

# Foster Family Handbook

Cat Care Edition



4th Edition

This manual is designed to be a tool to assist you in being the best foster family you can be. It is a fluid document and updated information will be included periodically. We encourage you to share your ideas and techniques.

Angel's Wish, Inc.  
161 Horizon Drive  
Suite 106  
Verona, WI 53593  
Phone: (608) 848-4174  
e-mail: [info@angelswish.org](mailto:info@angelswish.org)  
[www.angelswish.org](http://www.angelswish.org)

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For further information, please contact:

Angel's Wish, Inc.  
161 Horizon Drive  
Suite 106  
Verona, WI 53593

Info Line Telephone: 608-848-4174  
Fax: 608-848-9817  
E-mail: [info@angelswish.org](mailto:info@angelswish.org)  
[www.angelswish.org](http://www.angelswish.org)

Foster Family Handbook, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition

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# Welcome to Angel's Wish

South Central Wisconsin's  
all-volunteer animal  
welfare organization

Angel's Wish is dedicated to reducing animal overpopulation, rehoming companion animals, and raising awareness of animal welfare issues in South Central Wisconsin.

Angel's Wish is an all-volunteer, nonprofit 501(c)3 organization founded in 2000.

## What is Angel's Wish?

Angel's Wish is incorporated with the State of Wisconsin and has active and involved Officers and Board Members. The Officers and Board Members of Angel's Wish are all unpaid volunteers who contribute countless hours to the mission of Angel's Wish.

The activities of Angel's Wish include rehoming stray, homeless, and abandoned pets; recruiting and training foster families; educating on animal behavior and animal issues; and providing community outreach to support other people in their efforts to care for and respect the needs of domestic and non-domestic animals.

Angel's Wish is determined to help end the euthanasia of adoptable animals, and also to broaden the definition of "adoptable." We are striving to attain this objective by coordinating the efforts of formerly individual rescue groups.

If you are currently engaging in rescue activities of your own, you may be interested in obtaining organizational support. Angel's Wish has seasoned volunteers who can help guide you in your efforts to care for animals in your environment.

## How Angel's Wish began

Angel's Wish began when several different groups of rescuers and animal advocates decided to work together to pursue the goal of ending euthanasia of adoptable pets in Dane County. After attending a No-Kill Conference in Chicago, several of these dedicated people came back to the Madison area with a new sense of purpose and the drive to make suffering of unwanted, stray or feral companion animals a thing of the past in south central Wisconsin.

The group was fortunate to enlist community support from local veterinarians for programs administered by Angel's Wish and the organization has grown incredibly since that time.

In 2005, we opened the Angel's Wish Pet Adoption and Resource Center on Horizon Drive in Verona, Wisconsin. The center includes space for adoption events, testing and vaccination clinics, training classes for youth and adults, a small retail area, meeting room, and storage.

## And why is it called "Angel's Wish?"

Lois Lawrence, a founding member of Angel's Wish, once rescued a kitten from a construction site. Weak with starvation, dehydration, and a severe upper respiratory infection, neither veterinary treatment nor Lois' love and care could save the kitten from the effects of that hot June day. Angel died that night in Lois' arms. We believe that Angel's wish would have been that no other animal be subjected to pain, suffering, abandonment, or neglect.

## info@angelswish.org and the Info Line

Angel's Wish receives e-mail messages daily. The public can request more information about adopting a companion animal, rehoming a stray or unwanted animal, animal behavior, assistance with spaying and neutering, fostering, and other matters. info@angelswish.org messages are retrieved and forwarded to volunteers for responses several times a day.

We also have a twenty-four hour telephone message system. Info line messages are retrieved several times a week and distributed to volunteers for responses.

## The adoption program

Angel's Wish, Inc. sponsors adoption events at area PETsMART Pet Stores, Mounds Pet Food Warehouses, and the Pet Adoption and Resource Center in Verona. We also sponsor other off-site events as opportunities arise.

Adoption clinics have specific times and guidelines. It is imperative you arrive 20-30 minutes prior to the start of an adoption event to set the animal up before the opening. To do otherwise is a disservice to the animal and displays disrespect to the other foster families and potential adopters. The website, <http://www.angelswish.org>, features animals that are available for adoption and information related to Angel's Wish and its programs.

Potential adopters are asked to complete an adoption application and are interviewed that day. They are allowed an opportunity to interact with the animal, ask any questions, and discuss any concerns. Adoptions can take place the same day, provided references can be reached.

In most cases, the adopter is asked to pick up the animal on a different day. This can be for a variety of reasons: the animal needs spay/neuter surgery, the adopting family needs time to get ready and set up for the animal, or the appropriate checks weren't able to be completed on site. Checks include contacting landlords and condominium associations and the veterinarian of record, if there are animals currently (or recently) living in the home.

## The foster program

Volunteers from all over south central Wisconsin are giving their time, their energy and their hearts to provide temporary homes for animals awaiting adoption. All animals in Angel's Wish's care are housed in volunteer foster homes, with a few adoptable pets being cared for and displayed at area vet clinics.

**Goal** To reduce the euthanasia of adoptable animals.

- Objectives**
- To ensure all kittens have reached the proper level of maturity and have received socialization opportunities, before being placed up for adoption, by fostering underage, underdeveloped, and under socialized animals.
  - To increase the adoptability of animals with no history by determining the animals' behavioral traits through observation and training in a home environment.
  - To increase the likelihood of a good match with the animal and a permanent, loving home by knowing more about the animal's personality, characteristics, and behavior.

## What is fostering?

Fostering is accepting an animal into your home for a temporary amount of time until they can be placed into an appropriate, permanent home. Fostering is necessary for under-socialized, unweaned, pregnant, sick, injured, or displaced animals. Fostering is also a critical step for some animals that need to be rehomed, but who are weaned, healthy, and not pregnant. It provides a home environment with one-on-one specialized attention that is needed by the animals in order to heal, grow-up, learn to love people, and flourish.

Fostered animals tend to be adopted quickly and good family matches tend to be easier to make. Not only are the animals more highly social, there is more information known about them. The more interactions, the more you'll understand and know this animal, the more information we'll be able to

provide potential adopters, elevating the opportunity for a good match, which will result in a permanent, loving home.

Fostering is time-intensive and can require financial expenditures, but it is extremely rewarding. This is not a venture to enter into lightly.

## Why become a foster home?

Many fosters are animal lovers who are stepping forward to "do the right thing" by caring for homeless animals in their neighborhood. Sometimes these animals come right to door—yours or someone else's—somehow "knowing" there's a heart that will reach out to them. Often, people who choose to foster do so because they know these animals face a death sentence at shelters forced to euthanize when overcrowded or they have nowhere else to go.

Many families foster as a way to teach their children about compassion and responsibility in a creative and collaborative way. We have had parent-child partnerships take on nursing bottle babies or moms with litters, as a tag-team effort with joyous results. Parents who home school have also found that fostering is a great teaching endeavor for their family.

In addition, we have many young students who foster as a way to earn community service credit, as well as to earn scouting badges, as 4-H projects, or as extra-credit projects. Youth wishing to foster must have written consent from a parent or legal guardian and attend Youth Volunteer Basic Training. Angel's Wish provides training, guidance, and medical care, as well as on-going support throughout the fostering period.

Finally, many people foster because they are interested in adopting a new animal and want to learn more about the animal. There's no better way to find the right addition to your home than by taking in adoptable animals and getting to know them first. With newborns and young animals, you can raise your new baby and have the pick of the litter, all the while knowing you've done a great thing for their littermates. With adults, while saving their lives, you get a trial run to see if this is a good match for your family—2-legged and 4-legged.

## What do I have to do?

Those who volunteer to foster animals must complete a volunteer application and a screening process that includes, for pet owners, a call to your veterinarian to confirm that your animals are well-cared for and current with vaccinations and other recommended medical treatments. If you are a renter, you need to provide a copy of your lease or contact information for your landlord so we can confirm that foster animals are permitted under your lease.

While fostering, you will work with a seasoned adoption coordinator who screens applications for adoption, oversees medicals, schedules veterinary appointments, schedules space at adoption events, and helps you work through questions and concerns.

Don't overextend yourself by fostering animals too frequently or too many at a time. Remember that fostering is an activity intended to enhance *your* life as well as the lives of the animals in your care. Take time to enjoy the experience!

