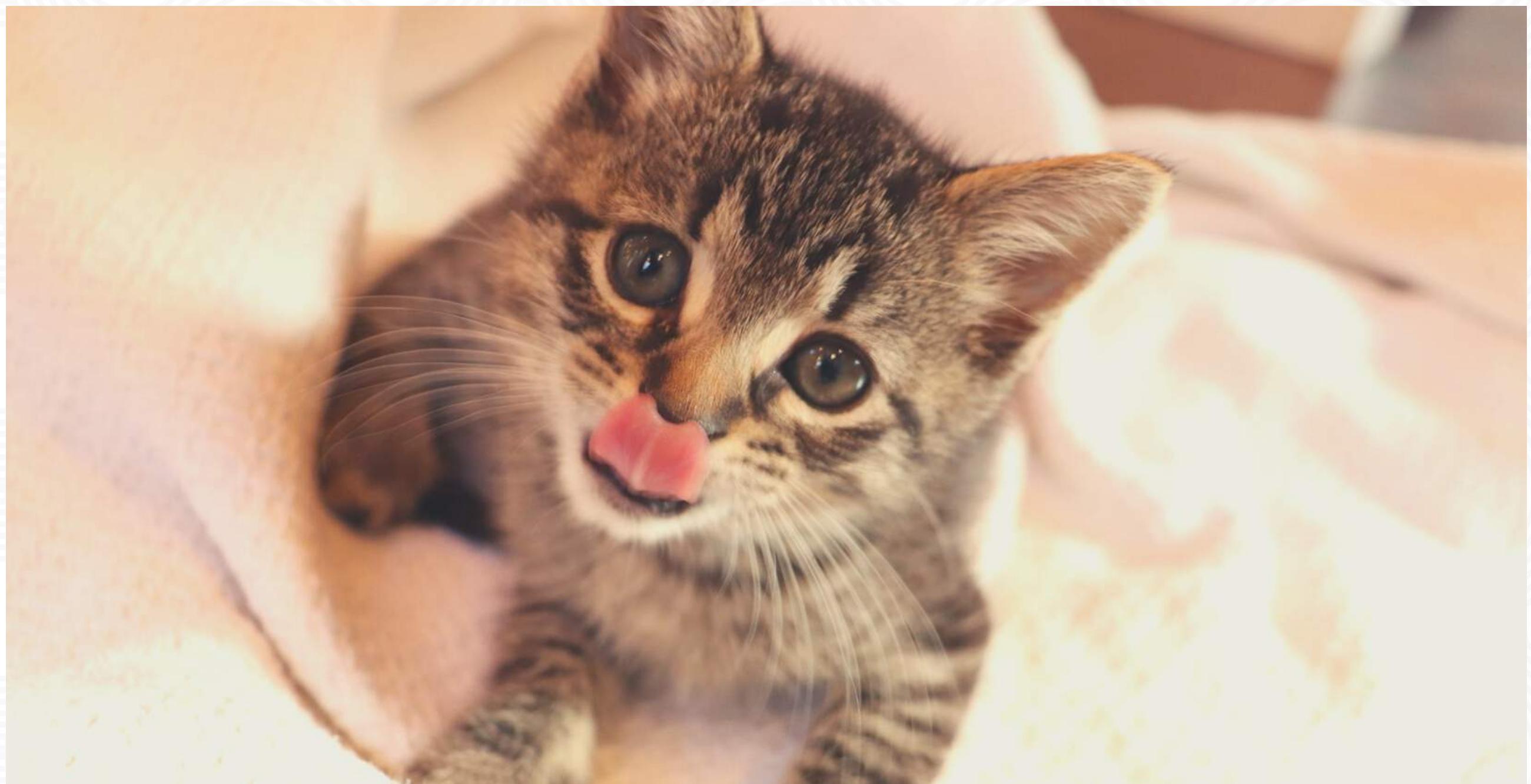
If you discover that fostering neonates isn't for you, or if something unexpected happens and you need to return your animal, please don't hesitate to reach out to the foster department.

It is more difficult to find neonate foster parents, so, if you are able, please give us as much time as possible to find a replacement foster home.

