



FELINE FOSTER MANUAL

Thank you very much for your
commitment to giving
felines a second chance.
We could not do it without you!



TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	3
Welcome aboard!.....	3
Program goal:	3
Program objectives:	3
Felines are placed into foster care for the following reasons:	3
The Ottawa Humane Society's mission statement:.....	3
Contact information:.....	4
CHAPTER TWO: KEY PROGRAM POLICIES.....	6
1. Foster program agreement:	6
2. Adoption inquiries:.....	7
3. Isolation:.....	7
4. Keep your cat indoors:	7
5. Veterinary care for your foster:.....	8
6. Transporting foster animals:.....	8
7. Bites and scratches:.....	8
8. Social media and your foster animal:	8
CHAPTER THREE: GENERAL FOSTERING GUIDELINES.....	9
Making the match.....	9
Preparing your home for your foster:	9
Decide where the feline(s) will be kept and make the environment as safe as possible:	9
Provide a nest for nursing animals:.....	10
Supplies and emergency kit	11
Essential foster supplies:	11
Suggested foster supplies:.....	12
Suggested supplies for an emergency first aid kit:	12
General care guidelines:	13
1. Arrival day:	13
2. Litter box requirements and training:.....	13
3. Feeding guidelines:	13
4. Administering medication:	14
5. Checking temperature.....	15
6. When your foster feline needs to see our veterinarian:	16
7. Grooming needs:.....	17
Returning your foster to the OHS:	18
1. If you cannot keep your foster for the duration of her required placement:	18
2. Procedure for returning animals for surgery:.....	18
3. Procedure for returning for adoption:	19
Medical emergencies:	19
If your foster animal dies in your care:	19
If you lose your foster cat:.....	19
Cleaning between placements:	20
Cleaning and disinfecting objects and surfaces in foster area:	20

CHAPTER FOUR: MEDICAL PROTOCOLS AND CONDITIONS	21
General <i>FVRCP</i> vaccination and de-worming protocols for felines in foster care:	21
FIV/FeLV testing protocols:.....	21
Common conditions of fostered felines:	22
1. Feline upper respiratory infection (URI):	22
2. Pregnant or nursing cats:	24
3. Socialization and behavioural intervention for kittens:.....	27
4. Socializing shy cats.....	28
Common health concerns:	29
Feline medical conditions not treated in foster care:	32
CHAPTER FIVE: ZONOSSES IN CATS	34
Zoonotic risks in a shelter environment:.....	34
How zoonoses are spread:	34
Are some people at a greater risk of becoming ill from a zoonosis than others?	34
What are the factors in sheltered animals that increase the risk of zoonotic disease?	34
What are some examples of zoonoses?	34
What to do to prevent zoonotic infections:	35
To protect yourself from zoonoses:.....	36
Contaminated home environments:	36
APPENDIX A: HOW TO PILL A CAT	37
APPENDIX B: HOW TO TRIM A CAT'S CLAWS	39

Chapter One: Introduction

Welcome aboard!

Welcome to the Ottawa Humane Society's Foster Program. We are grateful that you have decided to donate your time and efforts to help us save more lives! Since the program's inception in 1983, foster volunteers have played a vital role in our organization by helping animals who are not yet ready for adoption for medical or behavioural reasons.

Animals recuperate faster from illness and injury in a nurturing home environment and have a greater opportunity to be socialized than they do at our shelter. In times of overcrowding or during the summer season, providing temporary respite from our busy shelter environment is also extremely beneficial for our animals.

Each year, approximately 1,600 animals benefit from the OHS foster program.

Program goal:

The goal of the foster program is to provide as many animals as possible with a second chance for a bright future.

Program objectives:

- To provide nurturing, temporary homes for dogs, cats and small animals requiring short-term convalescence outside the shelter environment;
- To encourage the normal growth and development of very young, otherwise healthy animals;
- To encourage the recovery and rehabilitation of animals not yet ready for adoption;
- To protect animals, especially puppies and kittens, from the risk of disease that may be present in the shelter.

Felines are placed into foster care for the following reasons:

- Upper respiratory infection
- Too young to be adopted
- In need of recovery from injury outside of the shelter
- Suffering from shelter stress and in need of refuge in a home setting
- Special medical needs
- Pregnant and/or nursing mothers with kittens
- Not adjusting well to shelter environment
- In need of socialization, behavioural monitoring and/or modification

The Ottawa Humane Society's mission statement:

To work in and with our community to provide leadership in the humane treatment of all animals, to address the causes of animal suffering, to encourage people to take responsibility for their animal companions and to provide care for animals who are neglected, abused, exploited, stray or homeless.

Contact information:

Fostering should be an enriching and enjoyable experience for you and your family. This manual is designed to guide you through the fostering process. We are here to help and answer any questions you have as they arise.

We are supporting hundreds of foster volunteers, so please contact us to make an appointment before you visit the shelter for foster pick-ups, drop-offs, and veterinarian exams. This allows us to gather the supplies needed for your appointment and reserve the time to dedicate to you and your foster animal(s). Email usually generates the fastest response and is our preferred method of communication.

When you need to get in touch with us, who you contact will depend on the reason and time of day. If we are not immediately available to take your call or respond by e-mail, we will get back to you as soon as possible. Please leave a message with detailed information about your foster animal, referencing the shelter ID number.

The foster department runs on seasonal schedules. We increase hours during the summer season to provide you with additional support and to accommodate the increase of animals in foster at that time. We will announce all changes in hours via email, in the Volunteer Connections newsletter and in the foster office well in advance.

How to contact us:

Summer season (mid-June to mid-November):

Reason:	When?	OHS representative to contact:
General Inquiries Asking questions or seeking advice, reporting problems, arranging to pick up food, etc.	Mon – Thurs 7:30 a.m. – 7:00 pm Friday 8:00 am – 4:00 pm Saturday 8:00 am – 4:00 pm	Customer Service Representative: Foster 613-725-3166 ext. 255 foster@ottawahumane.ca
	Friday 4:00 – 7:30 pm Saturday 4:00 pm – 5:30 pm Sunday 8:00 am – 5:30 pm	Veterinary Technician 613-725-3166 ext. 229 technicians@ottawahumane.ca
	Mon – Thurs 7:30 a.m. – 7:00 pm Friday 8:00 am – 4:00 pm Saturday 8:00 am – 4:00 pm	Customer Service Representative: Foster 613-725-3166 ext. 255 foster@ottawahumane.ca
Emergency Animal is in immediate distress, having trouble breathing, injured, etc. <i>Please ensure you are checking on your foster before bed, as our emergency services are available until 1am.</i>	Friday 4:00 – 8:00 pm Saturday 4:00 pm – 5:30 pm Sunday 8:00 am – 5:30 pm	Veterinary Technician 613-725-3166 ext. 229 technicians@ottawahumane.ca
	Mon – Fri 7:00 pm – 1:00 am* Saturday 5:30 pm – 1:00 am Sunday 5:30 pm – 1:00 am	After-hours Emergency Line 613-725-1532
	Mon – Fri 8:00 am – 7:00 pm Saturday 9:00 am – 5:00 pm	Customer Service Representative: Foster 613-725-3166 ext. 255 foster@ottawahumane.ca
Pick-Up and Returns To make an appointment to pick-up/return a foster (for surgery, etc.)	Mon – Fri 8:00 am – 7:00 pm Saturday 9:00 am – 5:00 pm	Customer Service Representative: Foster 613-725-3166 ext. 255 foster@ottawahumane.ca

Winter season (mid-November to mid-June):

Reason:	When?	OHS representative to contact:
General inquiries Asking questions or seeking advice, reporting problems, arranging to pick up food, etc.	Mon – Fri 7:30 a.m. – 4:00 pm Saturday 8:00 am – 3:30 pm	Customer Service Representative: Foster 613-725-3166 ext. 255 foster@ottawahumane.ca
	Mon – Fri 4:00 – 7:30 pm Saturday 4:00 pm – 5:30 pm Sunday 8:00 am – 5:30 pm	Veterinary Technician 613-725-3166 ext. 229 technicians@ottawahumane.ca
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Chapter Two: Key program policies

1. Foster program agreement:

When you joined the foster volunteer program, you signed the foster program agreement as part of your application package. We have included a copy here for your reference.



Foster Program Agreement

The Ottawa Humane Society:

1. Retains all rights and ownership of any animal in the Foster Program. The OHS has the right to recall any fostered animal to the shelter at any time.
2. Does not require prior notice for the repossession of an animal, when a foster volunteer fails to bring the animal back to the OHS as requested.
3. Makes all decisions regarding animals to be placed in foster.
4. Prioritizes placements of OHS animals to foster volunteers based on the needs of the animals, the volunteer's experience and ability.
5. Is not liable for any injury, illness or damage to persons or property, including to owned animals, while an animal is in the foster home.
6. May visit a foster home at any time, providing that the foster volunteer is given prior notice.
7. Provides food and cat litter for foster animals to foster volunteers. The OHS is not responsible for any other foster expenses not agreed upon in advance.

Ottawa Humane Society Foster Volunteers:

1. Agree they will attend a Foster Program Orientation prior to fostering.
2. Agree that only they will provide care for OHS foster animals in their possession and understand that OHS foster animals must not be left under anyone else's care, without authorization from the OHS.
3. Agree that they may not travel with their foster animal nor take their foster animal anywhere that has not been approved by an authorized OHS employee.
4. Agree to have their owned animals spayed or neutered and be up-to-date on vaccines before bringing an OHS foster animal into their home. Canine vaccines include: DHLPP (*Distemper, Hepatitis, Leptospirosis, Parvo, Parainfluenza Bordetella (kennel cough)*) and rabies. Feline vaccines include: FVRCP (*Feline Viral Rhinotracheitis, Calicivirus, Panleukopenia*) and rabies.
5. Agree to isolate OHS foster animals from existing pets in the household.
6. Agree to keep OHS foster dogs on-leash, at all times, when in public. They also agree that dogs with kennel cough must be kept away from other dogs when in public.
7. Agree to contact the OHS for all foster animal care needs and questions and will adhere to the emergency protocols provided in the foster manual.
8. Agree to return OHS foster animals, as soon as they are well and/or upon request by the OHS.
9. Agree to direct all adoption inquiries about their foster animals to the OHS Adoption Centre.
10. Agree they may not adopt their foster animals.

