



FOSTERING PUPPIES

Puppies (ages 16 weeks or younger), regardless of whether or not they are with their mother, have very little chance of surviving in a shelter environment. Sending these tiny pups to a temporary home with a foster family provides them with a better chance at life and finding a forever family.

Supplies Needed

- Nest box (small crate bottom or large cardboard box will also work)
- Towels/Blankets (must be washable and kept clean at all times)
- Food and water dish (metal preferred, easy to disinfect)
- Canned and dry puppy food
- Puppy milk replacer, depending on age of puppy
- Bottles for feeding, depending on age of puppy
- Heating pad/hot water bottle
- Toys
- Food or postal scale to help track your puppy's growth

The First Eight Weeks of Life - One Week of Age

- Leave food out for nursing mom at ALL times. Food requirements can increase three times the normal amount.
- Puppies weight will vary according to breed; pups should be gaining about 1-1.5 grams per day for each pound of anticipated adult weight.
- Handle puppies as little as possible.
- Puppies will sleep 90% of the time and nurse the other 10%. They should nurse vigorously and littermates should compete for the nipple. They can nurse for up to 45 minutes at a time.
- Be sure to keep puppies warm and dry.
- Watch the pups nurse at least once a day to ensure each pup is nursing.

The First Eight Weeks of Life - Two Weeks of Age

- The puppies should continue to gain 1-1.5 grams per day for each pound of anticipated adult weight.
- Their eyes will open when the pups are between 10-14 days old. They open gradually, usually starting from the nose outward.
- All newborn puppies will have blue eyes and initially no pupils. The eye color is a solid dark blue.

The First Eight Weeks of Life - Three Weeks of Age

- Mother dog will spend more time outside of the nest box.
- Puppies will continue to gain same weight as before.
- Puppies ear canals will open when the pups are about 13-17 days old.
- Puppies are usually able to stand around day 15 and are crawling by day 21.
- Puppies should be spending 60-70% of their time sleeping.
- Puppies milk teeth will begin to cut.
- Will learn to play with each other, sit and start to touch objects with their paws.
- During week three, puppies should begin their socialization phase. Increase the amount of handling and get the pups used to human contact and interaction. Avoid exposing them to anything frightening.

The First Eight Weeks of Life - Four Weeks of Age

- Puppies will continue to gain same weight as previous weeks.
- Adult eye color will appear, although it may change within 9-12 weeks.
- Puppies will begin to develop complete sound and sight orientation.
- Puppies will begin to clean themselves, although their mother will do most of the serious cleaning.
- Puppies will begin to eat from saucer and should be weaned gradually from their mother's milk. Mother will begin to discourage her puppies from nursing, however with some dogs, puppies may be allowed to nurse for up to two months. It is important to make sure the puppies are eating and gaining weight.
- Puppies will start to eliminate on their own. A supply of newspaper or puppy pads will be needed for house training.

The First Eight Weeks of Life - Five Weeks of Age

- Puppies will continue to gain same weight as previous weeks.
- Male puppies' testicles will become visible.
- Puppies should be active and able to get out of the nest.
- Weaning and house-training should continue.

The First Eight Weeks of Life - Six Weeks of Age

- Puppies should have complete visual abilities.
- Puppies will imitate their mother, play with toys and explore the world around them.
- Continue the weaning process by thickening the gruel. Begin to introduce solid food.

The First Eight Weeks of Life - Seven Weeks of Age

- Nursing sessions should be brief and infrequent, if at all.
- Puppies should be eating undiluted puppy food. Continue to encourage dry food, which is good for their teeth.

The First Eight Weeks of Life - Weeks Eight to Twelve

- Puppies should be ready to be altered.
- Socialization, house-training and exposure to other people will continue to take place.
- Limited exposure to other animals in the house may start, however, we ask that the puppies have two vaccinations and be tested before exposing to your other dogs.
- Cat litter should not be accessible to the puppies.
- See notes for leash training and socialization.

Orphaned Puppies

We often take in puppies without mothers. These pups must be placed with foster families that are able to dedicate a majority of their day to the care of these vulnerable puppies. These pups will need 24-hour care and supervision, correct quantities of nutrients for different stages of growth, and a regular schedule of feeding, sleeping, grooming and exercise.

Orphaned Puppies, cont.

You must be able to provide the stimulus for urination and defecation during the first 18-21 days of life. This is done by massaging the genital and anus area before and after each feeding with a cotton ball or very soft washcloth, dampened with warm water. You can also use mineral oil on a cotton ball to stimulate the bowels. Puppies can usually eliminate without assistance after four weeks of age.

Body warmth is important to regulate and control puppies body temperature. They cannot regulate temperature themselves, so it is imperative to keep them out of drafts and cool areas. You can use a heating pad or hot water bottle, but be careful not to burn the puppies. Be sure to layer with several towels so that there is no direct contact with puppies' skin/fur. Also carefully monitor to ensure the puppies do not chew on the cords.