When you return your foster animal, we request you bring back any neonatal supplies you were given, regardless of the condition it may be in.



At the time of return, as much information as you can give us will help your foster find its perfect forever home! You can always email bios and pictures to foster@ashevillehumane.org.



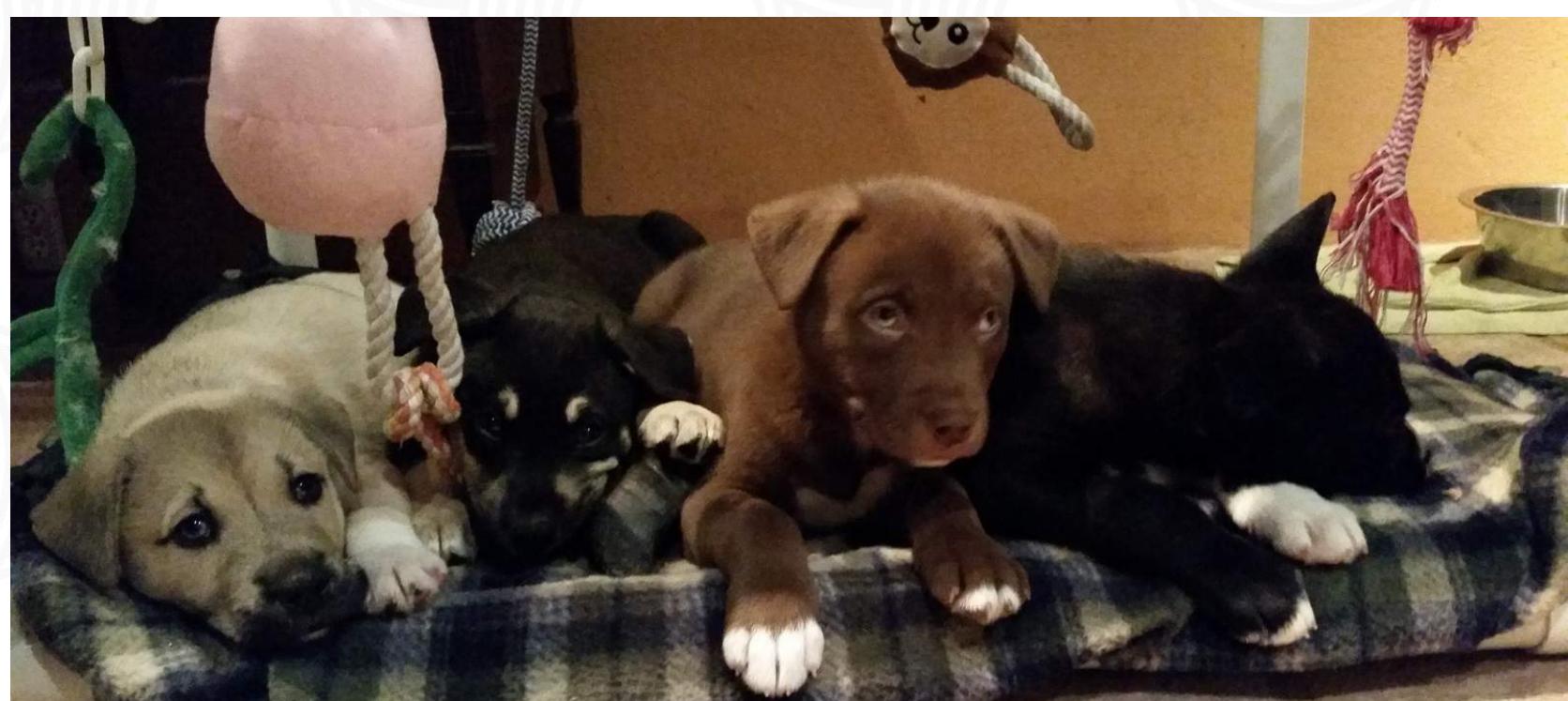
All animals MUST be spayed/neutered before they can be adopted.

Unfortunately, we can not allow fosters who are adopting their animals to go to their own veterinarian for the spay/neuter surgery.