**Please note: failure to adhere to the agreed upon conditions, may result in removal from this program.

I, the undersigned, understand and agree to the above terms and conditions of the foster program.

Foster Volunteer Signature: _____

Date signed: _____

Print Name: _____

2. Adoption inquiries:

Remember ... you **may not** adopt your foster animal. If you are interested in adopting another animal, please be sure to visit our Adoption Centre. We have this rule in place for several reasons including:

- **For the foster family:** Being a foster volunteer can be a very emotional experience. Not all animals improve or even survive in the foster home. Foster families become attached and feel that they are the only ones that can care for a particular animal. Bringing the animal back after the foster period can evoke feelings of loss and guilt feelings in the volunteer. Guilt and loss are not a good basis for an adoption decision. To help ease this, the OHS takes the option off the table.
- **For the integrity of the OHS:** The OHS has a list of people that have made specific adoption requests and some have been waiting for extended periods of time. It's unfair to our community and calls our integrity into question to have insiders cut to the front of the line.
- **For resource reasons:** We invest in our volunteers through training and on-going support. Historically, we lost many volunteers after they adopted animals. Losing a foster volunteer has an impact on the program and the number of animals we can rehabilitate. Those that foster once or twice and adopt use up resources that could be better spent on providing care for more animals. By remaining in the foster program, foster volunteers can help many more animals become healthy and adoptable.
- **For the fostered animal:** Our commitment is to place all adoptable animals in not only a home, but the best possible home by finding the best possible match. The selection criteria for volunteering at the OHS are not the same as for adopting. As a result, the foster family may not be the best match for the dog or cat.

If someone meets your foster and is interested in adopting, please refer them to the Adoption Centre for further assistance.

Please remember that volunteers are eligible to adopt (animals other than their foster animal) only after six months of volunteering.

3. Isolation:

To minimize the possible spread of disease and/or viral transmission, isolate foster animals to one room in your home. This is primarily for the health and wellbeing of resident animals and to protect the rest of your home should your foster animal be harbouring an unknown illness. If your foster animal is harbouring an unknown illness and your home becomes contaminated, the effects are minimized when the animal has been isolated to one area of your home. In addition, felines coming from shelter environments are used to being in smaller, confined spaces (like a cage) and giving him one area of your home allows him to slowly acclimate to his new environment. Sometimes giving him too much space, too soon can result in him becoming overwhelmed.

4. Keep your cat indoors:

To keep your foster feline safe, keep her inside. Foster animals are property of the OHS and are not permitted outside, where they run the risk contracting a virus or disease, being injured by cars or other animals and/or contributing to overpopulation if they are not sterilized. In addition, please protect against escapes. Cats will push out screens, escape from balconies, jump out windows, etc...

5. Veterinary care for your foster:

Although you may have an established relationship with your veterinarian, foster volunteers are not permitted to bring their foster animal to their own veterinarian. Foster animals are under the care of the OHS veterinary team, and seeing a different veterinarian does not allow for continuity of care. The OHS has a fully operational veterinary clinic onsite to treat OHS animals.

6. Transporting foster animals:

Foster animals are among the most vulnerable of animals in a shelter environment. As a result, they may need frequent trips to and from the OHS. Foster volunteers are responsible for transporting their foster animals as needed. Transportation includes visits to the OHS for regular exams, follow-up exams, emergency exams and food/supply pick-ups. All felines must be kept in their carriers during transport. We know that regular and ongoing transportation needs are sometimes challenging and appreciate your commitment to your foster animal's welfare!

7. Bites and scratches:

Many foster animals are in need of medical and/or behavioural intervention. Foster volunteers are required to medicate and socialize with their foster animal. Some animals do not tolerate being medicated very well, and some may not adjust well to their new environment. If a foster animal bites or scratches you resulting in any blood, contact the Customer Service Representative: Foster immediately and file a bite/scratch report with the OHS. Depending on the circumstance, the CSR: Foster will determine how best to proceed. Please thoroughly disinfect the wound and contact your doctor for medical follow-up.

8. Social media and your foster animal:

We ask that you refrain from posting information and photos of your foster animal on social media (for example: Facebook, Instagram, etc...). Foster animals are not yet ready for adoption. We would prefer to feature animals that are already in need of a permanent home!



Chapter Three: General fostering guidelines

Making the match

The foster department matches animals with foster volunteers in the best interest of the animal in need.

- The CSR: Foster will call or e-mail you to tell you about felines in need of placement. The animal's respective needs and the anticipated length of stay for the duration of their placement will be communicated. Occasionally, group emails are sent to our foster volunteers with a list of animals requiring foster.
- If you agree to accept a foster placement, an appointment will be made for you to pick up your foster. **A prolonged shelter stay may compromise the animal's health and the health of other animals in the shelter, so we ask that you pick up your foster as soon as possible.**
- When you meet with the CSR: Foster, your foster's care plan (medication, feeding schedule, rest, etc.) will be reviewed with you and you will receive written care instructions. At this time, the animal will be ready to leave the shelter with the food and medication that we provide.



Preparing your home for your foster:

Once you agree to foster an animal, it is time to prepare for its arrival! These guidelines will set up your foster for success:

Decide where the feline(s) will be kept and make the environment as safe as possible:

- Choose a well-ventilated area that is out of the main flow of traffic. A spare bedroom or a lesser-used bathroom (with a window) is a good option. Remember that while the space you provide may seem small compared to what your own animal(s) are used to, even a bathroom will provide the animal with more space than a cage at the shelter.
- The floors in your chosen room should be easy to clean—vinyl or tile is recommended.
- Remember to keep your own animals away from fosters to reduce stress on all animals in the home, and to help your own animals remain free of contagious disease.
- Ensure the room is free of accessible electrical cords and all outlets are blocked off.

- Remove objects that may fall or get knocked over, or which felines could swallow or get tangled in.
- Remember, if you are keeping animals in the bathroom or laundry room, ensure toilet seats are down and washing machines and dryers are closed at all times.
- Avoid any potted plants in the foster's room (possible poisoning or pulling plant off of shelf onto themselves).

Gather all necessary supplies:

- Gather essential items such as food bowls, litter, litter pan with scoop and bedding prior to the foster's arrival.
- The foster department will provide some items for your foster placement, and there are some suggestions in the supplies charts on Tables 1 and 2 of this manual.



Set up litter pan(s) for feline fosters:

- Kittens should have shallow litter pans for easier access. The cardboard cases that pop cans or canned cat food comes in make ideal litter pans because they can be discarded when they are soiled.
- Always use non-clumping litter for kittens under the age of 6 months. Kittens tend to play in their litter and may accidentally ingest it, which will lead to immediate problems in their digestive tract.
- Adult cats are best with a large, open litter pan.

Provide a nest for nursing animals:

- In a quiet corner of your home, a clean, warm, and dry box should be provided for a pregnant or nursing mother cat. The box should be large enough for her to comfortably lie away from her kittens if she chooses, but small enough so the newborns are easy to reach. The sides need to be high enough to prevent the young from wandering, but low enough for the mom to be able to come and go with ease. The box should be lined with newspaper and then piled with clean, dry, soft, removable linens.



Supplies and emergency kit

The OHS provides foster volunteers with all necessary supplies. The tables below indicate what we supply, what you may need to purchase, and the function of each item. Some items that you may also be common household items, and some volunteers may opt to purchase additional supplies at their expense to facilitate their foster experience.

Essential foster supplies:

Item	Function	We provide	You provide
Food	For animal care	✓	
Dishes	For animal care	✓	✓
Litter pan(s) Litter & Scoop	For animal care	✓	
Toys	For enrichment and socialization		✓ Please check with foster staff for approved toys
Carrier	To provide a safe environment for transport	✓	
Transportation	To transport animals to/from shelter for exams, etc...as needed		✓
Towels, blankets, and newspapers	To create a bed for all animals, and a nest for nursing mothers.		✓
Rectal thermometer and Vaseline (lubricant)	To take the temperature of nursing moms and animals suspected of being ill	✓	
Scale	To weigh kittens to ensure they are thriving and gaining weight.	✓	
Syringe	To administer medication.	✓	
Medication	To aid sick or injured felines.	✓ As needed	

Suggested foster supplies:

Item	Function	We provide	You provide
Scratching post	To provide enrichment, exercise, and to protect your furniture		✓
Hot water bottles	To warm young or ill animals (as required)		✓
Brush and nail clippers	To groom, as required		✓
Enzymatic stain remover	To remove animal stains effectively		✓
Baby gate or playpen	To secure animals in one area		✓
Cotton swabs/pads	To clean eyes and ears, as directed		✓
Rubber gloves	To protect hands during medication administration, grooming, etc...		✓

Suggested supplies for an emergency first aid kit:

Item	Function	We provide	You provide
Non-adhesive compression bandage	To provide pressure and coverage to an open wound during transport to OHS		✓
Rubber gloves	To create a sterilize environment if dealing with emergency medical issue		✓
Gauze pads	To absorb bodily fluid from an open wound during transport to OHS		✓
Saline solution	To flush out open wound prior to bandaging		✓

General care guidelines:

1. Arrival day:

When you bring your feline home, introduce him to the room/crate and show him where the litter pan is. Provide him with a fresh bowl of water and leave him alone for awhile. Give him some time to settle in and try not to overwhelm him with too many noises or visitors during the first few days of their stay. Although it can be hard to avoid cuddling him when you first bring him home, giving him a bit of time to adjust is in his best interest.



The CSR: Foster will call or e-mail you within two weeks of your placement for an update, if they have not heard from your prior to that. At that time you may discuss non-emergency issues related to the health and behaviour of your foster animal and help us to determine whether the animal is ready to come back to the shelter. **If you have questions at any time, please contact us!**

NOTE! If your foster animal becomes suddenly ill or is injured in your care, please contact the OHS immediately.

Remember! You are now this cat's best advocate for finding the best possible match in a forever family, once he is ready! Get to know him and let us know what he likes, doesn't like, favourite toys, etc... You can teach your foster cat tricks, through interactive play and positive reinforcement with treats. Please make sure you share this information through a foster history sheet, so we can share this valuable information with potential adopters!

2. Litter box requirements and training:

Kittens should be provided with a litter box that meets their needs. This will encourage them to like the box and use it consistently. Kittens need a low box, such as a cardboard box or oblong cake pan, with about one inch of **non-clumping** litter. Clumping litter can be very dangerous if ingested. Litter boxes need to be easily accessible and visible to minimize accidents. If you have a large litter of kittens, use two boxes, with at least one per room the kittens have access to.