Foster families:

- provide day-to-day care of homeless animals
- spend quality time playing with and cuddling foster animals
- monitor behavior for healthiness and happiness
- train the foster to use a scratching post, stay off counters and tables, and play with soft-paws (no claws).
- use a carrier and their own self-insured vehicle for transporting foster animals
- at least once a week, transport foster animals ready for adoption to and from adoption events
- as needed, transport the foster animals to authorized medical appointments and give prescribed medications
- ensure the animal is available and on-time for adoption and medical appointments
- ensure vaccinations and boosters are given at the appropriate times.
- understand that some foster animals do not survive.
- learn to let go when it's time for a foster to go to a permanent, loving home

## What does it cost?

There are no fees involved with fostering.

Most foster families take on the costs of day-to-day care (food, litter, pet dishes, toys, and the like) of their foster animals. (Save your receipts. Since Angel's Wish is a non-profit organization, the expenses you incur for foster animals are tax deductible as donations-in-kind.) Others obtain supplies from Angel's Wish.

Angel's Wish must approve all medical and special needs for foster animals. For approved medical and special needs, Angel's Wish provides medications, medical treatment, and special needs items for foster animals. Your adoption coordinator will help you with medical and special needs items. All veterinary appointments, medical treatment, medication and special needs items must be obtained through your adoption coordinator.

Foster families should be prepared to make a financial commitment that could include:

- repair cost for damage to your home or furnishings (screen doors, stains on carpet, broken vases, and the like)
- the cost of keeping your own pets up-to-date with their vaccinations, parasite treatments, and health checks
- medical treatment for family members or pets

## Preparing for your first foster

Learn as much as you can about pet care. The Angel's Wish website, [www.angelswish.org](http://www.angelswish.org), and the "Good Resources" section at the end of this manual are a good place to start.

Your foster animal will need:

- a clean, warm, comfortable environment, separate from your own animals
- clean bedding, food and water dishes, and toys
- a scratching surface
- a litter box that is scooped daily and disinfected at least once a week
- a carrier for safe transportation to and from adoption events and medical appointments
- fresh food and water

For both the foster and your own pets protection, you will need to:

- keep your own pets current with vaccinations.
- isolate the foster animal to assess health and behavior and allow the animal to adjust in a quiet, safe environment.
- work with your adoption coordinator to schedule appointments with the veterinarian. The animal may need a physical exam, vaccinations, and/or spaying or neutering.
- animal proof your foster area (see guidelines).
- keep your foster indoors.

## Suggested items for foster homes

As you become more experienced with foster care giving, you will develop your own style and methods that work best for you and your home. Although you'll need some of these items, you may find you don't need everything on this list. We hope you will find some of these proven ideas to be good suggestions for your situation.

**Baby food, KMR (milk replacer), and Nutri Cal** — These are good for cats and kittens that need extra nourishment, are under aged orphans, or have loss of appetite.

**Blankets and towels** — for warmth and comfort

**Bowls** — ceramic or stainless steel are more easily sanitized than plastic and are much less likely to cause feline acne. If they are weighted, it will help to reduce spills and messes.

**Crate** — various sizes depending on the size of the animal

**Feeding bottle or syringes** — for animals that need extra nourishment, are under aged orphans, or have loss of appetite

**Basic medical package**—Amoxicillin, Clavamox, Melbamite, dewormer, revolution, and Albon. Your adoption coordinator will determine what your specific package should contain.

**Hand sanitizer**—good for quick hand washings

**Gram scale** — for weighing newborns

**Grooming supplies** — nail trimmers, brushes, combs, flea combs, etc.

**Kitty condo** — good for isolating the fosters to a smaller area for the initial observation, behavior modification training, or for the foster’s peace of mind; essential for fostering kittens without mothers

**Litter pans** — always good to have several sizes: smaller, shorter one for kittens, extra large one, and a short-sided one

**Newspaper** — for protecting floor or for lining a kennel

**Painter’s tarps** — for protecting carpeted floors. If more than one is purchased, they can be used interchangeably while being laundered.

**Plastic carriers** — for trips to the vet and adoption clinics

**Rectal thermometer** — for checking temperatures in animals you suspect are ill.

**Scratching post** — made from sisal rope and tall enough to remain standing when the cat uses it. A cat tree can be wrapped with sisal rope and serve the purpose just fine. This will be provided, if needed.

**Stain and odor remover** — Enzyme cleaners remove all trace of the odor, but may not eradicate the stain.

**Toys, toys, toys** — See the section on toys for safe, fun ideas.

**Ziploc storage bags** — for collecting stool samples

## Animal information packets

Each foster animal needs an information packet that includes photos and description that can be used on the web and at adoption events. The packets also may include other items your foster coordinator designates. Bring the packet with the animal to all adoption events and medical appointments. You can use a ring to attach the packet to your foster animal’s carrier to make

it easier to remember. Rings are available at the Angel's Wish Center.

On the cover sheet, include the foster's name, gender, age, vaccination and spay/neuter status, and a description of personality traits. Is your foster a lap-cat? Does he/she like to be held or not? Declawed or using scratching post? Like a particular litter box or type of litter? Have favorite toys or activities?

## Safety

Foster animals must be under the control of the foster family or other experienced Angel's Wish volunteer while appearing in public places at all times. No Angel's Wish foster animal should be allowed out of the confines of the foster home until they have received their full set of vaccinations, unless it is necessary to transport them to veterinary care. Cats and kittens must always be transported in a carrier.

Having comforting music available can help with the adjustment period. Keeping your fosters indoors protects them from parasites, such as ticks and fleas, and many poisonous plants.

## Animal bites

Although not a common occurrence and even when using proper handling techniques, bites and scratches can occur. By practicing safe animal handling and disease control, you will lessen the risk for placing yourself in a compromising situation. If you'd like to take further precautions, ask your doctor for a pre-rabies vaccination for yourself.

Use these steps in the event of a bite or scratch incident:

1. Clean and flush wound immediately with soap and water
2. Report the incident to your adoption coordinator. If a bite breaks the skin, also report it to the appropriate Health Department: (Madison 267-1989; Dane County 255-2345).

Unless you know for certain the animal has had a rabies vaccination, he/she must be quarantined for 10 days for rabies observation.

3. If necessary, see your family doctor for treatment of the wounds. Per your agreement when signing the hold harmless agreement, any treatment deemed necessary for a personal injury is the responsibility of the individual.

## Animal proofing your home or foster room

It is important to ensure your home or foster room is safe for the animals. Here are some things to consider before bringing a foster animal into your home.

- Ensure all medications and cleaners are out of reach of jumping, climbing kitties
- Keep trashcans covered or inside a latched cabinet
- Place dangling wires and mini-blind or drapery cords out of reach or wrap with protective covering, such as vacuum hose or PVC pipe
- Remove houseplants (see list below for types and symptoms)

- Cover electrical outlets so little kitten paws and claws can't get caught in them
- Count heads when opening and closing closets to ensure no one is shut inside.

It is possible the animal(s) may cause damage to your home. Minimize this by using common sense when establishing your foster room and ensuring kittens and cats cannot be climbing on screens or other inappropriate items. Angel's Wish, Inc. cannot be held responsible for damages caused by the foster animal.

## Houseplants

Many house and garden plants are poisonous. The table that follows lists a variety of plants that are toxic and the symptoms that each plant can cause.

<i>Type of Plant</i>	<i>Symptoms</i>
Alocasia	Salivation and edema (swelling)
Amaryllis	Nausea and vomiting
Balsam Pear	Nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea
Bird-of-paradise	Nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea
Buckthorn	Nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea
Cacti	Contact irritants / mechanical injury
Calla lily	Salivation and edema (swelling)
Caladium	Salivation and edema (swelling)
Christmas candle	Nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea
Clematis	Nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea
Common Boxwood	Nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea
Daffodil	Nausea and vomiting
Dieffenbachia	Salivation and edema (swelling)
Elephant's ear	Salivation and edema (swelling)
English holly	Nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea
English ivy	Nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea
Euonymus	Nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea
Foxglove	Slow and irregular heartbeat with nausea and vomiting
Foxtail	Contact irritants / mechanical injury
Green Dragon	Salivation and edema (swelling)
Honey locust	Contact irritants / mechanical injury
Honeysuckle	Nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea
Hydrangea	Vomiting, stupor, difficult breathing, coma
Iris	Nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea
Jack-in-the-pulpit	Salivation and edema (swelling)
Japanese plum	Vomiting, stupor, difficult breathing, coma

<i>Type of Plant</i>	<i>Symptoms</i>
Larkspur	Slow and irregular heartbeat with nausea and vomiting
Lily of the valley	Slow and irregular heartbeat with nausea and vomiting
Malaga	Salivation and edema (swelling)
Mock orange	Nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea
Oleander	Slow and irregular heartbeat with nausea and vomiting
Philodendron	Salivation and edema (swelling)
Poinsettia	Nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea
Pokeweed	Nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea
Wisteria	Nausea and vomiting

**Toys** Never play with a, cat or kitten, with your hands or feet. It teaches them that biting and scratching people is OK.

