

SYDNEY DOGS & CATS HOME

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NEONATE GUIDE

Thank you for caring for our neonate kittens! These babies have little to no immunity and will rely on you for pretty much everything. This will be a challenging time but it's all worth it as you are giving these babies the best chance at a long, happy life. SDCH is always here to support you every step of the way, so please don't hesitate to contact your Foster Officer or our other team members (see magnet for other numbers).

Set up

- Neo kittens can be set up in a carrier, which must be well padded with soft blankets. **Don't use blankets with holes** as the kittens can get caught.
- Ensure you utilise a **heat pad** (provided by SDCH) wrapped in blankets to keep them warm.
 - o Check the heat pad regularly and reheat when needed, they need to go in the microwave for ~5 mins and should last ~8 hours.
- Once the kittens are 4+ weeks and begin the weaning process, they can be moved to a mesh playpen to allow room for a litter tray/food bowls.

Weighing

- Kittens must be weighed **every day**, at the same time each day.
- Kittens should gain an average of 15g a day or 100g a week.
- Weigh using kitchen scales and with kittens in a bowl for greater accuracy.
- Keep a record of daily weights.
 - o If a kitten does not gain weight, or loses weight for 24-48 hours, notify SDCH immediately as the kitten may need to see the vet.



<https://atlantahumane.org/kitten-weight>

Feeding

Preparation:

- Kittens **MUST be warm** in order to be fed – if a kitten feels cold, place them in their enclosure with the heat pad until they warm up.
- Use a bottle/syringe with a Miracle nipple attachment (provided by SDCH).

- Only feed kittens Wombaroo kitten formula (provided by SDCH) – do not feed cow's milk or any kitten milk from the supermarket.

Making Formula:

- To make formula, mix 1 scoop (6.5g) of Wombaroo powder with 25mL pre-boiled warm water (SDCH will provide scoop).
- Ensure it is mixed thoroughly so there are no lumps as this can clog the bottle.
- The formula should be warm – test against your wrist. If too hot, let it cool. If too cold, you can easily warm up by placing the bottle in a mug of hot water.
- Make a new batch of formula at least every 2 feeds – it doesn't last well in the fridge for too long.

Feeding the Kitten:

- When feeding, ensure the kitten is held with their belly down – imagine how they would lie when they're feeding from mum.
- **Do NOT feed a kitten on their back** – this can cause them to aspirate which can be fatal.
- Support the kitten with one hand and hold the bottle with the other hand – the kitten should latch onto the nipple and begin to feed.
 - o If a kitten is struggling to latch, try the following:
 - Ensure there are no lumps in the formula and that it is warm.
 - Try swaddling the kitten in a fluffy blanket.
 - Try brushing the kitten's head with a toothbrush to mimic mum grooming them.
 - Try feeding them in their enclosure rather than taking them out.
 - Overall, be patient! You can always give the kitten a little break and try again later.
- Once latched, a kitten will suckle the milk on their own.
 - o You do NOT need to squeeze the bottle or depress the syringe - this can cause the kitten to aspirate.
- The frequency and amount of formula per feed will change as the kitten ages. See chart at end of guide.



<https://patch.com/california/ranchosantamargarita/learn-bottle-feed-kittens-fosters-needed>

Toileting

- Kittens <4 weeks must be stimulated to toilet at each feed.
- Use toilet paper or tissues - **do not use paper towels** as these can be too rough.
- You can slightly dampen the tissues with warm water.
- Gently rub circles around the kitten's genitals.
- The kitten should urinate/defecate after around 10 seconds - do not rub for too long as this can irritate the skin.
- Keep track of how often the kittens toilet - they should defecate 1-4 times a day.
- Make note of the consistency/colour of faeces - it will be soft, but it should not be liquid. **Diarrhoea is a cause for concern** and the kitten may need vet treatment.
- Make note of the colour of urine - it should be pale yellow. If it is dark yellow, the kitten may be dehydrated and require veterinary assessment.



<http://www.kittenlady.org/stimulating>

After Hours Support

- If you are concerned about the health of your kittens after hours, we'd rather you be safe than sorry.
- Please call a 24-hour vet for advice and take the kittens in if needed (see Foster Guide for a list of vets that SDCH liaises with, but any vet will do).
- Explain you are a foster carer and take the Emergency Vet Letter with you (provided at pick up, can also be found in your emails).
- Let SDCH know as soon as we open what has happened and we can arrange a follow up appointment with our vet if needed.

SDCH FOSTER CONTACTS	
<u>DOG FOSTER OFFICER</u> Your first contact for dogs - Any foster concerns at all call or SMS	<i>Most days, 8:00am - 4:00pm</i> <i>If no answer, contact Animal Care Team</i> 0418 589 886
<u>CAT FOSTER OFFICER</u> Your first contact for cats and rabbits- Any foster concerns at all call or SMS	<i>Most days, 8:00am - 4:00pm</i> <i>If no answer, contact Animal Care Team</i> 0451 648 551
<u>ANIMAL CARE TEAM</u> If the Foster Officer is not available. Or for information about a foster adoption.	<i>Mon-Sat, 9:00am - 3:30pm</i> <i>& Sun, 9:00am - 3:00pm</i> (02) 9587 9611 / 0450 636 481 info@sdch.org.au
<u>VET TEAM</u> For any medical queries, to order more medications, or for vet appointments.	<i>Mon-Fri, 9:00am - 4:30pm</i> 0427 909 269 vet@sdch.org.au
<u>PHOTOS & VIDEOS</u> Email us photos, videos and animal descriptions.	pics@sdch.org.au

Kitten feeding amount/frequency guide:

AGE	APPROXIMATE WEIGHT	AMOUNT TO FEED	SCHEDULE
0 to 1 week	50 to 150 grams	2 to 6mL kitten formula	Every 2 hours
1 to 2 weeks	150 to 250 grams	6 to 10mL kitten formula	Every 2 to 3 hours
2 to 3 weeks	250 to 350 grams	10 to 14mL kitten formula	Every 3 to 4 hours
3 to 4 weeks	350 to 450 grams	14 to 18mL kitten formula	Every 4 to 5 hours
4 to 5 weeks	450 to 550 grams	18 to 22mL kitten formula Start the weaning process- gradually transition to a mixture of kitten formula and wet kitten food. Transition to take place over multiple feeds/days.	Every 5 to 6 hours
5 to 16 weeks	550g to 2.5kg	½ sachet kitten wet food and ¼ cup kitten dry food	3-4 times a day

If you are more of a visual learner, we highly recommend the Youtube Channel 'Kitten Lady' - she is a very experienced bottle baby carer who has amazing educational videos for everything to do with neonates.

Thank you again for opening your home to our neonate kittens in need. Please don't hesitate to contact us for any support 😊