Adult cats need a large, open litter box. Always keep the litter box clean and away from their food. Scoop out the box every day and replace the litter completely every few days.

NOTE! If you notice your foster cat is not using his litter box, please contact the foster department immediately for additional tips and tricks.

3. Feeding guidelines:

Although many people rely on dry cat food as a staple for their cats' diets, many veterinarians now agree that canned cat food is a must for developing strong bones and muscles and can defend against many potential conditions caused or contributed to by an all-dry cat food diet. Sick cats may eat only wet food. While dry food

is convenient, doesn't spoil and is enjoyed by cats, it should be presented to your foster as a side option and not as the only option.

NOTE! Be careful not to overfeed, as doing so may cause gastrointestinal upset. Also, please refrain from feeding your foster anything other than the prescribed diet, such as milk, cat treats or any other human food.

NOTE! Feeding guidelines are expressed in DAILY amounts to be fed. When feeding an animal, divide the amount by the number of feedings the animal is receiving daily.

Kittens (4—12 months)—Science Diet Kitten (Healthy Growth):

Weight (kg)	4—6 months (amount/day)	7—8 months (amount/day)	9—12 months (amount/day)
.5 kg (1lb)	1/4 c dry + 2tsp can moist	—	—
1 kg (2lb)	3/4 c dry + 2 tsp can moist	1/3 c dry + 2 tsp can moist	
1/2	3/4 c dry + 1/4 can moist	1/2 c dry + 1/4 can moist	
1.8 kg (4lb)	2/3c dry + 1/4 can moist	5/8 c dry + 1/4 can moist	
2.3kg (5lb)	3/4 c dry + 1/2 can moist	2/3c dry + 1/2 can moist	1/2c dry + 3/4 can moist
4.5kg (10lb)	—	1&1/8 c dry + 1/2 can moist	7/8 c dry + 3/4 can moist

- * Feed kittens 3-6 months three times per day;
- * Feed kittens and cats over 6 months twice per day, unless otherwise advised.

Adult cats (>12 months)—Science Diet Adult (Optimal Care):

Weight of cat (kg)	Dry cups per day	Canned cups per day
2.3kg (5lb)	1/4 – 1/3	1/2 – 3/4
4.5kg (10lb)	3/8 – 5/8	1&1/4 – 1&3/4
6.8kg (15lb)	5/8 – 3/4	

Feed healthy adult cats twice daily unless otherwise specified; feed nursing, pregnant and underweight cats multiple times daily as directed.

4. Administering medication:

Administering medication to your foster may be necessary. Medications come in many different forms, and proper administration is essential for the animal to receive the maximum benefit from the prescribed treatment.

Medications should always be given for the full amount of time as prescribed, even if your foster starts to show signs of improvement. Please follow and complete the treatment chart as instructed. Bring your chart and medications to your vet exam just in case a different course of treatment is prescribed. At the end of your foster placement, return all medication and treatment charts.

i. Pills and capsules:

- Pills and capsules are administered by mouth.

- When giving pills, tilt the animal's head back with one hand while gently opening its mouth and dropping the pill to the back of her throat with your other hand. Then gently hold the animal's mouth closed, with her head pointed straight up, and gently rub her throat in a downward motion or blow on her nose to encourage the swallowing reflex. **Follow with 3-5 ml of water with a syringe.**
- Pills may also be administered in a small piece of cheese, hotdog, or canned food, but this method is usually less effective with cats than with dogs.

NOTE! See Appendix A for an illustrated guide to pilling your cat.

ii. Liquids:

- Tilt the head back, open the mouth and slowly dribble the liquid from a syringe or dropper onto the back of the cat's 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.

iii. Pastes:

- The easiest way to administer a paste is to place the appropriate amount as a ribbon on your finger, open the cat's mouth and smear the paste on the roof of her mouth.
- Alternative method: place the paste on the cat's front leg so she will lick it off. (Since the dosage isn't always accurate this way, only use this method for medications that don't have to be measured exactly.)

iv. Ointments and creams:

- **Eyes:** To administer ointment, tilt the cat's head back slightly, squeeze a small amount of ointment inside the lower eyelid and close the eye to distribute the ointment evenly over the surface of the eye. When administering drops or ointment to a cat, it may help to have someone assist you by holding the cat, or you may want to wrap the cat securely in a towel or pillowcase.
- **Ears:** Grasp the tip of the ear with one hand and hold the ear flap perpendicular to the head. With the other hand, drop in the prescribed number of drops or amount of ointment. Continue to hold the ear firmly to prevent the head from shaking and massage the base of the ear to work the medication down inside the ear canal. Again, when administering drops or ointment to a cat, you may need assistance or may find it useful to first wrap the cat securely in a towel or pillowcase.

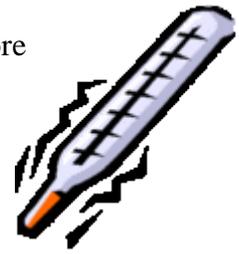
NOTE! If you are experiencing any challenges with medicating your foster cat contact the foster department immediately. The CSR: Foster will work to find the best method for treating your foster. Never stop giving medication even if the animal looks better; always finish the full prescription.

5. Checking temperature

The normal temperature range for a cat is 37.78 - 39.17° C (100 - 102.5° F).

In rare instances, we may ask you to take the temperature of your foster if you suspect a fever or to monitor the health of young animals and their mother. If you are uncomfortable taking your foster's temperature, let the CSR: Foster know and we will be pleased to do it at the shelter.

We recommend using a digital thermometer, since it provides a clearer reading and is more durable than a glass thermometer.



To take your foster's temperature:

1. Lubricate the end of a rectal thermometer with petroleum jelly.
2. Insert the thermometer into the cat's rectum and wait for the thermometer to beep.
3. Use a tissue to clean off the end of the thermometer and read the temperature displayed.

NOTE! Contact us immediately if your foster's temperature is over 40°C (104° F).

6. When your foster feline needs to see our veterinarian:

Fosters may be placed into foster care with a pre-existing medical condition or they may develop an illness when in foster care. Our veterinarian performs rounds at 1:00 p.m. from Monday to Friday and at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday. We do not have veterinarian exams on Sundays. When we schedule you to bring your foster in on a given day, please be punctual. Animals are seen on a first-come, first-served basis (except in the case of an emergency), and if you are late you may face a prolonged wait.

Please outline any health concerns you have about your foster with the CSR: Foster. Foster volunteers may not be present for the veterinary exam of their foster animal(s). As all foster animals are respectively examined back-to-back and this process can vary in duration, depending on the number of veterinarian exams needed, and can take anywhere from 1-3 hours. In the summer, this process usually lasts 3 hours in duration. We ask that you wait in the lobby until the examination is complete or indicate that you will return later in the day to pick up your foster.

NOTE! Remember to bring your completed treatment charts and any medication to all vet exams!

In addition to regular veterinary exams, please contact us immediately if you notice the following symptoms in your foster cat, as he may need to see a veterinarian:

- Loss of appetite
- Blood in stool
- Bleeding from anywhere
- Weight loss
- Fever
- Change in attitude/behavior
- Abnormal twitches, walking abnormally or into objects
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Sneezing or coughing
- Discharge from the eyes or nose
- Hair loss
- Excessive scratching or head shaking
- Straining to defecate/constipation
- Presence of parasites (like worms or fleas)
- Trauma: limping, accidentally dropped or stepped on, etc...
- Difficulty breathing
- Lethargic/unresponsive



- Straining to urinate
- Neurologic symptoms: circling, tremors, walking unsteadily, etc...

7. Grooming needs:

Establish a grooming routine with your foster cat from the beginning. Acclimatizing her to brushing and nail trimming helps her future family and veterinarian with handling her. Opening her mouth for inspection and manipulating her ears and paws may make it much easier for her to be groomed and examined by a veterinarian in the future.

Do not bathe your foster cat. Cats do a good job of keeping their coats clean. In rare instances, you may use a damp towel to wet the fur of your cat. Dry shampoo products are available on the market if your foster cat's coat requires freshening.

i. Brushing

Brushing your foster cat not only helps to establish a regular grooming routine, it also helps to minimize any aversion the cat may have to handling. Cats are most effectively brushed with a slicker brush. The foster department can advise you on the best type of brush for your particular foster's coat.

If your foster shows an aversion to being brushed, start with only a minute or two a day of grooming and reward her tolerance with treats and affection. If she exhibits signs of aggression when you try to brush her, STOP! Always leave the removal of mats up to the OHS and never use scissors to trim a cat's fur.



ii. Nail trimming

If you are uncomfortable trimming your foster's nails, the CSR: Foster can guide you through the process or do it for you. If you feel comfortable doing it yourself, please follow the guidelines below and trim the nails on a weekly basis using nail clippers specifically designed for cats.

Before trimming your foster cat's nails, get her used to having her paws handled and squeezed. Begin by gently petting her legs while giving her a treat. Gradually increase the pressure so that petting becomes squeezing, which you'll need to do later when you extend the claw to clip the nail.

Apply a small amount of pressure to the cat's paw, with your thumb on top of the paw and your index finger under the pad, until the claws are extended. You should be able to see the quick (pink blood vessel inside the nail). Try not to cut into the quick of the nail as it will be painful and likely bleed. If you accidentally cut the quick, apply pressure over the bleeding nail with a cotton ball for a couple of minutes until the bleeding stops. Flour or cornstarch also helps to stop the bleeding.

See Appendix B for additional information on how to trim a cat's claws.

Returning your foster to the OHS:

When it is time to return your foster, you may feel a sense of sadness, loss, and even guilt. This is completely normal and is often the most challenging time for a foster volunteer. Your foster has been an integral part of your daily routine and you have given him a second chance at a bright future. The OHS screens all potential adopters and your foster will soon be a cherished pet in a loving home.

By completing a foster history sheet for prospective adopters, you increase the appeal of the animal while he waits in the Adoption Centre. The information you provide gives insight into what the adoptive family can expect from their new family member. You may include photos and stories with the foster history sheet to further describe your experience with your foster. This gives adoption staff a better chance to match the animal to the best possible forever home.

The CSR: Foster will contact you when your foster animal is ready to be returned and make an appointment for return. Failure to return your foster when requested may result in termination from the foster program.