Spaying & Neutering

When your foster animal returns to AHS, they will go onto the adoption floor (as space is available) to be pre-adopted until the next available surgery spot opens at one of our partner veterinary offices. Surgery days are typically Monday - Thursday, and the animal will typically spend the night after their surgery. They'll return to AHS first thing the following morning at which point they'll be ready to head home with their adopters!

Generally, we like to wait until kittens are 2.3lbs before sending them to be spayed/neutered. Most puppies are over this 2.3 lb weigh criteria before they reach 8 weeks of age, however, in the occasion they are not, we might decide to have them return anyways so we can send them home as "pre-adopts" with their new families. We will then coordinate getting them spayed or neutered with their adoptive families. This is generally decided on a case-by-case basis.

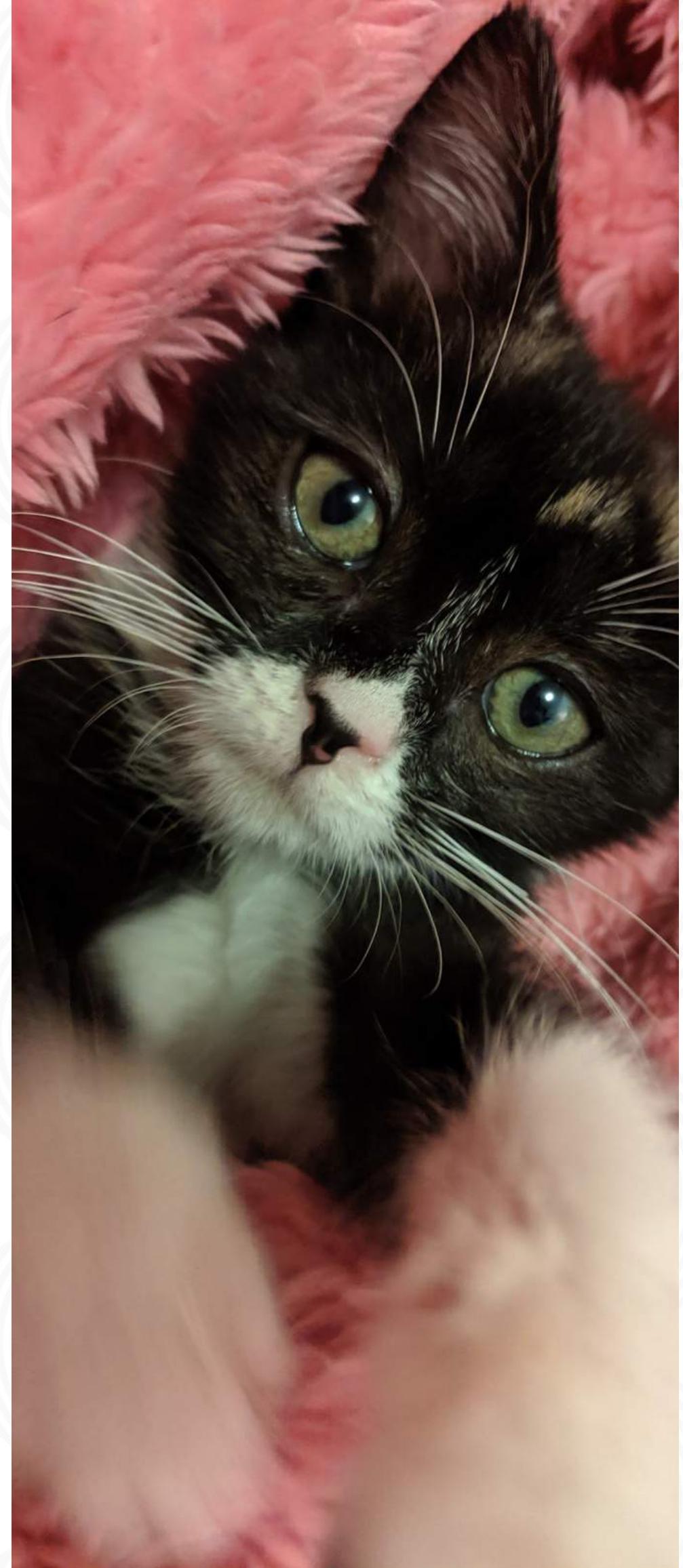


Finding Your Foster A Home

We are always happy to hear that foster animals have homes waiting for them! Any interested adopters do need to actually meet and spend time with the animals before we will put a note on the animals' file about an interested adopter. If you are not comfortable having interested parties over to your home to meet the animal, simply let them know when the animal returns to AHS and tell them to keep a close eye on the website, or stop by the adoption center to visit. We do request to please avoid marketing your fosters as available for adoption on any community social media pages or apps. Posting them on your personal pages is always ok unless we instruct you otherwise.

We always recommend that kittens go home in pairs, as they will generally be happier with someone to play with and snuggle with while their humans are away at work. We always have an adoption special on kittens - Adopt one, get one free!

Alternatively, AHS will not adopt out sibling puppies to the same home. There are some severe behavior issues that arise as the puppies hit maturity (around 2 years old) if puppies are kept with their siblings, to the detriment of the dogs themselves and their people. In an effort to avoid this from happening, we will only ever adopt out one puppy to one household at a time. If you have any questions, the foster team will be happy to provide you with more information on Litter Mate Syndrome.



