



Weaning is an always fun, often messy,
but oh so satisfying part of raising kittens!

When to Begin Weaning

Start weaning at 4 weeks of age, using mother and baby cat canned food, or any other food specifically given to you by the foster team.

Introducing Solid Food

- Start by offering a small bite of wet food on your finger, a spoon, or a tongue depressor.
- If the kitten doesn't recognize it as food, gently open their mouth and place a small amount directly onto their tongue.

IF THE KITTEN HAS BEEN ON FORMULA

- At every meal, always start with step one and offer canned food.
- After the kitten eats some canned food, supplement with a bottle containing a slurry of wet food and formula.
- Begin with a 1:3 ratio (food:formula).
- Gradually increase the food and reduce the formula in each feeding until the kitten transitions to just wet food.

IF THE KITTEN HAS NOT BEEN ON FORMULA

- Still start with step one and offer canned food.
- After the kitten eats some canned food, supplement by syringe-feeding the canned food directly.
- Do not introduce formula unless directed by the foster team.
- You can add a small amount of water or warm the food slightly to make it easier to syringe.
- Important: Do not add too much water, as this can dilute the nutritional value of the food.

IF THE KITTEN HAS A MOTHER

- Mom will typically help teach her kittens how to eat.
- Offer multiple small meals of canned food daily.
- If kittens are struggling, you can still place small bites into their mouths to encourage them.

Timeline & Progression

- Weaning should take 5–7 days.
- By 5 weeks, kittens should be fully transitioned off formula and eating wet food consistently on their own.
- At this point, begin offering dry food (you can soften it with warm water if needed).
- If kittens hesitate to eat dry food, try mixing it with canned food.
- By 6–7 weeks, kittens should be eating mostly dry food.
- Dry food is more calorie-dense than wet food, helping kittens meet their nutritional needs without filling up too quickly.

Keeping Clean

- Weaning is messy! Always ensure kittens are clean and dry after every meal.
- Never leave wet food, gruel, or water in the kitten area unattended at first—wet kittens can become hypothermic, and leftover food on their bodies can cause skin infections.
- The foster team can provide a daily-use kitten-safe shampoo if needed.

Monitoring Weights

- Monitor weights daily until kittens reach about 1.5 lbs.
- If a kitten's weight drops or stays the same for more than a day, contact the foster team immediately.

Need Help?

- All kittens wean at slightly different rates. If your kittens are not progressing along this basic timeline, reach out to the foster team for guidance, tips, and support.



ashevillehumane.org/get-involved/foster/resources