1. If you cannot keep your foster for the duration of her required placement:

In the best interest of the foster animal, it should remain in one home for the duration of the foster placement. The OHS can't provide interim care for fosters and we ask that you only accept placements that you can commit to. We understand and respect that sometimes things happen that prevent you from maintaining your commitment or that an animal's needs may become greater than originally estimated. In addition, only OHS foster volunteers are able to provide care for OHS foster animals and volunteers are not permitted to leave their foster with others. Should you not be able to continue to foster for whatever reason, please contact the foster department to make an appointment to return your foster.

2. Procedure for returning animals for surgery:

If you are fostering kittens, an appointment will be made for surgery once the kitten is physically mature enough to be sterilized. Kittens must weigh at least 1 kg to be sterilized.

- Please contact us when your foster reaches his designated weight so that we may schedule the surgery.
- When you have been informed of the surgery date, arrange to bring him to the shelter the night before the surgery date.
- He will be sterilized and welcomed into the Adoption Centre the day following his procedure, provided there are no surgical complications.
- Since he will not be going home with you after his surgery, please ensure you bring his foster history sheet and photos in when you drop him off for surgery.
- If you are fostering the mother as well, please keep her at home for an additional week or two in order for her mammary glands to dry up. Once her mammary glands have dried, her spay surgery will be booked.



3. Procedure for returning for adoption:

In most cases, an appointment for return is made when an animal is finished all treatment and is no longer symptomatic. At this time, the animal is returned and made available for adoption. When you return your foster animal, please ensure all paperwork, including the foster history sheet, accompanies the return.

In some cases, when an animal has been recovering from an injury or illness and has required regular vet exams to monitor progress, the animal might unexpectedly be medically cleared and deemed ready for adoption. Should this be the case, the foster department will follow up with you to advise you of this positive outcome and work with you to get the foster history sheet completed as soon as possible.

Medical emergencies:

If you think your animal is need of immediate medical assistance, please contact the OHS immediately. Please refer to the contact information charts (of this manual) regarding who to contact.

The OHS is unable to provide support between 1:00 a.m. and 7:00 a.m. **Please monitor your foster carefully and contact us before 1:00 a.m. for advice if you believe a serious health issue is developing with your foster.** It's recommended that you always check on the welfare of your foster before going to bed.

If your foster animal dies in your care:

Sadly, sometimes an animal does not survive despite our best efforts. Many of our foster animals have unknown histories and may be harbouring an unknown illness, so it is impossible to guarantee a positive outcome. A cat that appears healthy at the time of placement could begin to show signs of illness several days later.

In the unfortunate event that a foster animal dies in your care:

- Wrap the animal in a plastic bag or place it in a small box,
- Please contact the foster department immediately via phone or e-mail,
- Bring the animal to the OHS as soon as possible.

Should you experience a negative outcome with one of your fosters, find comfort in knowing that you gave him the best quality of life while he was in your care.

If you lose your foster cat:

If a foster cat escapes your home environment and you cannot catch her:

- Please contact the foster department immediately via phone or e-mail. They will complete a lost report with you and file it with the OHS's lost and found department.
- Place her used litter box outside; this may help nervous or shy cats who have bolted return to a site that "smells" familiar.
- Do not place food outside—this can attract unwanted animal guests.
- Make fliers that include the lost date, description and any unique markings, a picture and your phone number – a reward motivates people!
- Borrow a live trap from the OHS to try to trap her, if you notice her in the area and just can't catch her.



Cleaning between placements:

Any items supplied to you by the OHS should be returned at the end of a placement. Cleaning between placements is an important precaution against the spread of disease. The most common disease organisms are viruses, bacteria, parasites and fungi. The entire living area should be disinfected before new felines are introduced. All surfaces, bowls, litter boxes, toys and bedding need to be disinfected.

To disinfect surfaces, remove all organic material and fecal debris and then soak with a mild bleach solution (1 part bleach to 32 parts water) for at least 10 minutes. Scrub all surfaces within the cat's reach. Wash and then soak food and water bowls in bleach solution for 10 minutes and rinse well. Litter boxes and reusable toys should be cleaned with the bleach solution. Using bleach and hot water wash animal laundry in a separate load from family laundry, to avoid disease transmission. Any toys or items that cannot be properly disinfected should be thrown away.

Cleaning and disinfecting objects and surfaces in foster area:

Surface/Object	Procedure	Special Steps
When new animals are introduced (between animals)	Thorough cleaning and disinfection between animal residents	Not applicable
High contact surfaces	Daily cleaning with a detergent and weekly disinfection	Not applicable
Visibly soiled objects/surfaces	Cleaning with a detergent and disinfection	Not applicable
Litter boxes and food bowls	Daily cleaning and weekly disinfection	Sanitize food bowls separately from litter boxes
All regular surfaces	Weekly cleaning and disinfection	Increase frequency to daily or more when infection is present
Laundry	Remove organic material before laundering Use soap and bleach Machine or sunlight to dry	Take caution in moving soiled items to washing machine to prevent environmental contamination and throw away any heavily soiled items.

For additional tips on disinfection protocols, please visit this website: <http://aspcapro.org/routine-practices-prevent-infection-foster-homes>



Chapter Four: Medical protocols and conditions

General FVRCP vaccination and de-worming protocols for felines in foster care:

Vaccination:

The OHS vaccinates all felines over the age of 4 weeks with an unknown vaccine history upon intake per the schedule below.

	Initial vaccine	Initial booster	Secondary boosters
Kittens	Upon entry to OHS (or once 4 weeks old)	4 weeks after initial vaccine	Every 4 weeks, after initial booster, until 20 weeks of age
Cats	Upon entry to OHS (if over 6 months)	2 weeks after initial vaccine	Not required



Your foster cat's vaccine requirements will be written on the care instruction sheets provided to you at the time of placement. CSR: Foster will contact you to make an appointment for boosters, as needed.

De-worming:

All felines are treated for parasites (de-wormed) according to their weight and age per the table below.

Please give the de-wormer (Strongid T) orally according to body weight every 2 weeks until kittens are 12 weeks of age, then once monthly until kittens are six months of age. The de-worming process should start when your kittens are 2 weeks of age.

Body weight:

Dose:

0.25 Kg = 250 grams = 0.5 lbs	0.1 mls
0.35 Kg = 350 grams = 0.75 lbs	0.15 mls
0.45 Kg = 450 grams = 1 lb	0.18 mls
0.55 Kg = 550 grams = 1.2 lbs	0.22 mls
0.65 Kg = 650 grams = 1.4 lbs	0.25 mls
0.75 Kg = 750 grams = 1.65 lbs	0.3 mls
0.85 Kg = 850 grams = 1.9 lbs	0.35 mls
0.95 Kg = 950 grams = 2.1 lbs	0.4 mls
1 Kg = 1000 grams = 2.2 lbs	0.4 mls

FIV/FelV testing protocols:

Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV) is a disease that is transmitted from cat to cat via saliva or other bodily fluids mostly through bite wounds or breeding. FIV is similar to HIV in humans. FIV causes immunosuppression, which leads to infections, dental disease, and development of some cancers.

Feline Leukemia Virus (FeLV) is a disease that is transmitted from cat to cat by saliva and other bodily fluids. The most common ways it is transmitted are by sharing water bowls, food bowls, and/or litter boxes and through direct contact. The virus does not survive very long in the environment. FeLV causes immunosuppression, and cats that carry this disease are much more susceptible to many infections and are at high risk for developing cancer, leukemia and lymphoma being the most common. Both FIV and FeLV are considered ultimately fatal diseases, and there is no treatment other than supportive care for cats that develop clinical FIV or FeLV.

Many FIV and/or FeLV-positive cats show no outward signs of illness for years. Eventually those infected become sick from the virus, and this is often when owners receive the diagnosis. Other cats become ill quickly and do not live very long lives. Unless your cat has been screened for these viruses by blood testing at your vet, your cat could unknowingly be a carrier.

The OHS tests all felines for both FIV and FeLV via a blood test prior to placing them into foster care. Although not a frequent occurrence, felines can carry FIV and/or FeLV and present a false negative blood test (meaning their test presents as negative but they are in fact infected). To minimize the result of a false negative test, the OHS will retest all cats still in the care of the OHS 30 days post-test, to ensure a valid result. Most felines placed into foster will only have had one test and you will be required to transport your foster feline to the OHS for the second blood test if needed. The foster department will contact you prior to the 30-day mark to schedule this.

NOTE! Kittens under 8 weeks or kittens born in foster care will not have had their FIV/FeLV blood test done prior to being placed into foster care. The foster department will contact you to arrange for your foster kitten's first FIV/FeLV blood test after the kitten is 8 weeks old.

Common conditions of fostered felines:

1. Feline upper respiratory infection (URI):

URI is a contagious respiratory disease affecting domestic cats. It can be caused by several viruses and microorganisms which primarily affect the eyes, nose, and throat. It manifests itself similar to a common cold in humans. Transmission of the disease occurs mainly from direct contact with the virus (found on fur, clothes, blankets, etc.) and rarely through aerosol droplets formed from a sneeze or cough.

One of the most common reasons for fostering is to treat cats suffering from URI. When given a quiet room to sleep in along with a healthy diet and plenty of TLC, cats recover from their infection more quickly than they do at our shelter, although more vulnerable animals, such as young kittens or malnourished, stressed cats, are at risk of succumbing to the illness. URI can, in some cats, cause serious disease such as pneumonia. Also, sick cats may not eat or drink adequate amounts and can become severely dehydrated. In such cases, hospitalization and fluid supplementation may be needed.



The average length of fostering a cat with URI is 3 to 5 weeks depending on the individual cat's recovery time. **It is important for you to contact us if the cat develops green nasal or ocular discharge, wet cough, or if it loses its appetite, as this may indicate a secondary bacterial infection and require other treatment.** Sometimes in young kittens, pneumonia can result from what started as an upper respiratory infection. Occasionally antibiotics are required as viral infections can become complicated by secondary bacterial invaders.