Sometimes it's not about the actual toys, but rather the configuration of the play area. A good and inexpensive way to build a play station is by using plastic milk crates. Place them in a pyramid shape, with the top (open part) facing into the room. Secure them together. Then hang toys from them or put blankets and towels inside for sleeping. Cats and kittens alike love this!

Cats have an uncanny knack of making toys from many objects we wouldn't think of as toys. Not all of these are safe for the kitties; some are just plain dangerous. These are unsafe objects because they can be ingested: yarn, rubber bands, paper clips, plastic milk jug rings, buttons. Some store-bought toys must be altered to be cat-proof. These include anything with small parts attached to them, eyes, ribbons, feathers. Oh, they are cute, but no fun to the cat when he/she pulls them off the toy and eats them! Feather toys should always be put away when the foster family is done playing with the cat/kitten. Any type of pills, such as prescriptions, aspirin, Tylenol, etc. should always be stored in the bottle and away from the animal.

<i>Toy</i>	<i>Comments</i>
Soft toys	Soft toys must be machine washable and be able to withstand bleach to be appropriate for use with foster kitties. Avoid stuffed toys with fillings of nutshells or polystyrene beads. These can be dangerous if the cat bites them open.
Round plastic shower curtain	These are fun as a single ring to bat around, hide, or carry. Also fun when linked together

<i>Toy</i>	<i>Comments</i>
rings	and hung in an enticing spot.
Balls	Provide plastic rolling ones with or without bells inside, ping pong balls, or plastic practice golf balls, especially the ones with holes in them.
Paper bags	Be sure to remove any handles. Never allow a foster animal to play with plastic bags.
Sisal-wrapped toys	These are attractive to those cats who ignore soft toys
Empty cardboard rolls	You can get these from the toilet paper or paper towels. They are especially enticing if you unwind the cardboard a little!
Wand toys	You can make you own with a dowel rod from any home improvement or craft store. Put bird feathers (you've collected in the yard) on the end, or a plastic practice golf ball, or just a knot.
Track toys	Track toys are great! Some come with cardboard scratching surfaces in the middle, others are covered.

Avoid all toys that are clearly not cat toys, such as clothing, pillows, etc. The animal needs to distinguish between what articles are and what articles are not appropriate for chewing and playing. It is better to start the animal out correctly and not accidentally encourage them to damage inappropriate items.

Avoid all toys with small parts that could be a choking hazard. The list that follows will give you an idea of the kinds of toys to avoid. This is not a comprehensive list:

- Toys with small parts which are glued on and can come off easily
- Toys that cannot be effectively disinfected
- Soft rubber toys with parts that can easily be chewed off
- Yarn, string, rubber bands, twist-ties, ribbon

## Grooming

Grooming your foster animal removes excess hair as well as dried saliva, and urine. This helps prevent hairballs (for the cat) and allergic reactions (for the humans). Another function of cat grooming is to reduce anxiety and conflict; this is also the reason why cats enjoy being petted. If you are fostering kittens, they may not necessarily need grooming, but it is important to get them started on understanding the process and accustomed to the procedures, because in a few months, they will need it. An established routine will add to the health of the animal and will give you one more opportunity for interaction. To ensure a positive experience, keep grooming sessions short at first and provide a reward for positive behavior.

## Nail trimming

It can be easy to keep nails trimmed and thus reduce the desire for adopters to want to declaw the cat. You can be part of this solution by getting the cat used to having his/her paws handled and squeezed. Each time you play with or pet the cat, touch or hold their paws; choosing which one depends on their level of tolerance. You can use the same nail clippers that humans use or you can use ones designed especially for animals; the preference is yours.

It may be easier for you to trim nails with the help of another person. One person holds the animal; the other clips the nails. Always do this in a place with good light. Apply a small amount of pressure to the cat's paw, until the claws are extended. You should be able to see the pink or "quick" which is a small blood vessel. Do not cut into the pink portion as it will bleed and be painful for the cat. If bleeding occurs, styptic powder, cornstarch, or flour along with direct pressure will stop the bleeding. This may need to be done every 7-14 days.

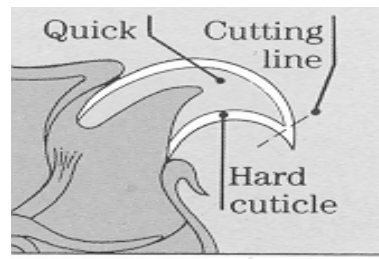


Figure 1: The cutting angle for a claw

Kitten nails need to be trimmed as soon as 3 weeks; this keeps them from scratching mama as they nurse or each other (or you) when they play. It also adds one more element of socialization to the kitten's world. The more used to being handled and being with humans, the more well-adjusted and emotionally calm they will be.

## Brushing

The more you know about your foster, the better the animal looks, the better his/her chances are of finding a good quality, permanent home. Regular brushing not only improves the animal's appearance, it helps stimulate healthy skin and reduces the allergens in the coat. It also has the added advantage of knowing one more trait of your foster. Some like brushing and combing; others hate it.

Flea combs are a must in your repertoire of grooming supplies, and they're not just for fleas! It helps to get the undergrowth from kitty, and because many are made of plastic, they seldom irritate the skin.

## Pregnancy and newborns

Pregnancy in cats can be as short as 57 days or as long as 70 days with the developing kittens growing an average of 1/8 inch (3mm) per day. Cats do not typically have physical problems giving birth. .

The most common cause of death in kittens is chilling. Be very certain to keep babies warm without direct use of a heating pad. Cleanliness is important with newborns. Always wash your hands before handling them or anything in their environment. Harsh chemicals should be avoided because they may irritate and compromise their systems.

Check umbilical cords daily until they dry and fall off. Newborns may attempt to nurse on one another, using the genitalia as a “pseudo-nipple.” Monitor for this behavior and separate the kits if it occurs. This type of suckling can cause damage and infection.

### Nesting box environment

A queening box is optimal and should be in a quiet, out-of-the-way place. The box should be large enough for the mom to comfortably lie away from the litter if she chooses, but small enough the newborns are easy to reach. The sides need to be high enough to prevent the young from wandering, but low enough for mom to come and go with ease. If you are using a cardboard box, do not place it on concrete because this will draw heat away from the babies.

Bedding should consist of several layers of blankets or towels. Be sure no holes or frayed edges are exposed. Bedding should be washed daily, especially during the first 3 weeks of the newborn’s life. Never place kittens in deep loose bedding such as straw, hay, or shavings. These can obstruct breathing or be inhaled and cause respiratory infections.

### Feeding mom

Pregnant and nursing mothers need to be fed kitten food. They need to be fed more often or given larger quantities and also will need more water than usual, anywhere from 2 to 4 times her normal intake. It is virtually impossible to overfeed a nursing mom. Depending on the animal, the veterinarian may require vitamin supplements to be given.

## Weaning

Weaning generally begins around 4 weeks of age and should be a gradual process completed at 6-7 weeks. Weaning may need to be done sooner, depending upon the size of the litter, the condition of the mother, and the availability of mother's milk. Kittens may also start to suckle each other. When this occurs, the kittens must be separated. Begin introducing the kittens to semi-solid gruel that becomes more solid with each progressing week. Feeding should be done at a consistent time twice a day; the babies may be nursing in between feedings.

Once you begin the weaning process, you must provide plenty of fresh water. Be sure the water bowls are designed such they cannot be easily tipped over. Keep the water level low enough to prevent possible drowning. Food also needs to be served in a dish that cannot be stepped on and flipped over, yet with sides low enough for the kittens to eat from without pressure to their throats.