Puppy bedding must be changed daily, sometimes more often. Wash dirty bedding and disinfect it with a small amount of bleach.

Puppies need exercise to promote muscular and circulatory development. However, care should be taken in the first two weeks of life because their internal organs and limbs are extremely fragile. Playing or handling should be done prior to feeding.

At least twice a week (or more if possible), puppies need to be groomed with a soft, warm, moist cloth. Wipe gently, imitating the mother's grooming licks.

Cow's milk should NOT be given to puppies as it does not provide enough nutrients. Use Esbilac (puppy milk replacer) to help supplement feedings. Esbilac should be warm (not hot). Do not boil the Esbilac as it may destroy the nutritional value. Place bottle in hot water for a few minutes, or warm in microwave for no more than ten seconds.

Orphaned Puppies, cont.

If constipation occurs, add one drop of vegetable oil to each puppy's food no more than once a day until problem eases. Use caution to not overfeed as it can cause diarrhea and a variety of other problems.

Hand-feeding can be challenging and everyone has a method that works best for them. You can use a baby animal bottle or syringe. It's best to keep the puppy in a position similar to what they would experience if mama was there. Do not turn the puppy on his/her back. Keep the bottle at a 45-degree angle to reduce the amount of air getting into the puppy's stomach.

Puppy Feeding and Weaning

Feeding equipment should be sterilized before and between feedings. Sterilize by dipping the equipment in boiling water. Be sure to sanitize your hands before and after feedings.

Feeding Amount Before Weaning:

Week One Amount - 60 ml/four times a day

Week Two Amount - 70 ml/three times a day

Week Three Amount - 80 ml/three times a day

Week Four Amount - 90 ml/three times a day

If the puppy is getting enough food, he/she should not cry excessively, gain weight and feel firm to the touch. After each feeding, give the puppy a full-body once over with a barely damp cloth, using short strokes like its mother would. This keeps the fur clean, teaches them how to groom and gives the attention and mothering they crave.

At approximately four weeks of age puppies should start to show interest in other sources of food. Introduce solid food by offering warm canned food mixed into a thin gruel with a bit of water or puppy milk replacer. Use a shallow sauce pan. Some puppies will lap it up immediately, while others will lick it off your fingers.

Puppy Feeding and Weaning, cont.

Teach them how to use the pan slowly, sometimes it takes two or three meals before they catch on. Be patient - weaning is a process. Once they catch on, you can thicken the gruel. Make sure there is always fresh water available in a spill resistant dish.

At six weeks of age puppies should be getting most of the nutrition from the food you are providing. Gradually add dry food by mixing it in with their gruel. At the end of eight weeks, they should be primarily on dry food. Do not give puppies human food or cows milk; they have different nutritional needs than humans and can become very ill when given some human foods.

Housetraining

When puppies reach four weeks of age they will begin to eliminate on their own. You should have a collection of newspaper or puppy pads and encourage them by showing the potty area several times a day (especially after meals and naps). Gently put the pup on the pad and praise him if he uses the spot to eliminate. Puppies do make mistakes! If that happens, remind him where he should go by gently placing him back on the area that he should use. Do not rub his nose in the mistake, this will do nothing other than harm your relationship with him. It is good to keep the puppies in a small confined area to allow for less mistakes and faster clean up time. Keep area clean and away from their food.

Socialization

It is your job to help convince puppies that humans are kind and loving. Some puppies will adjust to you and their new environment quickly, while others will seem frightened or anxious. Try sitting down on the floor when making phone calls, the sound of your voice will be familiar and not threatening. A radio or TV playing quietly is another tool to use for familiar tones.

Socialization, cont.

At four weeks of age, puppies are ready to socialize with humans and each other. Play with the puppies each day, observe who needs more time to come out of their shell and who is outgoing. When you pick a puppy up, talk in soothing tones and stroke them gently. You want this to be a pleasant experience, so put the puppy down if he squirms a lot. They should be introduced to the outdoors in a confined area and carefully watched. Never leave puppies outside without supervision!

We ask that children under ten years of age not be alone with the puppies. This will help avoid any negative behavior from puppy or children including screaming, feeding human food or pulling too hard on the puppy. Talk with our staff if you feel your child is mature enough to handle the puppies properly. We want our foster pups to be socialized with kids, but not scared of them.

Leash Training

Leash training can take place at eight to twelve weeks of age. The puppies should be used to their collar. Let them sniff the leash and you can gently touch them with it. Place the leash on each pup's body without attaching it to the collar so they get used to the weight of it. Once the puppies are comfortable, attach a leash to their collar and let it drop. They may be scared or curious at first. Gradually you can pick up the leash and hold it in front of you. While doing this, ask the puppy to come to you. Do not apply pressure from the leash. Once the puppy follows you around with the loose leash, then you can start to lead them around. Do not force leash training, be patient and stay positive. This may work better with food as a motivator.

