



Kitten Expectations & Care by Age

(During the first 3 weeks of life Kittens are unable to urinate and defecate on their own and will require stimulation to eliminate. The foster will gently rub a warm wet wash cloth or cotton pad on the puppy's genital area and anus which will allow them to eliminate. This should be done before and after feedings)

Very important that kittens remain on their bellies with feet on the counter when feeding, DO NOT turn them on their backs to bottle feed.

For more detailed instructions, please see our Kitten Foster Instruction Guide.

Weeks	Feeding	Development
0-1	Feeding a ½ tablespoon of formula every 2-3 hours, overnight can be every 3-4 hours. If mom is present, make sure kittens are nursing. Kittens can nurse up to 45 minutes. A lot of crying or activity can indicate a problem with mom's milk supply.	At one week of age the Kittens should be handled minimally. They sleep 90% of the time and eat the other 10%. Kittens should be kept dry and warm to avoid low body temperature, which is the number one danger in kittens.
1-2	Bottle feed every 2-3 hours until their bellies are full but not bloated. Overnight feedings can be every 3-4 hours.	Healthy kittens should be round and warm. When you pick up the kittens they should wiggle, healthy kittens seldom cry. Ear canals should open between 5 and 8 days. Eyes will open between 8 to 14 days.
2-3	Bottle feed every 3-4 hours until bellies are full but not bloated.	Kittens begin to crawl and should be trying to stand. They will begin to play with each other, biting ears, tails and paws before their teeth come in. They should be teething at this stage.
3-4	Bottle feed every 4 hours until bellies are full but not bloated. Kittens may start to lap gruel from a bowl.	Kittens begin to see well and their eyes begin to look and function like adult cat eyes. Kittens will begin to clean themselves at this stage. If mom is present, she will continue to clean them. At 3 weeks, Kittens are in their socialization stage. If they have siblings allow them to play often.
4-5	Bottle feeding may be necessary to keep kittens from crying of hunger. Kittens usually can drink and eat gruel from a saucer at 4 weeks. Weaning from the bottle should be gradual.	Begin litter box at 4 weeks of age. DO NOT use the clumping style litter at this stage. Handle kittens to increase their socialization skills.
5-6	Feed gruel 4 times a day. Thicken the gruel gradually be decreasing the amount of water that you add. Start to introduce dry food and water at this point.	At 5 weeks kittens will roam around the room and will need supervision. Be sure to offer different types of toys so they can explore and learn different textures.
6-7	By this age, kittens should be eating dry kitten food well. Feed the kittens at least 3 times per day. Kittens like to eat frequently instead of one to two large meals a day.	By this age you have "mini cats". They are able to groom themselves and play with each other and you.
7-8	Offer dry kitten food 3 times per day. Leave water at all times.	Continue playing and socializing with kittens.
8+	Offer dry kitten food 3 times per day. Leave water at all times.	By this time kittens should be ready for spay/ neuter surgery and adoption.