To get kittens acquainted with the food, dip your finger into the gruel and let the little one lick at it, or smear a small amount on their lips—be very careful not to get it in the animal's nose. You will want to remove mama while feeding or she will eat the gruel. You can also remove her 1-2 hours prior to feeding to stimulate the babies' appetites. Here are some recipes to use:

## Kitten weaning recipes

The following table provides information about preparing nutritious meals for healthy, weaning kittens. If your kitten has health problems, follow the advice of your veterinarian for weaning foods.

<i>Serve at</i>	<i>Details</i>
4 weeks	KMR mixed with baby food or canned kitten food to a soupy consistency. Make sure the mixture is 98-100 degrees before serving.
5 weeks	Grind up dry kitten food in food processor, then grind in canned kitten food. Use a ratio of 1 cup dry to 2 cups canned.
6 weeks	Change the ratio to 2 cups dry to 1 cup canned.
7 weeks	By 7 weeks, the kittens can be eating whole chunks of dry with a little canned on the side.

## Drying up and mastitis

Once kittens are weaned, lactation in mama can be stopped by withholding food for 24 hours, then increasing it by 25% each day for 4 days. The Mom should be completely dried up before spaying.

Mastitis is an inflammatory process involving one or more mammary glands caused by a bacterial infection. Affected mammary glands are usually swollen, warm, and painful to touch. If it occurs, it will happen within 6 weeks of giving birth. When present, mastitis can cause systemic signs of illness including fever, listlessness, loss of appetite, and neglect of young. Treatment should begin with hot-packing the affected glands to encourage drainage, and may require antibiotics. Applying Bag Balm will also promote healing.

## Kitten development

The sensory world of a kitten in the first 2 weeks of life is dominated by temperature, touch, hearing, and smell. Sense of smell plays a central role in suckling. Kittens will sleep 90% of the time and eat the other 10%. They should nurse vigorously and compete for nipples; newborns can nurse up to 45 minutes at a time. Make sure to monitor their eating, ensuring they nurse at least once a day and there isn't a lot of jockeying for positions. Baby kitties should be content and mostly quiet the first couple weeks; healthy kittens seldom cry.

When unweaned kittens are crying and wandering away from the mother, this is a sign of distress. Wandering away is a problem because kittens aren't able to control their body temperatures and chilling is a major cause of kitten mortality. Perhaps the kitten isn't getting enough milk because Mom isn't healthy enough to provide enough. Until the kitten is able to eat on his/her own, you may need to supplement with syringe-feeding KMR to the kitten and some NutriCal. As soon as they can eat on their own, or close to, you can mix all meat Gerber baby food (they seem to like the chicken or turkey) with the KMR for a very soupy gruel. If you have a kitten exhibiting this and you are supplement feeding, be sure to weigh the kitten daily; it is the only sure way to know if the kitten is growing and thriving.

**Weight** — A steady daily weight gain is the best indicator that a kitten is doing well. At 5 days, a kitten should weigh 3-7 oz; by 10 days 4 ½ - 9 ¾ oz; by 15 days 6- 11 ¾ oz; and so forth

**Eyes**— A kitten's eyes start to open at 7-10 days after birth and are fully opened by the 16<sup>th</sup> day. When the eyes open, the iris is

blue-gray and will change to normal adult color by 4-6 weeks. The visual system isn't fully developed until 3-4 weeks.

**Ears** — Ear canals open between 5-8 days and ears become erect by 15 days.

**Teeth** — Teeth start to erupt shortly before 2 weeks and change from milk teeth to adult teeth around 3 1/2 months.

**Other** — Kittens should be able to stand by day 21. By 4 weeks old kittens will start to clean themselves and can begin to eat from a bowl and use their litter box. Females are sexually mature between 4-12 months; males around 7-10 months. A healthy cat's temperature is around 101.5 degrees.

**Fading Kitten** — Once in a while, one or more kittens in a litter will begin to “fade” after a week or two of life. They will stop growing, begin to lose weight, stop nursing, and stop crawling. They may cry continuously and lose the ability to stay upright. The mother cat may push them out of the nest, where they often chill and starve to death. Kittens fade very quickly and probably will not recover even with intensive care. There is no clear cause of reason for this condition; it has been linked to birth defects, environmental stress, and infectious disease. Early veterinary treatment is imperative, but even with tube feeding, re-hydration, and monitoring, many, if not most, fading kittens will die.

**Dangers** — As kittens get older, more mobile and curious, their confinement area must be constantly checked for ways to escape and possible dangers to young explorers. Make sure to keep power cords clear from all whelping boxes, as well as any item the kittens may chew up and ingest. Kittens will investigate and chew anything. What they swallow is potentially harmful, causing blockage, intestinal upset, or poisoning.

## Orphaned kittens

Successful rearing of orphaned kittens requires providing them with a suitable environment, the correct quantities of nutrients for different stages of growth, and a regular schedule of feeding, sleeping, grooming, and exercise. You must also provide the stimulus for urination and defecation during the first 18-21 days of life. Do this by massaging the abdomen and perianal area after each feeding with a cotton ball or very soft wash cloth (you don't want to irritate the area) dampened with warm water. You can also use mineral oil on a cotton ball to stimulate the bowel. Kittens, after 4 weeks, can usually eliminate on their own.

You must also maintain their body warmth for them as kittens do not have the ability to regulate and control their body temperature. Keep them out of drafts. You may need to use a heating pad or Snuggle Safe (a microwaveable source of heat that stays warm for 12 hours). If you need to use a heat source, place it in front of their sleeping area, at the opening of the crate and cover it with several thicknesses of towels.

Kitten bedding must be changed daily, and sometimes more often. Wash dirty bedding with a little bleach to disinfect.

Kittens need exercise to promote muscular and circulatory development. Play with and handle them prior to each feeding. At least twice a week, and more often, the baby needs to be groomed with a soft, warm, and moist cloth wiped gently, imitating the mother's grooming licks.

Cow's milk is not nutritious enough for kittens; they will slowly starve to death on it. If you can't get to Angel's Wish a veterinary clinic or pet store to obtain KMR or Just Born for kittens, check the emergency recipe section for temporary substitutes.

Test temperature before feeding. It should be warm without burning –around 100 degrees Fahrenheit (which is a kitten's body temperature). Never boil the food to warm it up, it will destroy the nutritional value. Placing the bottle in hot water for a few minutes will provide adequately warmed food. Do not heat in the microwave; this technique is thought to deplete some of the nutrients. KMR or Just Born can also be frozen into ice cube trays so that you only defrost the amount you need and eliminate waste.

If constipation occurs, add 1 drop of vegetable oil to each kitty's formula no more than once daily until the problem is eased. Overfeeding can cause diarrhea and a host of other problems.

Hand feeding can be challenging and yet, very rewarding. Every one who has done this has developed a method that works best for them; you will too! Whether you use a baby animal bottle or a syringe, it's best to keep the kitten in a position similar to what they'd experience, if mama were there. In other words, don't turn the baby on his/her back. Keep the bottle at a 45-degree angle to reduce the amount of air getting into the kitten's stomach.



Figure 2: The correct position for bottle feeding kittens or puppies

## Kitten feeding

Feedings should occur every 2 hours until the 3<sup>rd</sup> week, at which time, you can go to every 4 hours at night (for your sanity). Below is a general guideline for how much to feed and when in their lifespan:

<i>Week of life</i>	<i>Amount to feed</i>
1 <sup>st</sup> week	3.7 cc per ounce of body weight
2 <sup>nd</sup> week	4.9 cc per ounce of body weight
3 <sup>rd</sup> week	5.7 cc per ounce of body weight
4 <sup>th</sup> week	6.3 cc per ounce of body weight

After each feeding session, you should give them a full-body once-over with a barely damp washcloth, using short strokes like mom would use. This keeps their fur clean, teaches them how to groom, and gives them the attention and “mothering” they crave.

## Emergency feeding formulas

Remember these are to be used only for emergency feeding because they are not nutritionally complete for the long-term health of the kitten. Mix the ingredients well and keep in tightly sealed jar in the refrigerator.