Symptoms of URI:

- Lethargy
- Intermittent sneezing and/or sneezing attacks
- Persistent fever
- Dry cough
- Drooling
- Clear nasal discharge
- Watery eyes; eyelids may paste shut in kittens
- Congestion – open-mouth breathing and wheezing that causes lack of appetite
- Sensitivity to light

Tips on care:

- **Lower stress levels:** Provide the cat with a warm and well-ventilated room where she can rest quietly.
- **Monitor food intake:** Cats with URI may not be interested in eating due to their overall feeling of malaise and congestion, which hinders their sense of smell. However, recovery relies on nourishment, so cats should be encouraged to eat. Adding a bit of warm water to canned food to form a paste may entice the cat to eat. If that does not work, try feeding “stinky food” such as canned tuna, salmon, or gravy-based cat food. In some cases, hand-feeding is required in several small intervals throughout the day.
- **If antibiotics are prescribed, follow the directions on the label and always be sure to complete the cycle of medication, even if your foster appears fully recovered.**
- **Clean your foster’s face:** Use a cotton ball or gauze pad dampened with warm water to clean encrustations around the nose and eyes. Always use a new gauze pad or cotton ball for each eye.
- **Help ease her breathing:** Your foster’s sinuses may become increasingly congested as the URI progresses. Adding a humidifier or vapourizer to her room or bringing her into the bathroom and closing the door while you take a hot shower may help.
- **Remember that as long as the cat continues to eat and doesn’t vomit or have diarrhea, she is likely on the mend!**

When to contact the shelter:

With rest and good care, most cats will recover from mild URI in three to five weeks. Sometimes cats need additional help. If your cat has any of the following signs, contact the OHS:

- Not eating for more than 24 hours
- Green or yellow discharge from the nose or eyes (our veterinarian may prescribe antibiotics at this point)
- Difficulty breathing, especially panting or breathing through an open mouth
- Depressed or unresponsive; a slight decrease in activity is expected but contact the OHS if the cat is much less active than usual
- Vomiting or diarrhea lasting more than 24 hours
- Little or no improvement after a week of home care



2. Pregnant or nursing cats:

A shelter environment can create stress that may lead to health problems for mother cats. In addition, kittens are susceptible to becoming infected with an upper respiratory infection in the shelter.

Fostering a pregnant or nursing cat can last anywhere from 4 to 10 weeks, depending on the kittens' ages. A pregnant cat requires at least 10 weeks of care, from the time she gives birth, to the time she is ready to be spayed and made available for adoption. The CSR: Foster will provide a rough estimate of how long an animal will require fostering.

Most mother cats will seek their own nesting area in the last week or so of pregnancy. Provide her with soft bedding, an area with minimal human traffic and separation from other pets in the home. Please check out this helpful video on feline births,

http://www.marvistavet.com/html/body_giving_birth_to_kittens.html



Pregnancy:

To prepare for your foster to give birth:

- **Create a nest:** In a quiet corner of your home, a clean, warm, and dry box should be provided for a pregnant or nursing mother cat. The box should be large enough for her to comfortably lie away from her kittens if she chooses, but small enough so the newborns are easy to reach. The sides need to be high enough to prevent the young from wandering, but low enough for the mom to be able to come and go with ease. The box should be lined with newspaper and then piled with clean, dry, soft, removable linens.
- **Make sure the mother cat is eating:** We will provide you with a growth/lactation diet that should be fed to the mother cat throughout her gestation and lactation periods. Because milk production requires energy, the mom's food and water supply should be increased 2 to 4 times her normal intake. Food and fresh water should always be made available to her.

Labour:

When a cat goes into the first stage of labour you may notice a loss in appetite. Your foster cat may become very active, cry out, dig at the floor or strain in the litter box. Her respiration rate will increase and she may begin to breathe through her mouth or even purr. This stage may last for up to 12 hours.

The second stage of labour happens when the mother cat's water breaks. You will notice a straw coloured fluid being passed, with a kittens being delivered a few minutes later. The mother will then proceed to clean the kitten and bite through the umbilical cord. It may appear as though she is cleaning the kitten in a rough manner, but her vigorous cleaning is very important to stimulate the kittens breathing and blood circulation.

In the final stage of labour, a placenta will be expelled a few minutes after the kitten has been delivered. The mother will likely eat some, if not all, of the placentas.

Some cats may prefer to be left alone for the birthing process, while some cats may enjoy the company of a caregiver during labour and will try to follow you if you leave the room. It is important to give your mother cat the level of attention she desires during this time.

Kittens are usually born between 15 to 30 minutes apart. Kittens should begin nursing in between births. Most deliveries will take between 2 to 6 hours. The average litter is 4 to 5 kittens. Larger litters of 6 or more are less common.

Occasionally a mother may not remove the amniotic sac from a kitten. This may be because she is a new mother and is unsure of what to do, or she may be busy with the next delivery. In this situation give the mother cat a minute to see if she realizes what is needed. If there is no imminent sign that she is going to remove the sac you will have to do this for her. Ensure your hands are clean. With both hands pinch the sac with your thumb and index finger over the area of the kitten's nose. Gently tear the sac open. Place the kitten in front of the mother cat to allow her to provide further care.



In approximately 40% of births, a kitten may emerge with the hind legs and tail first. This type of birth is not considered abnormal and is only slightly more difficult for the mother cat than a head first birth. The mother may become agitated and begin to turn around in circles trying to release the kitten. If she appears to need assistance try to help her bear down by placing her hind legs against the birthing box or against your hands. Even with assistance this type of birth may take up to 20 minutes. In almost all cases the birth will be successful, however if the mother cat becomes weak or appears to be in distress contact the Foster Department immediately.

Other signs of a difficult birth (dystocia) that requires urgent assistance include:

- Strong contractions for more than 60 minutes without producing a kitten
- An interval of more than 2 hours between delivery of kittens
- A partially visible kitten appears to be stuck in the birth canal for more than 25 minutes
- Red-brown vaginal discharge appears but no kitten is delivered
- The birthing process stops but you suspect that not all kittens have not been delivered
- The mother cat is exhibiting signs of exhaustion, depression, appears to be in distress, or experiences unexpected blood loss

NOTE! Please contact the foster department immediately if you suspect your foster cat is in distress or experiencing difficulty birthing.

Postpartum:

- **Observe the mother cat:** Once the kittens are born, watch to see that they are all moving and breathing. Ensure that the mother cat is being attentive to their needs by allowing them to feed and stimulating them to urinate and defecate. You may hear the mother's interaction with her kittens in the form of a "brrp" or "chirp" noise as she calls to them and reassuringly nuzzles them. Please allow the mother cat the majority of her day to be quiet and stress-free while she cares for her newborns. Please keep in mind that the mother may show strong protective reaction at this time. This instinctive reaction is facilitated by her hormonal state and the physical presence of her young. This phenomenon is quite common, in particular with cats who are having their first litter. Within a few days, her protectiveness should wane somewhat and she will allow you a closer inspection of her kittens.

- **Call the CSR: Foster to report the births:**

When you call us to report how many kittens were born and how the litter and mom are doing, you may also want to take this opportunity to discuss any questions or concerns you might have.

- **Weigh and observe the kitten(s):** Once the kittens are born, you should weigh them and record their weight every 2 days to ensure that they are gaining well. They should be warm and have pink noses and tongues. Their bellies should be slightly rounded. The kittens' eyes should open at 10 to 14 days old; please let us know if their eyes are not open by day 14. As



the kittens become mobile, they will increasingly approach their mother and initiate suckling. Toward the end of the second month, the kittens become almost wholly responsible for initiating suckling and the mother cat may actively impede their efforts by blocking access to her nipples or by removing herself from their proximity. The increasing role of the kitten in initiating suckling helps develop the kittens' sensor and motor abilities.

- **Feed the kittens:** For the first 4 weeks of life, the kittens need only their mother's milk. Even if they are still nursing after that time, you can start feeding the kittens a warm slurry of canned kitten food and water when they reach 4 weeks of age. Feeding them kitten food makes a good supplement to mother's milk and helps the kittens gradually adjust to a time when they will be fully weaned. Initially it may be necessary to smear a little slurry on the kitten's noses to initiate feeding. Please change the amount and consistency of food gradually to prevent digestive upset.
- **Encourage the kittens to wean:** The mother will usually begin to wean her kittens at 6 to 8 weeks of age. If the mother seems reluctant to wean her kittens, separate the mother from her litter a few times a day for a couple of hours to ensure that they are learning to eat on their own. Once kittens are weaned, it's very important to ensure that they all continue to eat. Kittens must eat canned food 3 to 4 times a day. If one kitten is not eating, offer her food separate from her littermates and observe her closely. Call us if any kitten has not eaten in 24 hours.
- **Socialize the kittens:** A kitten's environment should be mentally stimulating to promote healthy development. Encourage kittens to explore their living quarters, meet new people (including gentle children), and play with different objects such as paper bags, wads of crumpled paper, plastic balls, and large bells. Exposing kittens to ordinary household appliances such as the vacuum cleaner and blender helps to encourage a comfortable, laissez-faire attitude toward these otherwise startling noises. Comforting kittens who show fear to new things only encourages them to be fearful. Instead, praise kittens for their curiosity or for brave reactions and ignore fearful ones.
- **Teach your kittens how to be good cats:** Aside from socialization, one of the best things you can do for kittens between the ages of 4 to 12 weeks is to teach them appropriate manners, especially with regard to proper play behaviour, scratching, and reliable litter box use. Use positive reinforcement techniques on a daily basis to gradually get them used to having their paws, mouths, and ears manipulated. This will help them adjust to restraint and later cope more readily with grooming exercises and trips to their veterinarian.
- **Record kittens' personalities:** Make a note of the differences in your litter—who is the most active, who is more quiet, who is the most playful, etc... The more information you are able to observe and note, the better and will help the adoption team find your kitten the best possible home once he's ready.

When to contact the shelter:

Mothers in labour do not generally require a high level of human intervention—she is best left to let nature run its course. This said, there are circumstances when a mother and/or her kitten's health are at risk. **If you feel your foster is in jeopardy, please contact the OHS immediately for assistance.**

Most mothers do a great job of providing a high level of care for their kittens. Sometimes, a mother will suddenly become disengaged and uninterested in caring for her kittens. Depending on the age of the kittens, this could potentially put their health and wellbeing at risk. **Should you feel that your nursing mother is no longer providing an appropriate level of care for her kittens, please contact the foster department for assistance.**

3. Socialization and behavioural intervention for kittens:

Kittens need human interaction to help develop into well-adjusted companion animals. Kittens are most curious and playful under 8 weeks of age, and it is best to allow them to exercise their natural curiosity. Play helps to increase physical coordination and social skills, teaches limits and proper interaction. Younger kittens will often sleep between feedings and spend more time playing as they get older.