Please know that all adopters must be counseled by a trained adoption counselor before making an adoption official, and AHS reserves the right to refuse any adopter for any reason.



The following links are great references for seeing the practical parts of neonate care, before bringing a neonate home with you. Simply copy and paste the links below into YouTube.

Syringe Feeding

Puppies - <https://youtu.be/oemcABbxDWc>

Kittens - <https://youtu.be/1dHOuyboY2U>

Bottle Feeding

Puppies - <https://youtu.be/uO7EBXfIAY>

Kittens - <https://youtu.be/ebDPivG16HE>

Tricks For Picky Eaters

Puppies & kittens -
<https://youtu.be/YQZlIB5vth8>



Weaning

Puppies - <https://youtu.be/NuGKDZHCi-w>

Kittens - <https://youtu.be/eTEJ4U4x8eQ>
<https://youtu.be/2kAsTM7Kd-k>

Potting

Puppies & kittens -
<https://youtu.be/QGKFqz-dpVc>



EMERGENCIES REQUIRING IMMEDIATE ATTENTION

- LETHARGY
- COLD TO THE TOUCH
- DIFFICULTY BREATHING
- EXCESSIVE BLEEDING
- POSSIBLE BROKEN BONES/SUDDEN ONSET OF SWELLING
- SEVERE LACERATIONS
- SEIZURES/NEUROLOGICAL SYMPTOMS
- UNSUCCESSFUL ATTEMPTS TO VOMIT
- VOMITING BLOOD
- INJURIES TO EYES
- MALE CATS VOCALIZING WHILE TRYING TO URINATE/UNABLE TO URINATE

CONCERNs THAT CAN WAIT UNTIL THE NEXT BUSINESS DAY

- DIARRHEA
- CONGESTION
- WEEPY/SWOLLEN EYES
- NASAL DISCHARGE
- BLOODY STOOL
- HAIR LOSS/SKIN LESIONS
- LIMPING
- MINOR TAIL INJURIES
- FLEAS
- INTESTINAL PARASITES
- VOMITING



CONTACT INFORMATION & HOURS OF OPERATION

BUISNESS HOURS:

Monday - Saturday
9:00am - 6:00pm

828-776-1203/828-768-5451

CLOSED:

Sundays; Monday - Saturday 6:00pm -
9:00am

828-231-0365

FOSTER MEDICAL TECH:

Tuesday - Saturday, 9:00am - 6:00pm mfoster@ashevillehumane.org
[828-776-1203](tel:828-776-1203)

FOSTER PLACEMENT

COORDINATOR:
Tuesday - Saturday, 9:00am - 6:00pm fosteradmin@ashevillehumane.org
[828-768-5451](tel:828-768-5451)

FOSTER MANAGER:

Monday - Friday, 9:00am - 6:00pm foster@ashevillehumane.org