<i>Formula</i>	<i>Ingredients and instructions</i>
Kitten Formula 1	1 can Evaporated milk 1 egg yolk 2 Tbsp Karo syrup At feeding time, mix ½ of the estimated feeding amount with an equal amount of boiling water. Once a day mix 1 drop of human infant liquid vitamins in each kitty's formula.
Kitten Formula 2	8 oz. homogenized whole milk 2 egg yolks 1 tsp salad oil 1 drop liquid pediatric vitamins (optional)

## Socializing

A great deal of time and effort is required to properly socialize kittens. Daily socialization sessions have pronounced and long-lasting effects on shaping their personalities and emotional growth. Exposing them to children, other people, and other animals is imperative. If you don't have children of your own, invite neighborhood children over for play sessions. It's a great learning experience for the children and their parents, too!

"Mom" does a great deal of teaching from 0 to 8 weeks. Kittens orphaned or separated from their mom and littermates too early often fail to develop appropriate social skills such as learning how to send and receive signals, what an "inhibited bite" means, how far to go in play, wrestling, etc. Play is important to increase physical coordination and social skills, learning limits, and "how to be a cat" by interacting with littermates and mom. Play is also a way to explore ranking of young.

Kittens handled 15 to 40 minutes a day during the first 7 weeks are more likely to develop larger brains. They are more exploratory, more playful, and are better learners. Skills not acquired by a kitten during their first 8 weeks may be lost forever. It is critical that kittens become acquainted with a variety of sights, sounds, and textures. Playing with a variety of toys is important and it helps them develop motor skills. Playing with them, playing music in their room, taking them on short rides in the car, or having a TV in their room can

accomplish this. Life experiences are invaluable, so any new experience will be enriching, including that scary vacuum!

Sometimes holding a pair of kittens helps –they seem to reassure each other. If your kittens are fearful and run away when you approach, try sitting or lying quietly on the floor near them and let them come to you. This is a lot less intimidating to the kittens than to see a pair of big, scary feet walking toward them. Stroke them and talk to them gently while they are eating to further reinforce positive associations.

It is useless to discipline a “naughty” kitten. Their little minds do not grasp deductive reasoning. Distract the mischievous little one with something else until he/she forgets whatever they were doing.

It is a good idea to record each animal’s personality traits and list their favorite toys, activities, etc. All of this information will help the animal to be matched with an appropriate home and will help the new adopter to provide quality care for the animal.

## Cleaning

Cleanliness is crucial to the thriving ability of foster animals. To control disease and parasite infestation, thoroughly clean your foster area between animals. Wash bedding and toys in hot water, laundry detergent, and bleach. Wash down all surfaces with a mild bleach and water solution or Novasan. Vacuum carpeted areas. Spritz scratching posts with a mild dishwashing detergent or Novasan, and let the toys soak in Novasan for 20 minutes. Scrub and clean condos, cages, carriers, scoops, and litter boxes with Novasan. Food and water bowls should be cleaned with dishwashing soap and water.

Clean any urine or feces-soiled areas with an enzyme cleaner immediately to avoid another animal using the same area. Enzyme cleaners remove all trace of the odor, but may not eradicate the stain. There are good stain removers on the market, but if you use a soap product on carpeting, be aware the soap may only serve to attract more dirt if it is not thoroughly washed out of the fibers.

Using stainless steel bowls is more sanitary than plastic because plastic can develop scratches that harbor bacteria, even after washing and disinfecting.

## Food and diet

It is imperative that all animals have fresh food and water daily. Equally important to note is the higher quality of food you choose to feed, the fewer stools you will clean up and the better health the animal will enjoy. Low quality foods include indigestibles and low quality nutrients, which do not absorb into the animal's body, and therefore are eliminated. High quality does not necessarily mean expensive; you have to read the label to know if you're buying high quality.

Some keys to getting high quality food are:

- Whole meat or single-source meat meal (chicken meal rather than poultry meal)
- A whole-meat source as one of the first 2 ingredients
- The type of meat is listed and not just stated as "meat"
- Whole, unprocessed grains, vegetables and not fragments and fractions (whole grain barley rather than rice bran, rice gluten, or brewers rice)
- Few sweeteners and not at the top of the list (corn syrup, sucrose)
- No artificial colors
- No propylene glycol – this is added to keep foods chewy
- No artificial preservatives (BHA, BHT, or ethoxyquin)

There are a variety of articles about foods, ingredients, and how to read a label. You are urged to consult the resources listed at the end of this manual to learn more.

## Feeding times

Adult feedings should be twice daily with the food left down for about an hour (put it down when you first get up, then pick it up before you go to work and do the same around dinner time). The benefit of twice daily feeding over free-feeding systems (leaving the food down all the time) is that you absolutely know the cat's appetite every twelve hours. If you doubt the animal is eating properly, then count the kernels you place in the bowl and count them again when you remove the bowl. This is the only way to ensure an accurate accounting of how much was eaten.

Kittens need to eat 2-4 times per day. Kittens should be fed kitten food until they are 8-12 months old.

Cats are carnivores and must have meat to survive. If allowed to eat on their own, cats will eat 10-18 meals evenly distributed throughout a 24 hour period. When diet is not artificially altered, cats select food according to its aroma, consistency, texture, and taste. They will also use previous experience to determine foods they like.

Cats have a remarkable sensitivity to the taste of water, making it even more important to ensure they have good, palatable water.

## Changing foods

To prevent diarrhea, if you switch food brands, do so gradually. A mix of 1/3 new with 2/3 previous for 2 days and then opposite for 2 days will help the animal to adjust.

## Litter box training

Placement is important. Do not place the litter box next to their bed or their food and water; place the box in a quiet location. Adult foster cats with no unweaned kittens need to be confined for their first days with you. A condo with shelves provides a perfect environment for this. This also provides an opportunity to train or re-train for litter box issues.

For kittens less than 6 months use unscented, clay or wheat litter. It is also good to have a kitten litter box; these are smaller and have shorter sides than cat litter boxes, allowing the kittens easy access in and out of the box. Since kittens tend to eat the litter, using scoopable, flushable, or clumping litter can lead to stomach ailments and expensive surgery when the litter clumps inside them. After each feeding, put the kittens in a litter box. Gently take their paw and scratch the litter with it to encourage them. Be sure to give lots of praise when they first start using their boxes. They may not “go” at first, but this practice gets them accustomed to the idea.

If an animal is not using the litterbox, first and foremost, don't chastise the cat or rub his/her nose in it. If you catch the cat in the act, thump on the wall to startle him or her. Then, quietly put the kitty in their litter box and clean up the mess. If you are using the same litter box for other foster cats, you must clean it with an enzyme cleaner. A cat has a much keener sense of smell than you or I.

Scooping the box every day is essential. Do not use a cat pan liner and do not use scented litter. Make sure you use separate litter scoops for each litter box when dealing with separated cats/litters.

If you need some extra help, we have cat behavior specialists within the organization, or you can go to the “Good Resources” at the end of this handbook.

## Medical treatments and veterinarian visits

### Vaccinations and other regularly scheduled medicals

Contact your adoption coordinator if you believe your foster requires medical attention. Remember that all medical treatment must be scheduled through your adoption coordinator.

All animals in Angel’s Wish care receive regular medical care. No cat or kitten leaves our care unless it is spayed or neutered, tested for feline immunodeficiency virus (FIV) and feline leukemia (FeLV), and current for age with vaccinations. Your adoption coordinator will advise you when and where to take your foster. Use the information that follows to ensure that your foster animal is receiving medical treatments on schedule.

<i>Medical treatment</i>	<i>When?</i>
Weight check	<b>Kittens:</b> every 2 weeks until spay or neuter <b>Cats:</b> at intake
Worming	<b>Kittens:</b> 4 weeks or older minimum weight 1 lb. Repeat as directed by your adoption coordinator or the veterinarian. <b>Cats:</b> at intake. Repeat as directed by your adoption coordinator. May be waived for pregnant animals or as indicated by medical records surrendered with the cat.
FIV/FeLV testing	<b>Kittens:</b> 8 weeks or older minimum weight 2 lb. <b>Cats:</b> at intake. May be waived as indicated by medical records surrendered with the cat.
Distemper vaccination (includes panleukopenia, rhinotracheitis, and calici)	<b>Kittens:</b> 8 weeks or older, booster in 4 weeks minimum weight for initial vaccination 2 lb. <b>Cats:</b> at intake. May be waived for pregnant animals or as indicated by medical records surrendered with the cat.