Outgoing and friendly kittens can be cuddled and played with freely after they have spent a day or two adjusting to their new environment. Wear long sleeves and pants when playing and socializing with them, as they can sometimes play roughly with their claws and teeth—both of which are sharp!

Please dedicate at least one hour daily so socializing your kittens. The time can be divided and should include:

- Frequent handling, petting, cuddling, talking, playing
- Restraint exercise during play sessions teach kittens inhibition and can be done by gently holding the kitten still and stroking his body including ears, tail, and muzzle. This teaches the kitten to enjoy having its body touched.
- Regular grooming sessions to prevent aversion to touch.
- Exposure to regular sounds, like the TV, vacuum, etc...as this teaches them to be well adjusted to daily home noises.

Toys: Add appropriate toys to the kitten's environment; contact the OHS if you need any. They should be easy to clean or disposable, and impossible to consume (i.e. ping pong balls). They should not have any small parts that can be eaten or chewed off and swallowed. "Solo" toys can be left with the kittens to play with on their own. "Interactive" toys include those with string and parts like feathers that can be chewed off. These toys can be used for play under supervision. Toys also provide kittens with things to bite other than human hands, feet and other body parts!



Shy or fearful kittens: Start by spending time in their presence to get them used to you. Stroke them and talk gently while they are eating to reinforce positive associations. Once they are used to you, you should provide the kittens with constant attention. Lots of handling, restraint exercises, and exposure to people and various household sights and sounds helps these kittens develop into happy, sociable cats.

Suckling: The kitten's instinctive need to suckle may cause them to suckle their litter mates' ears, tail or genitals, even after they have eaten. This is harmless unless you notice it is causing irritation to the other

kitten's skin. If it is a problem, try to satisfy this need by providing them with a soft blanket to suckle on. Check each kitten's genitals to ensure suckling is not causing problems such as redness or irritation. Excessive suckling can cause scar tissue to form over a male kitten's penis, which can ultimately require surgery to correct. It can also cause hair loss and sore spots on the skin.

Correcting behaviour: Do not punish kittens. They won't understand why you are doing it. Inappropriate behaviour can be addressed in various ways, but typically distracting a kitten and redirecting to it to something more positive works best. You can do this by getting their attention with noise, toys or treats. If kittens nip while you're petting them, use the minimum amount of correction necessary to achieve the desired response. For example, stay calm and ignore them for 10-15 seconds before interacting any further. If kittens are playing too roughly, try holding them firmly but gently until they settle down. **Any type of physical punishment, such as nose tapping or scruffing, is generally considered detrimental, counterproductive and is not acceptable.**

4. Socializing shy cats

Fostering a cat is an amazing experience! For a shy or fearful cat, sometimes the process of moving to a new environment can be challenging. The best way to help your new, furry friend adjust to your home is to give him time. Cats progress at different rate. Some cats trust humans quickly and others can take much longer.

Remember—please don't get discouraged if the progress seems slow; each positive interaction will help your foster find his forever family! Cats don't always understand that we are trying to help, so taking it slowly and allowing him to adjust at his own pace is essential. The best way to help him be the best cat-citizen he can be is to work with him multiple times a day, for about 20 minutes per session.



After you've allowed him to adjust to his new home, introduce yourself very slowly. At first, just sit in his room and allow him to come to you when he is ready. Offer your hand and allow him to smell you. If he seems comfortable and approaches you, gently pat him by gently stroking the top of his head and cheeks. When he is comfortable with you and eating well, you can introduce playtime!

Give the toy to him and let him explore it. Once he appears comfortable with the toy, pick it up and use it to stroke him gently, beginning with the cheeks and head. If he is comfortable being touched by the toy, move your hand closer to him until you are touching the cat with your hand, instead of the toy. If he is more receptive to play, use the toy in a playful manner to lure him near you. The key to successful play is to have him associate fun and play with positive human touch. As he continues to make progress, pet him and lengthen these cuddling sessions over time. Remember when working with a shy or fearful cat to takes things slowly! If at any point he becomes uncomfortable or appears stressed, stop! Ensure you give him plenty of time before trying to work with him again. When working with him, ensure you move slowly and quietly, talk to him in a calming voice and pay close attention to his body language. Cats who are scared may try to runaway and hide, freeze, and/or hunch/curl (to try to be as small as possible). A bite may be impending if your foster cat swats and hisses or freezes in one position and is tense. Being conscious of body language and taking things slowly will ensure a comfortable and safe interaction with your new friend.

Common health concerns:

The OHS gives all animals a thorough general physical exam upon intake to try to identify health concerns before they are sent to a foster home. Some conditions may only become apparent later. Contact the foster department immediately if you notice any changes in your foster or if your foster demonstrates any of the symptoms outlined in the chart below.

Symptom	Possible cause	What to do
Eyes • Clear discharge	Conjunctivitis is inflammation of the mucous membrane covering the anterior portion of the eyelid.	Contact the foster department. Monitor the eyes. If discharge is excessive or progresses to a yellow or green colour, please contact the foster department. If you see clear discharge, it is a viral infection and no treatment is required.
Eyes • Green or yellow discharge	Conjunctivitis is inflammation of the mucous membrane covering the anterior portion of the eyelid.	Contact the foster department to make a vet appointment. Gently wipe eyes with a warm, damp cloth. If yellow or green discharge is present, it is most likely a bacterial infection and should be treated.
Eyes • Third eyelid exposed	Cats have a third eyelid, called a nictitating membrane, which is usually hidden. Its function is to remove dust or other irritants from the eye.	If you can see this membrane for more than 24 hours, please contact the foster department.
Vomiting	A common occurrence in felines for a variety of reasons, including hairballs.	Contact the foster department and remove all food for 4 to 5 hours. If vomiting stops, give a very small amount of food 4 to 5 times a day. Return to regular feeding if no more vomiting occurs. If vomiting persists, remove food and contact us for additional follow up.
Diarrhea	Diarrhea is one of the most common ailments affecting animals and has many causes. Cow's milk often causes diarrhea in cats and kittens. Other causes of diarrhea include stress, allergy to food, parasites, improper absorption of food or change in food, and some diseases.	Kittens cannot wait for treatment as they become dehydrated very quickly. Contact the foster department immediately if you notice diarrhea. Fecal analysis can rule out parasites as the cause of diarrhea. Please contact us to discuss.
Sneezing and/or nasal discharge	Sneezing and nasal discharge are commonly found in cats who are suffering from an upper respiratory infection. Sneezing is typically in "fits."	Contact the foster department. Monitor sneezing and contact the foster department if sneezing fits increase or worsen. Nasal discharge: contact us if discharge is yellow or green as the cat will need to be seen by the veterinarian.

Additional feline diseases and medical conditions:

Foster animals may be harbouring an unknown illness and may become symptomatic in your home. This chart explains some additional feline diseases and medical conditions. This chart is simply meant for information purposes. **If you notice any changes in your foster feline's behaviour or health, please contact the foster department immediately for assistance.**

Condition	Description and Symptoms	Treatment
Anorexia	The loss of appetite or lack of eating. Symptoms include a lack or refusal of food consumption, lethargy.	Please contact us if your feline is not eating. Treatments can include: appetite stimulants, subcutaneous fluids (if dehydrated), change in diet and/or nutritional supplements.
Aspiration pneumonia	Inflammation of the lungs and consolidation due to inhaling foreign material (food). Symptoms include: coughing, sneezing, difficulty breathing, lack of appetite and nasal/ocular discharge.	Please contact us if your feline has difficulty breathing and appears in distress. Early veterinary treatment is critical. The prognosis for adult cats is generally good, although kittens often do not recover even with intensive care.
Coccidiosis	Due to a single-celled protozoan parasite and it can spread between cats. It can diarrhea, but doesn't always cause symptoms. It does not spread to people.	Please contact us if your feline has abnormal bowel movements. Treatment usually consists of 10 days of oral medication.
Ear Mites	Ear mites are highly contagious tiny, white parasites that live on the surface of the ear canal producing a flaky, dark brown, and sometimes waxy discharge in the ear canal. Infected animals will shake their heads and scratch or rub their ears.	Please contact us if you notice your foster shaking his head or scratching his ears excessively. Treatment requires application of a topical miticide and routine ear cleaning.
External parasites	Organisms that live on an animal (e.g. hair, skin, nasal and ear passages) where they obtain their nutrition and protection from their host. Symptoms include: hair loss, excessive scratching and/or visual identification of parasite.	Please contact us immediately if you suspect your foster may be suffering from an external parasite, or you see one feeding off your foster. Treatment is dependent on the type of parasite.
Fading kitten syndrome	Poorly understood and vaguely defined. It is a term used to describe a life-threatening condition in which a previously healthy kitten fails to thrive, e.g. stop growing, lose weight, stop eating. Kittens fade very quickly, but this generally happens within the first two weeks of life. It has been linked to birth defects, environmental stress and infectious disease.	Please contact us immediately if you think your kitten is in distress. Early veterinary treatment is critical, although kittens often do not recover even with intensive care.

	Symptoms can include low body temperature, extreme lethargy, difficulty breathing and excessive meowing.	
Fleas	Fleas are the most common external parasite that is found on the skin of animals. An adult flea is a dark brown insect that can be seen on the animal's skin along with their eggs and flea feces (black specks).	All animals are given a flea treatment soon after their arrival at the shelter. Please contact us if you notice excessive scratching or fleas on your foster feline as they will need additional treatment.
Internal parasites	Organisms that live within an animal (e.g. heart, intestinal tract) where they obtain their nutrition and protection from their host. Symptoms include a distended abdomen, diarrhea and lack of weight gain.	Please contact us immediately if you suspect your foster may be suffering from an internal parasite. Treatment is dependent on the type of parasite.
Lice	Lice are off-white and approximately 1/10" long. Their irritation causes infected animals to scratch excessively. Lice are host-specific and do not transmit to people or different species.	Please contact us if you notice excessive scratching or lice on your foster feline. Treatment requires routine shampooing.
Ticks	Ticks are small rounded arachnids that attach to one spot and do not move. Once they insert their head under the skin, they begin engorging themselves on the blood of the host.	If you see a tick on your foster, please contact us. Please do not try to remove the tick yourself.
Tapeworm	Tapeworms have flat, white, rice-like bodies that are approximately 1.5 inches long. They rarely produce well-defined symptoms but, in the cases of a heavy infestation of a malnourished animal, symptoms may include dullness, irritability, increased appetite, dry and harsh coat, or mild diarrhea.	Please contact us if you notice worms around the animal's anal region, or in stool or vomit. Treatment requires de-worming with oral medication.
Worms	Felines can get roundworms, whipworms, tapeworms and hookworms and they can be passed to other animals and people. Symptoms include a distended abdomen, diarrhea and lack of weight gain. It is important to de-worm felines as directed.	Please contact us immediately if you suspect your foster may be suffering from worms. Treatment is dependent on the type of worm.