You can start to slowly introduce other basic training tools using positive reinforcement for "sit", "down", "come" and "off." Always be patient, use a calm voice and praise (or possibly treats) to make this a great experience. Never punish a puppy with a loud voice or upraised hand.

Health Issues

Because most foster puppies are rescued from shelter environments, it is very difficult to ensure that puppies will always be healthy. Puppies may appear healthy at time of rescue and then begin to show illness a few days later. For this reason, it is very important that foster homes keep their own dogs up-to-date on vaccinations.

It is also extremely important that newborn puppies are physically kept separate from your personal dogs until eight to ten weeks of age and after their second round of vaccinations. This will help to keep the puppies safe, allow you to monitor for signs of illness and help prevent your own dog from getting sick.

Routine Veterinary Care

Foothills Animal Rescue provides foster puppies with basic medical care such as vaccinations, spay/neuter surgery, de-worming and heartworm testing. Our rescued animals are microchipped and all records of medical care will be in their file.

If you observe any changes in your foster puppy's behavior (medically or physically), please notify the shelter team as quickly as possible. They will evaluate the puppy to determine whether medication should be started or if further veterinary care is needed.

It is important that you are able to separate puppies from each other if needed to recover from illness. While fostering, you will need to make sure you are available to bring the puppies into the shelter for a complete schedule of vaccinations or evaluations.

If experiencing any of these concerns, notify the shelter team for further evaluation.

Routine Veterinary Care, cont.

Puppies younger than nine months:

- **Diarrhea that lasts for more than one day**
- **Vomiting and diarrhea that lasts for more than six hours**
- **Vomiting more than once in an hour**
- **Not eating for more than 12-24 hours**
- **Lethargy without fever for more than 12 hours**
- **Lethargy with fever**

Our shelter does have veterinary partners that we use to help with the care of our animals. In the event of an emergency, contact Marlene Miles, Shelter Manager at (480) 381-2437.

Common Illness for Puppies and Dogs

If your foster puppy or dog displays any of the symptoms listed below, please contact the shelter team. Our team will determine the best course of action based on your observations.

Canine Distemper is a viral disease that is often fatal. Distemper is most commonly seen in puppies under six months of age, however, it may affect adults. Early signs resemble a severe cold.

- **Symptoms: Eye discharge, loss of appetite, vomiting, nasal discharge (green), diarrhea, fever, confusion/disoriented and loss of balance.**
- **Treatment: Veterinary care. Distemper can have lasting effects including loss of enamel from teeth, seizures or encephalitis (brain swelling). Most dogs will not completely recover from distemper and will most likely have ongoing issues.**
- **Transmission: Very contagious. Airborne.**

Parvovirus (Parvo) is a disease most common in puppies and young dogs. It causes the sloughing of the lining of the intestinal tract. Parvovirus can survive in the environment for six months or longer.

Common Illness for Puppies and Dogs, cont.

Unvaccinated dogs may become infected with Parvo by simply coming into contact with places that were infected. A bleach solution is the best way to disinfect contaminated areas. The vaccine for Parvo is considered very effective.

- Symptoms: Lethargy, loss of appetite, vomiting, fever and diarrhea (usually bloody).**
- Treatment: Veterinary care.**
- Transmission: Contagious to other dogs; especially dogs who are not vaccinated. Contact with feces and vomit.**

Kennel Cough is a respiratory tract infection that has been linked to several viral and bacterial causes. Coughing is usually stimulated by physical exertion or by touching the throat area. May last one to three weeks and is treated with antibiotics. Kennel cough is very common in shelters. The Bordetella vaccine may help reduce bacterial and viral cases.

- Symptoms: Cough, runny eyes and nose.**
- Treatment: Shelter/foster care with antibiotics or cough suppressants.**
- Transmission: Very contagious to other dogs. Dogs with current Bordetella vaccine will probably not get it.**

Ringworm is a common fungal infection of the skin. It is not actually a worm.

- Symptoms: Irregularly shaped areas of fur loss, skin appears rough and scaly, a Wood's lamp may help to identify whether or not the fur loss is ringworm.**
- Treatment: Shelter/foster care with antibiotics and weekly baths of topical treatments. Treatment program can take 12-16 weeks depending on severity of case.**

Round worms, tape worms and hook worms affect a dog's digestive system. They are most commonly seen in puppies and young dogs.

- Symptoms: Large/distended belly, diarrhea, inability to gain weight.**
- Treatment: Shelter/foster care with de-worming medications.**
- Transmission: Contagious to dogs and cats through contact with feces.**