<i>Medical treatment</i>	<i>When?</i>
Rabies vaccination	<b>Kittens:</b> 6 months or older <b>Cats:</b> at intake. May be waived for pregnant animals or as indicated by medical records surrendered with the cat.
Flea, tick, and ear mite	<b>Kittens:</b> 4 weeks or older minimum weight 1 lb. Repeat as directed by your adoption coordinator or the veterinarian.
Flea, tick, and ear mite, <i>continued...</i>	<b>Cats:</b> at intake. May be waived for pregnant animals or as indicated by medical records surrendered with the cat. Repeat as directed by your adoption coordinator or the veterinarian.

## If a foster animal becomes sick

If you believe that your foster animal is ill or injured, contact your adoption coordinator immediately. Take note of specific symptoms. The adoption coordinator and the veterinarian will need to know details of behavior, as well as appearance of fecal matter, frequency of urination, swelling and/or changes in appetite.

Monitor patterns of symptoms. Be ready to explain when a problem began, how often it occurs, and whether the condition tends to arise at specific times (such as mealtime, bedtime, after exercise, and so forth).

Watch the clock. If mild symptoms do not disappear in 24 hours, call your adoption coordinator.

Be careful when you examine the animal. They may not be in a very good mood if they don't feel well or are in pain. Keep small children and visitors away from the animal until he/she is feeling better.

Warning signs to watch for:

- Sneezing, coughing
- Gagging / hairball stuff
- Wheezing
- Tires easily, lethargic or depressed
- Diarrhea or straining to urinate or defecate
- Bleeding from any part of the body
- Swelling

- Abnormal twitches
- Loss or decrease of appetite
- Change in attitude or behavior
- Breathing heavily

Fecal samples may need to be checked if you notice anything suspicious, such as diarrhea or blood in the stool. Contact your adoption coordinator. Feces must be fresh and moist, no more than 12 and preferably less than 7 hours old when you deliver them. Samples should be stored in airtight baggies in the refrigerator (not the freezer) until they are taken to the veterinarian or laboratory. Your adoption coordinator will advise you where to take the feces for analysis.

**Common diseases or illnesses**

If you see any of these symptoms, contact your adoption coordinator. Your foster animal may need to see a veterinarian or receive medication. Remember, all veterinary visits and medical treatments must be scheduled through your adoption coordinator.

<i>Disease or illness</i>	<i>Symptoms</i>
Allergic reaction	Signs are skin irritation, coughing, or respiratory distress.
Constipation	Very hard or no feces in the litter box. Whining and crying while attempting to use the litter box. Bloating, hard tummy.
Diarrhea	Up to 3 weeks of age, diarrhea is usually related to too much food intake. It can also be a sign of infection, ingestion of foreign material, intestinal parasites (very common), poisoning, bacteria, viruses, or stress-induced factors. Diarrhea can occur if you've recently switched brands or types of food.
Dehydration	<p>Indications include dry skin, lack of skin elasticity, dry mucus membranes, or darker yellow color to the urine. This is a dangerous condition and the animal will need attention.</p> <p>To detect dehydration:</p> <p>Gently grasp the loose skin above the animal's shoulders or along his/her rib cage, lift it, and let it drop back into place. If the skin drops back slowly or remains bunched up, the animal may be dehydrated.</p> <p>Look at the animal's gums. Dry, sticky gums are a sign of dehydration. Feel the animal's nose; if it is extremely dry, it could also be a warning signal.</p>

<i>Disease or illness</i>	<i>Symptoms</i>
Itching	In animals, the target organ for allergies is their skin. Signs are excessive scratching, licking and chewing feet, redness of skin, skin infections, head shaking, or weeping, irritated eyes. The irritant could be external (on the coat) or internal (inhaled).
Loss of appetite	This can be a reaction to a recent move, stress, or change in food. But it can also be a sign of more serious problems. Discuss feeding problems with your adoption coordinator.
Viral and Bacteria Diseases	
Upper respiratory infection (URI)	This is a common problem in cats, somewhat like the common cold in humans. Symptoms are sneezing, coughing, ocular/nasal discharge, lethargy, fever, and loss of appetite. URI is seldom fatal and usually resolves within 1-2 weeks. Cat-to-cat contact or airborne secretions cause it. Treatment consists of supportive care, including keeping the cat warm, minimizing stress and excitement, and offering good quality food, and plenty of fresh water. The secondary bacterial infections can make the problem worse and may require antibiotics and fluids, if necessary.
Panleukopenia (distemper)	This disease causes vomiting, diarrhea, lethargy, fever, and loss of appetite. It is caused by exposure to an infected cat or to the virus in the environment.
Feline leukemia (FeLV)	This disease is caused by a retrovirus, it's infectious, and it's fatal. FeLV can suppress the immune response or can cause cancer in the bloodstream or any body tissue, such as kidneys or spinal cord. It can cause tumors, chronic diarrhea, and anemia that make the cat susceptible to other diseases. Transmission to other cats is made from close contact with infected saliva – fighting, grooming, bites, shared food, shared water bowls. The virus can also be spread through urine and feces. The virus is short-lived outside of the cat's body and is easily killed by household disinfectants. Pregnant mothers can spread the virus to their kittens.
Feline immunodeficiency virus (FIV)	This disease is a retrovirus, which causes immuno-suppression and produces a disease similar to AIDS in humans after years of infection. It is transmitted through the bite of an infected cat.
Feline infectious peritonitis (FIP)	This disease is caused by a common coronavirus and is transmitted through saliva. FIP is thought to be a mutation of the Feline Enteric Corona Virus. Often the disease will go unnoticed, but it will eventually develop into a slowly progressive disease and be fatal. Incubation is usually a few days to three weeks, but sometimes can be up to several months. Clinical signs include persistent fever, loss of appetite, and progressive weight loss. Some cats accumulate fluid in the abdomen, show neurological problems, and have diarrhea.

Common  
internal parasites

Internal parasites attack the heart, lungs, and digestive systems. Left untreated, they can be fatal. The following table contains information about treating internal parasites. Always consult your adoption coordinator before beginning medical treatment.

<i>Parasite</i>	<i>Symptoms</i>	<i>Recommended treatment</i>
Coccidia	Coccidia are a protozoan parasite most prevalent in kittens, but occasionally found in adult cats. The diarrhea associated with coccidia is seen primarily in kittens and is the first sign of this disease.	Treatment will consist of about 20 days of medication in either liquid or pill form. Coccidia can be spread to other cats.
Heartworms	Heartworms are a dangerous canine and feline parasite and a growing problem in the United States. These potentially fatal 6-14 inch worms are found in the heart and can cause heart and lung failure. The parasite is spread by mosquitoes that bite an infected animal, ingest the larvae, then bite another animal, injecting the larvae under the new animal's skin. Heartworm infection is sneaky because it can cause major damage to vital organs before you spot any warning signs, which can be chronic cough, poor appetite, tiring after moderate exercise, or weight loss.	Consult your adoption coordinator

<i>Parasite</i>	<i>Symptoms</i>	<i>Recommended treatment</i>
Roundworms	<p>Roundworms are a common parasite and are zoonotic. They live in the stomach and intestinal tract and can reach up to 5 inches long. Transmission occurs by direct contact with contaminated soil, ingestion of host (beetle, rodents, etc), and from mother to offspring during lactation or in utero. Heavy infestation causes kittens to appear thin and pot-bellied. Coughing, diarrhea, and vomiting may also occur. The worms appear like white earthworms and may be seen in stool or vomit.</p>	<p>Deworming is a common practice and good preventative.</p> <p>Good sanitation can be maintained by keeping stools picked up in the yard and this practice is paramount to preventing reinfestation.</p>
Tapeworms	<p>There are several types and species of tapeworm, but all types have an intermediate host (fleas or rodents) in which the larvae stage develops. Transmission occurs when the animal ingests an intermediate host harboring the larvae. Typically this occurs while grooming/licking themselves or another. Symptoms may include dullness, irritability, increased appetite, dry and harsh coat, and mild diarrhea. Tapeworms will appear as flat, white, rice-like worms approximately ½” long in fresh feces or around the animal’s anal region.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><i>continued...</i></p> <p>Consult your adoption coordinator.</p>

Common external parasites

External parasites attack the skin, ears, and eyes. While irritating for both the animal and humans in the home, they are seldom fatal. Left untreated, serious complications can arise from secondary infections. The following table contains information about treating external parasites. Always consult your adoption coordinator before beginning medical treatment.