Feline medical conditions not treated in foster care:

The OHS does its best to ensure we have diagnosed all injuries or illnesses in animals before placing them into foster. Cats suffering from the following conditions will not be placed into foster care. If you suspect your foster may be suffering from any of the following conditions, contact the foster department immediately.

Condition	Symptoms	Transmission
Feline Panleukopenia (Distemper or “Panleuk”)	After an incubation period of about 2 to 9 days, the first signs appear as a high fever, severe depression, severe dehydration, glossy eyes, vomiting and diarrhea. At first, vomit and diarrhea appear as a clear fluid; later is it yellow and tinged with bile. Typically, the cat will lie with its head hanging over the edge of its water dish, not moving except to lap water.	The panleukopenia virus is spread by contact with urine, feces, saliva or vomit of an infected cat.
Feline Leukemia (FeLV)	Loss of appetite, slow but progressive weight loss, poor coat condition, enlarged lymph nodes, persistent fever, pale gums and other mucus membranes, inflammation of the gums and mouth, infections of the skin, urinary bladder and upper respiratory tract, persistent diarrhea, seizures, behaviour changes and other neurological disorders, a variety of eye condition.	Spread from infected mother to kittens or shed from saliva and nasal secretions, also in urine, feces and milk from infected cats; can also occur in cat to cat transfer during mutual grooming or a bite wound.
Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV)	May appear normal for years but eventually leads to immune deficiency and can cause severe illness in those with weakened immune systems. Symptoms can include poor coat condition, persistent fever, loss of appetite, inflammation of the gums or mouth, recurrent skin or bladder infections, behaviour changes and other neurological disorders, a variety of eye conditions	Transmission through bite wounds, on rare occasions spread from infected mother to kittens.
Feline infectious peritonitis (FIP)	FIP is a chronic, wasting disease that results in poor appetite, fever, and weight loss over several weeks; it is ultimately fatal. Because various organs may be affected (i.e., liver, kidneys, brain, eyes, etc.), a variety of clinical signs may be associated with this disease. There are two forms, the wet (effusive) form and the dry form. The wet form results in accumulation of large quantities of fluid in the chest or abdomen. If it occurs in the chest, the cat will experience difficulty breathing. When it occurs in the abdomen, a large, bloated appearance will result. The dry form affects the target organs in a similar fashion, but no	There are three stages of FIP infection, and significant risk to other cats occurs in only the first two stages. 1. The first stage is <i>initial infection</i> . During the two to four week period following viral infection of the cat, a large amount of virus is shed; other cats in direct contact with virus will be exposed. 2. The second stage is one of <i>dormancy</i> . The virus is inactive

	<p>fluid is produced. If enough time passes without the cat dying, the dry form may progress into the wet form. Diagnosis of FIP is much easier if fluid is present.</p>	<p>within the cat, so it causes no disease. If the cat is stressed during this stage, some virus shedding may occur. Otherwise, the cat is not contagious. However, some cats shed enough virus during the stressed period to be a threat to surrounding cats. This stage may last a few weeks to several years.</p> <p>3. The third stage is <i>clinical illness</i>. It usually lasts a few weeks and terminates in death of the cat. As a rule, the cat is not contagious during this stage.</p>
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Chapter Five: Zoonoses in cats

Zoonotic risks in a shelter environment:

A zoonosis (plural zoonoses) is a disease or infection that can be spread from an animal to a human.

All animals, like people, are capable of harbouring many different diseases. Sometimes they get sick from these diseases, but sometimes they can be carrying disease agents without actually becoming ill. Some of these diseases, which we call zoonoses, can be passed to people and could potentially make us sick. It is important to be aware of risks so that we know how to protect ourselves from being infected with a zoonosis. As you will learn by reading below, animals in a shelter environment are often more likely to be carrying these diseases than the pets we have in our homes. Because these zoonotic diseases can be spread in many different ways, there are some important yet simple precautions that need to be taken to protect ourselves.

How zoonoses are spread:

Zoonotic diseases can be spread by direct contact with the infected animal or their body fluids, by touching an object (called a fomite) that has previously been in contact with the infected animal, by inhaling aerosolized disease particles, by ingesting the infectious agent (by touching your mouth/food with a dirty hand), or by coming in contact with an intermediate animal that spreads the disease, such as a flea.

Are some people at a greater risk of becoming ill from a zoonosis than others?

Yes. Although anyone can become infected if exposed to a zoonotic disease agent, those who have weakened or suppressed immune systems are at a greater risk and can develop a more severe clinical illness. This includes, for example, those undergoing chemotherapy, infected with HIV, taking medication after receiving a blood transfusion or organ transplant, or being treated for an autoimmune disease. The elderly and very young are also at an increased risk.

What are the factors in sheltered animals that increase the risk of zoonotic disease?

Although once in our care we do everything we can to make and keep these animals healthy, animals come to our shelter with many different backgrounds, usually unknown. They often have not had appropriate vaccinations or vet care, and they can be infested with parasites such as fleas and worms. Many have been living outdoors, hunting or scavenging, and may have come into contact with or ingested various disease agents. Furthermore, they may be frightened, disoriented, or poorly socialized, which can lead to aggressive behaviour and an increased risk of bite or scratch wounds.

What are some examples of zoonoses?

- **Cat Scratch Fever:** This disease is caused by a bacterium that is spread from one cat to another by fleas. Infected cats rarely become ill, but they can spread the disease to humans through bites and scratches. In people with a healthy immune system it may cause a fever and other flu-like symptoms, but in immunocompromised individuals, it can cause a serious illness affecting their skin, internal organs, and nervous system.



- **Giardia:** Is caused by a protozoan parasite and is less commonly seen. It causes severe and ongoing diarrhea in both animals and humans and will resolve with and without medication.
- **Intestinal Roundworms:** Cats and dogs are commonly infected with intestinal parasites, especially if they have not seen a vet for de-worming medication (all foster are de-wormed before being sent to a foster home). These worms can be spread to people by ingesting eggs from surfaces contaminated by infected feces. In people, the worm larva can become lost and end up in the lungs, liver, heart, eye, or central nervous system, and cause various clinical signs, ranging in severity from mild to life-threatening.
- **Toxoplasmosis:** This is caused by a microscopic single-celled organism called *Toxoplasma gondii* that can be found in cat feces. It can cause flu-like symptoms if ingested and is especially harmful to pregnant women as it can cross the placenta and damage the fetus, even leading to miscarriage. It is safe to be in contact with cats and have them in your home during pregnancy, but we do recommend that somebody else clean the litter box. Cleaning your litter box with gloves and washing your hands after are suggested.
- **Rabies:** Although very rare in Canada, rabies is a fatal, untreatable disease. Pre- and post-exposure vaccines are available, however, to prevent disease. It is a virus that can infect any mammal and is spread in the saliva of the infected animal through bite wounds. The pre-exposure vaccine is recommended for individuals who may be at a higher risk of exposure.
- **Ringworm:** This is a skin infection caused by a fungus, not a worm. It causes irregularly shaped areas of fur loss and rough, scaly skin on infected animals. In people, it causes a classic round, itchy red lesion. It can be contracted by touching an infected animal or the hair they have shed in the environment. Some people are more susceptible to infection than others, but in general, those with a weaker immune system are at a greatest risk. Please note: All animals are screened for ringworm upon admission to the OHS via a woods lamp, although this test is not always 100% reliable.



What to do to prevent zoonotic infections:

The good news is that most zoonoses can be prevented by taking simple precautionary actions. What the OHS does to reduce zoonotic risk:

- Treats the animals for common parasites (intestinal worms, fleas)
- Performs a full health exam of each animal upon arrival at the shelter
- Isolates clinically infectious animals
- Follows a strict sanitation protocol
- Provides training and education for volunteers
- Reduces the risk of bite and scratch wounds by temperament-testing animals, identifying possible aggressive animals with warning cards on their cage/run, and trimming nails
- Follows proper health and safety protocol in the event of a bite or scratch
- Limits the amount of exposure that volunteers have to animals of unknown temperament or background

To protect yourself from zoonoses:

- WASH YOUR HANDS!!! – after touching each animal and before leaving the shelter or touching your face.
- Alcohol-based hand gels or disposable gloves can also be used.
- Do not eat or drink while working in animal areas.
- Talk to your doctor to identify your personal risk factors.
- Follow this and procedures provided to you.

Hand Hygiene (borrowed from <http://aspcapro.org/routine-practices-prevent-infection-foster-homes>):

Clean hands before and after handling animals or items in the animals' environment.
Alcohol-based hand sanitizers:



- Can be used when hands are not visibly soiled
- Provide a rapid kill of most transient microorganisms but are not recommended when risks of ringworm or panleukopenia are significant

Follow These Steps:

- Ensure hands are visibly clean (if soiled, follow hand washing steps)
- Apply 1 to 2 full pumps of product
- Spread product over all surfaces of hands, concentrating on fingertips, between fingers, back of hands, and base of thumbs (most commonly missed areas)
- Rub hands until product is dry, for a minimum of 15 to 20 seconds

Soap and water recommended when significant soiling or risk is present, follow these steps:

- Wet hands with warm (not hot) water
- Apply liquid or foam soap 1-2 full pumps
- Vigorously lather all surfaces of hands for a minimum of 15 seconds
- Removal of bacteria requires a minimum of 15 seconds mechanical action
- Pay particular attention to fingertips, between fingers, backs of hands and base of the thumbs (most commonly missed areas)
- Dry hands thoroughly

What you can do to protect your family at home:

- Ensure that your pets are up to date on their routine vaccinations.
- Ensure that all members of your family wash their hands after handling a foster animal.
- If you are fostering animals in your home, be sure to pick up dog feces immediately and clean the litter box daily.

Contaminated home environments:

Different illnesses require different disinfection protocols. Some illnesses, such as ringworm, can contaminate your home environment for an extended period of time. Should your home end up contaminated, the foster department will provide you with additional information on how to properly disinfect your home.