<i>Parasite</i>	<i>Symptoms</i>	<i>Recommended treatment</i>
Ticks	Ticks feed on blood. The insects embed themselves in the skin and causing redness, swelling, irritation, and painful itching.	Treatment begins with physically removing the ticks.  Consult your adoption coordinator for recommended preventative.
Ear mites otodectic mange, ear mange	Ear mites are tiny white parasites that live on the surface of the ear canal and feed upon skin cells and debris. They reproduce quickly and produce numerous offspring. Ear mites create a flaky, dark brown, sometimes waxy discharge in the ear canal. Most kittens acquire ear mites from their mother while still in the nest. The infected animal will shake their heads and scratch or rub their ears. These are highly contagious to other dogs, cats, and rabbits. They can travel outside the ear and may be all over the animal's fur.	Treatment includes applying a topical miticide medicine to the ear and cleaning the ears. Treatment can also include an injection of Ivermectin, which kills ear mites systemically.
Sarcoptic mange (scabies)	This mange is highly contagious to humans and animals. Sarcoptic mange is caused by a microscopic, spider-like mite burrowing into the skin and causing the animal to scratch and bite with intensity. Scabs, crust, and hair loss patches occur due to the scratching and biting, and are commonly found on the earflaps, legs, face, and elbows.	Consult your adoption coordinator

<i>Parasite</i>	<i>Symptoms</i>	<i>Recommended treatment</i>
Fleas	<p>Fleas are the most common external parasite. Fleas feed on the animal's blood and depending upon the severity of the infestation can cause anemia or even death. Signs of infestation include seeing the dark brown insect on the skin along with the eggs (white specks) and feces (black specs). Flea eggs can drop on the carpet, furniture, animal's bedding, and cracks or indentations in floors. The hatch cycle can take only a few days to complete. .If the animal has fleas, there is a good chance he/she also has tapeworm. This is because fleas are a common carrier of this internal parasite and the fleas are ingested during grooming or licking activity. Another problem is the animal may have an allergic reaction to the fleas if bitten. This sets off a cycle of constant itching and scratching, and the animal will begin to lose hair, especially around the tail. Scratching can severely damage the skin, causing "hot spots."</p>	<p>Control is a multi-step process, which includes treating the animal and the environment. Eradicate fleas from the house and the yard. Treat animals with Frontline or Revolution Consult your adoption coordinator if you find fleas on pregnant or nursing animals.</p> <p>Vacuuming the house and washing the animal's bedding daily is necessary, since insecticides usually do not kill flea eggs unless high concentrations are used.</p> <p>The most effective way to remove eggs from the house is by using a vacuum cleaner. Before you begin, treat the vacuum bag by placing flea powder inside it or spraying it with flea spray. When you finish, empty the bag immediately. .</p>

### Life cycle of the flea

Adult fleas lay eggs, which usually drop off their animal host and accumulate in alarming numbers where the animal spends a lot of time. Doghouses, carpets, sofas, and other such places are often good nesting grounds for flea eggs. Under ideal conditions, eggs hatch in 1-2 days or may last up to 3-4 weeks before hatching.

Flea eggs hatch into a larval, caterpillar-like stage that feeds on debris and organic matter and lives freely in the environment. Most larvae can be effectively treated with concentrated insecticides.

The larvae can develop into adult fleas in 5 days. Adult fleas prefer furry animals, but may feed on people. The common flea is hardy; it can live up to 4 months without feeding and has a lifespan of up to 2 years. It is important to remember that fleas feed on their animal hosts but spend most of their time off the animal. For every flea you see, there are at least 100 lurking somewhere else in your home.

**Zoonotic diseases** Zoonotic diseases are diseases animals can transmit to humans under natural conditions. An animal need not appear ill in order to be contagious. Similarly, people may show no symptoms or be quite ill. Some zoonotic diseases, like rabies, can even result in death. Zoonotic diseases can be acquired by direct contact with an infected animal or by indirect contact with infected materials such as urine, feces, hair, or saliva. Many internal and external parasites are considered zoonotic.

<i>Disease</i>	<i>Symptoms</i>	<i>Recommended treatment</i>
Campylobacter	Transmitted by ingestion of infected animal feces. Human symptoms include abdominal pain, cramps, fever, chills, and bloody diarrhea.	Always wash hands after working with animals.
Giardia	Transmitted by ingestion of the parasite, via infected animal feces or contaminated soil or water. Symptoms include diarrhea, loose or watery stool, stomach cramps, and upset stomach and can lead to weight loss and dehydration. Some people have no symptoms.	Always wash hands after working with animals and using the toilet yourself; avoid drinking untreated water; wash fruits and vegetables well before eating.

*continued...*

<i>Disease</i>	<i>Symptoms</i>	<i>Recommended treatment</i>
Ringworm	<p>Ringworm is a zoonotic disease, meaning it is contagious to humans and animals. It is a fungal disease producing dry, scaly, hairless patches (called lesions). Most healthy adult cats have some resistance to ringworm and never develop symptoms from the fungus. Young cats (under one year) and cats with a suppressed immune system are most susceptible to infection. Ringworm is transmitted through direct contact with the fungal spores.</p> <p>The hairless spot gets larger and additional spots appear. Sometimes the spots will be more regular rings with furless scaly circles and a visible red ring at the outside edge. On people and dogs, ringworm is most often shaped in a regular ring.</p> <p>Ringworm causes little distress and is not an emergency, but it is highly contagious, itchy, and takes patience and diligence when applying medicine because it is a stubborn spore.</p> <p>Exposure to a Wood's lamp or a black light, which makes the fungus glow, sometimes can detect ringworm.</p>	<p>Ringworm requires extensive treatment and can take up to 4 months to resolve in healthy animals. Treatment includes applying a topical or oral anti-fungal medicine prescribed by a veterinarian. Ringworm spores are able to survive for long periods in an environment. This makes cleaning and sterilization a critical part of the treatment regime. Disinfect with a bleach and water mixture.</p> <p><i>If you suspect your foster animal has ringworm:</i> Isolate the animal immediately. Limit handling the animal. Contact your adoption coordinator. Disinfect all toys, towels, blankets, etc with very hot water and bleach. Disinfect all food and water bowls, carriers, and anything else the animal has come into contact with. Vacuum all upholstery and rugs thoroughly. Wash yourself thoroughly and change clothes after handling the infected animal.</p> <p><i>If you have fostered a litter with ringworm,</i> it is best to wait 4 weeks before fostering a new litter.</p>

<i>Disease</i>	<i>Symptoms</i>	<i>Recommended treatment</i>
Rabies	Rabies is a fatal neurological disease transmitted through the bite of an infected animal. Symptoms include dramatic behavior change (becoming vicious or unusually affectionate), hiding or roaming long distances, attacking inanimate objects, vocal changes, drooping jaw, profuse drooling, staggering, paralysis, convulsions, and death within days.	Consult your adoption coordinator.
Toxoplasmosis	Typically, humans are infected by eating contaminated meat, but humans can also be infected by ingesting or inhaling infected oocysts in cat feces.  Healthy individuals who are infected exhibit no symptoms, but individuals who are pregnant or have a compromised immune systems may exhibit severe symptoms including neurological and vision problems	Wearing gloves and cleaning litter boxes daily will prevent this.

## Recovering from injuries or surgery

Occasionally there is an animal in need of extensive medical treatment. Injuries can be sustained in a variety of ways: being hit by a car, attacked by another animal, abused, or neglected. The foster care period for an animal recovering from surgery may vary from a few days to a few weeks, depending on the severity of the injuries and the treatment involved. These animals usually require daily medications, special diets, and regular veterinarian visits. (Remember, all veterinary visits must be scheduled through your adoption coordinator.) Many need complete bed rest in order to fully heal and others may require some rehabilitation exercise.

Depending on the mobility of the animal, an easily accessed, easy-to-clean area separate from your own animals is ideal. They will need a quiet play to stay where they feel safe and relaxed.

## If a foster animal dies

It is a sad fact that foster animals, through no fault of your own, sometimes die. The mother may reject or kill a baby; you may find an animal dead when you wake up; an ill or injured animal may not recover. While it doesn't happen often, it does happen,

If you experience the loss of foster you will feel something between distress and devastation, depending on how long you have cared for the animal and how attached you have become. We have all felt this. Do not blame yourself for "doing something wrong" for in fact, by opening your home in the first place, you have done something very right and something very good.

Contact your adoption coordinator, grieve the loss, then get love and comfort from the others in your home.

***Celebrate all successes and give yourself praise for the lives you have saved!***

## Administering medications

Some animals require daily medications. Others require medication only occasionally, when they are experiencing health problems. Always follow the veterinarian's instructions whenever medication is given. Do not give medications without first talking to your adoption coordinator.

**Liquids** For cats, tilt the head back, open the mouth, and slowly dribble the liquid from a syringe or eyedropper onto the back of the tongue. If the cat coughs or sputters, decrease the amount of the head tilt. If the medication is bitter tasting, the cat may foam at the mouth.

**Pills** When giving pills, tilt the animal's head back, gently open the mouth, and drop the pill to the back of the throat. Gently hold the mouth closed, with the head pointed straight upwards and blow on the nose to get the animal to swallow. As an alternative, pills may be given in a small piece of cheese, canned food, or peanut butter although this works better for dogs than for cats.

**Pastes** The easiest way to administer pastes is to put medication on your finger, open the animal's mouth, and smear the medication on the roof of the mouth. If the medication is in a syringe, it may be placed on the tongue where it will adhere and be swallowed. An alternate method is to place the paste on the front leg where it will be licked off. This isn't as accurate and should only be used when exact measurements are not needed.

**Eye drops and ointments** To administer drops, tilt the animal's head back slightly. Bring the bottle of drops over the eye and drop in the prescribed amount. Ointment can be squeezed inside the lower eyelid once the animal's head is tilted backward. Close the eyes to distribute the ointment evenly over the surface of the eye.

With cats, it may be necessary to get the help of an assistant, or you can wrap a cat securely in a towel.

**Ear drops and ointments** Grasp the tip of the ear with one hand and hold the ear flap perpendicular. With the other hand, drop or squeeze the medicine into the canal. Continue to hold the ear firmly (to prevent head shaking) and massage the base of the ear to work the medicine down inside the ear canal.

**First aid** When an animal is injured or ill, it is important to know what to do to best help him or her. An injured or unconscious animal may need prompt first aid action – stopping bleeding, or treating shock, clearing airways. In the case of severe or life-threatening blood loss, it is essential to apply a bandage that

will provide gentle, firm pressure to control the bleeding.

## First aid kit

Each foster home should have an animal first aid kit that includes at least the following items:

Disinfectant safe for animals	Milk of magnesia
Human eye wash	Mineral oil
Antiseptic cream	Antiseptic wash
Antiseptic powder	Stretch gauze
Round-ended scissors	Tweezers
Thermometer	Cotton on a roll
Q-tips	Plastic bags to cover foot dressing
Pressure bandages	Sterile gauze pads or telfa pads
Adhesive tape	Blanket and towels
½% cortisone cream	Calamine lotion
Antibiotic cream	

## Handling an injured animal

Injuries and illness are traumatic experiences for both foster families and animals. Always remember that even the gentlest animal, when injured, will likely bite. Take precautions to prevent this. Use the procedures that follow.

## Restraining a cat

Use this type of restraint for cats and small dogs who cannot be muzzled .

1. Place a blanket over the animal.
2. Approach the animal from behind and place your hands over the shoulder and under the neck.
3. When you pick up the animal, support the body between your arms.

## Transporting injured animals

For severely injured animals, a stretcher is preferred. A stretcher can be improvised out of any rigid material, even heavy cardboard. If rigid material is not available a stretcher-sling can be made with a blanket or sheet. If injuries are not severe, cats may be wrapped in a blanket. If the cat is afraid, cover his/her eyes.

## Exposure injuries

Just as humans are affected by extremes of heat and cold, animals can sustain severe injuries when exposed to temperature extremes for any length of time.

### Chilling and hypothermia

Signs are depressed attitude, low body temperature (below 96 degrees), decrease respiratory rate, shivering (which is absent if body temperature is below 90 degrees); unconsciousness.

1. Move animal to a warm, protected place.
2. Cover with blankets and gently rub the body (not extremities) to aid rewarming.
3. Can use an electric heater or heating pads (with caution so as not to burn) if body temperature is very low.
4. If conscious, give warm sugar water.
5. If unconscious, immediately call your adoption coordinator to schedule you to see a veterinarian.

### Frostbite

Frostbite occurs most frequently in body areas sparsely covered with hair or areas of poor blood circulation (tips of ears, tails, scrotum). This is typical with stray animals.

1. Move animal to warm, protected place.
2. Rewarm by moist heat application (85 degrees) or immersions in warm water.  
Do not rub or apply pressure dressing or ointments.

### Heatstroke

Heatstroke is most commonly seen in animals that are confined in some manner in hot weather. Signs are heavy panting, difficult breathing, vomiting, rapid pulse, high body temperature (106-110 degrees), and collapse.

To treat heatstroke:

1. Cool animal by submerging in cool water (NOT ice water).
2. Keep wet and cool.
3. Monitor temperature.  
When the temperature reaches 100 degrees, dry animal and discontinue cooling.
4. Encourage animal to drink, but DO NOT force.
5. If collapsed, call your adoption coordinator.

## Collapse and accident

Quick, appropriate action can mean the difference between life and death in the event of an accident or collapse.

### **Do not:**

- Do not move the animal unless he/she is in danger (middle of highway)
- Do not raise his/her head or prop it up because saliva, blood, or vomit may run to the back of the throat and block the airway
- Do not give the animal anything solid or liquid by mouth

### **Do:**

- Get the animal out of danger and treat for shock.
- Slip a sheet under him/her and carry the animal like a hammock.
- Cover the animal with a blanket and place a hot water bottle wrapped in a cloth next to him/her.
- Check the pulse. This can be felt on the inside of the cat's thigh where the leg joins the body.
- Check for heartbeat.
- Treat bleeding. Stop any heavy blood flow.
- Look for broken bones.
- Contact your adoption coordinator.

# Numbers you need to know

Keep these telephone numbers handy. The agencies represented are wonderful resources and can assist you with problems your adoption coordinator cannot address and at times when you cannot reach your adoption coordinator.

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<i>Agency</i>	<i>Telephone number</i>
City of Madison Animal Control	(608) 267-1989
Dane County Dog Parks	(608) 246-3896
Emergency Clinic for Animals	(608) 274-7772
Licenses, Dane County (to trace)	(608) 266-4121
State of Wisconsin DNR, wildlife management	(608) 266-1877
UW Vet Clinic	(608) 263-7600

*your adoption coordinator* \_\_\_\_\_

*your veterinarian* \_\_\_\_\_

*other resource numbers:*

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## Good resources

We are grateful for the vast experience of our members and to the following agencies, organizations, and authors for providing information and assistance in preparing this manual. Without them all, this book would not have been possible.

Alt Vet Med. <http://www.altvetmed.com>  
American Pet Association. <http://www.apapets.com>  
American Veterinary Medicine Association.  
<http://www.avma.org>  
Animal Protection Institute. <http://www.api4animals.org>  
Best Friends. <http://www.bestfriends.org>  
Cat Owner's Home Veterinary Handbook by Delbert Carlson  
DVM and James Griffin, MD  
Cat Who Cried for Help by Dr. Nicholas Dodman  
Cat's Mind, The by Dr. Bruce Fogle  
Cats International. [www.catsinternational.org](http://www.catsinternational.org)  
Center for the Study of Community Animal Management.  
<http://www.saveourstrays.com>  
Cornell Book of Cats by Mordecai Siegal  
DawnWatch. <http://www.dawnwatch.com>  
Doris Day Animal League. <http://www.ddal.org>  
Dr Pitcairn's Guide to Natural Health for Dogs and Cats by Dr.  
Richard Pitcairn and Susan Hubble Pitcairn  
Felinestein by Susan Delzio and Cindy Ribarich, DVM  
Humane Society of the United States. <http://www.hsus.org>  
In Defense of Animals. <http://www.idausa.org>  
Kitten Rescue. <http://www.kittenrescue.org>  
Maddie's Fund. <http://www.maddies.org>  
National Council for Pet Population Study and Policy.  
<http://www.petpopulation.org>  
Netvet Veterinary Resources. <http://netvet.wustl.edu>  
Pet First Aid by Bobbie Mammato, DVM  
Whole Cat Journal. E-mail to [wholecat@hotmail.com](mailto:wholecat@hotmail.com)  
You and Your Cat by David Taylor

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