How to Pill a Cat

"HOW TO" SERIES

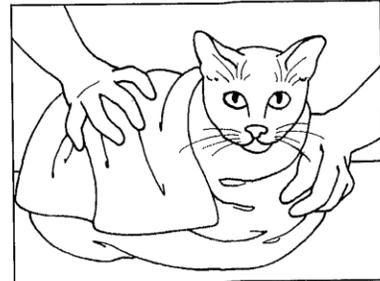
If you hide a pill in food, dogs will usually gobble it right down. Cats, however, rarely fall for this trick. Chances are, you'll need to give the cat his pill by hand.

Before you follow the steps below, remember these tips: (1) If you're not in control, cats will sense this and do their best to make the entire process as difficult as they can. ("Calm, cool, and collected" is the motto to live by here.) (2) Cats aren't too fond of having their mouths pried open and pills dropped down them. They'll try their best to back away from you and flee. So a key part of the process is making sure cats are properly restrained. (3) Some cats learn to associate getting a pill with salivating (a "Pavlov's dog" reaction). To prevent messy drooling, you'll have to learn how to pill the cat quickly and efficiently.

Now the adventure begins. The steps below are guidelines only. Feel free to modify them according to the cat's, and your own, comfort level.

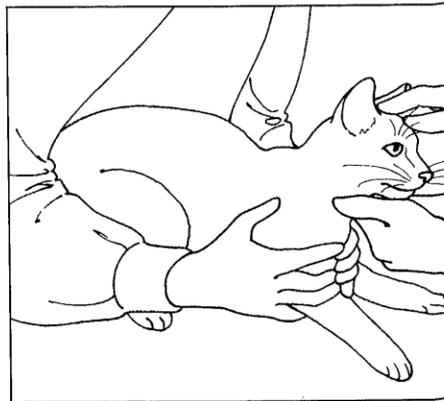
1. Sit Still, Kitty

If you're pilling the cat by yourself, hold the cat so that he can't back away. A corner works well. Or kneel down, turn the cat so that he faces away from you, and cradle him gently between your knees so that you have both hands free. Then follow steps two through seven.



If the cat is especially hard to restrain, try wrapping him up. Simply place the cat in a pillowcase or towel and wrap it completely around the cat's body, covering all four paws.

If someone is available to help you, have your helper comfort and cradle the cat from behind, holding the cat's front legs down securely so that he doesn't scratch. Once the cat is restrained, follow steps two through seven.



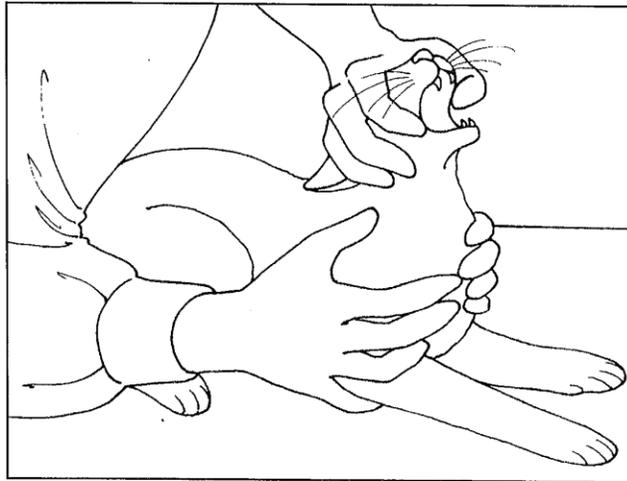
Illustrations by Susie Duckworth

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HOW TO PILL A CAT

2. Get a Grip

Place one hand over the cat's head so that your thumb and forefinger are on the side ridges of his face just behind his jaw.

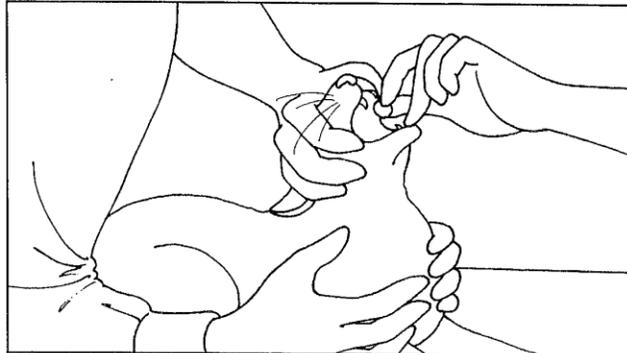


3. Look Up, Boy

Tilt the cat's head back until his nose points upward. The cat should reflexively open his mouth slightly.

4. Open Wide

Hold the pill between the thumb and forefinger of your other hand, and use your middle finger to gently open the cat's mouth fully.



5. Down the Hatch

Drop the pill as far back in the cat's throat as possible, aiming for the point where the tongue meets the roof of his mouth. If you're comfortable sticking your finger into the cat's mouth, use your finger to slide the pill down.

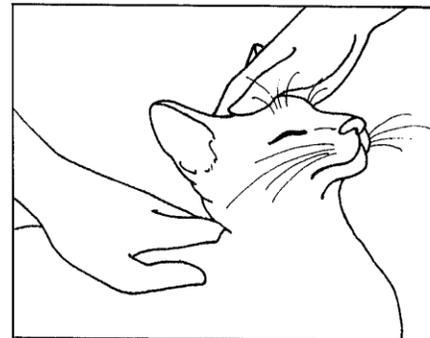
6. Now Swallow

Quickly close the cat's mouth, continuing to hold his head back. Stroke the cat's throat to stimulate swallowing. When the cat licks his nose, it often means he's swallowed the pill. If the cat doesn't swallow, try blowing lightly on his nose. This stimulates the cat's swallowing reflex and serves to distract him.



7. Good Kitty

After the cat swallows the pill, give him praise and maybe a treat. Make the pill-taking just a small part of an otherwise positive experience. By pampering the cat, you'll help him be more prepared and cooperative the next time he's given a pill—which will probably be the next day.



The Humane Society of the United States

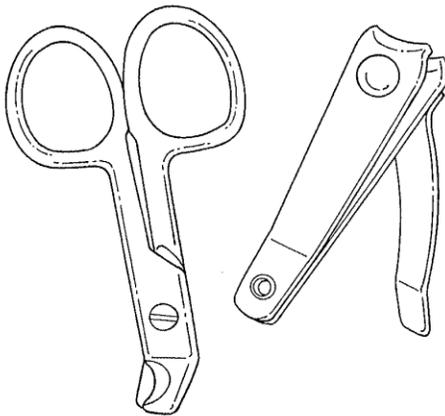
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How to Trim a Cat's Claws

Animal Sheltering
The Community Animal Care, Control, and Protection Resource

"HOW TO" SERIES

Trimming a cat's claws every few weeks is a vital part of maintaining the animal's hygiene. Regular trimming not only protects the health of a cat's handlers, but also guarantees the well-being of adopters' couches and armchairs. But if the idea of trimming a cat's claws has you biting your nails, know that all it takes is some patience, a little help from a more experienced person, and plenty of practice to sharpen your skills.



1. Stay On the Cutting Edge

There are plenty of tools available to trim a cat's claws; use whichever one works best for you and the animal. Some people prefer a special pair of scissors modified to hold a cat's claw in place, others prefer human nail clippers, and still others choose plier-like clippers or those with a sliding "guillotine" blade. Whatever your tool of choice, be sure the blade remains sharp; the blunt pressure from dull blades may hurt an animal and cause a nail to split or bleed.

2. Take Paws, Part I

If you approach a cat with a sharp object in one hand while trying to grab a paw with the other, odds are you'll come up empty-handed. Because cats' temperaments and dispositions vary greatly, there is no "perfect" way to handle a cat while trimming his claws. Some cats do well with no restraint at all, but most cats need to be held firmly but gently to make sure that no one gets hurt. Try resting the cat in the crook of one arm while holding one paw with the other hand. Or, place the animal on an examination table and lift one paw at a time. You may even be able to convince a particularly sociable cat to lie back in your lap.



Illustrations by Susie Duckworth

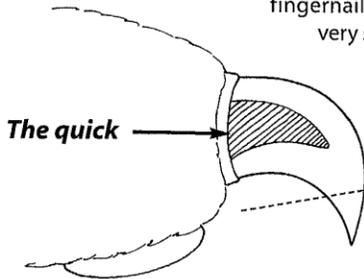
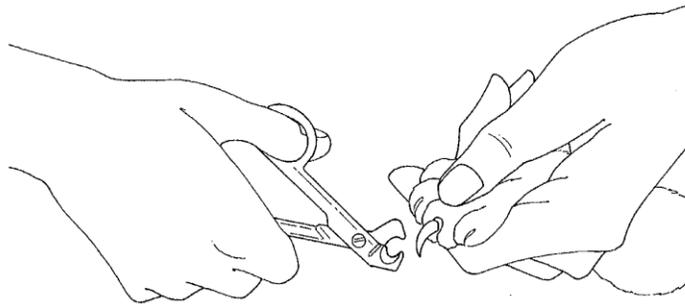


3. Take Paws, Part II

If you've got a helper, ask him to hold the cat while you clip the nails, or just ask him to rub the cat's nose or offer up a special treat. If you're having a difficult time trimming a cat's rear claws, try gently scruffing the cat and laying him on his side, then have someone else trim the claws.

4. Take a Little Off the Top

Now that you're in position and the cat's in position, put the claw in the right position, too. Take a paw in your hand, curl your fingers into a fist, and use your thumb to gently press down on the joint just above the claw. When the claw extends, quickly but carefully snip off the sharp tip and no more. Don't get too close to the pink part of the nail called "the quick," where blood vessels and nerve endings lie. Just like the pink part of a human fingernail, the quick is



very sensitive; cutting into this area will likely hurt the animal and cause bleeding. If this happens, apply a little pressure to the very tip of the claw (without squeezing the entire paw, which would only increase the blood flow) or dip the claw in a bit of styptic powder, then leave the cat alone, being sure to check on him occasionally.

When working with a long-haired cat, be sure the fur is clear of the clippers or you may pull the animal's fur, hurting the cat and hurting your chances of ever trimming his nails again.

5. Take It One at a Time

If you aren't able to trim all 20 nails at once, don't worry. Few cats remain patient for more than a few minutes, so take what you can get, praise the animal for cooperating, then be on the lookout for the next opportunity—maybe even a catnap—to cut things down to size.