





SYDNEY DOGS & CATS HOME

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PREGNANT MUM & BUBS GUIDE

Thank you so much for fostering one of our pregnant mums! This guide will advise how to best care for mum cat as she prepares to give birth, and how to care for the babies once they arrive.

Setting up a space

- A spare room is ideal – somewhere quiet where mum can feel safe.
- Set up a nest for mum – you can use a cardboard box, a cat bed with tall sides (so the kittens can't get out), or even a large empty litter tray.
 - o Ensure the nest is well padded with towels/blankets.
- Set up mum's supplies – at least two litter trays, and food/water bowls.
 - o Place the litter trays as far from the food/water bowls as possible, but still in the same room.
- When mum cat arrives home, place the carrier in the room and leave it with the door open. Let mum come out in her own time – do not try to pick her up.
- When mum feels comfortable, she will initiate contact with you.
- Pregnant cats need a lot of food – ensure mum has kitten dry food available at all times, and feed her kitten wet food throughout the day.

Giving birth

- In general, you do not need to intervene during the birthing process as mum cat should take care of everything, but there are exceptional circumstances.
- When mum is getting ready to give birth, she will pace around the room, groom herself more than normal, and become more vocal.
- When the birth is imminent, mum will go into her birthing nest – don't touch her or try to move her at any point.
- Mum will then go into labour – she will expel birthing fluids and a small amount of blood.
- The kittens will come out one at a time – each will have its own amniotic sac which mum will break within seconds of their birth.

- If mum cat does not break the sac within 15 seconds, you will need to step in and break it with a clean towel – don't use anything sharp and ensure you wear gloves – then give the kitten back to mum.
- Mum will lick the kitten to clean it – if she does not wipe the mucus from the kitten's face/mouth, then step in and clean it gently with a clean towel. The kitten should begin crying out.
- Each kitten will have its own placenta, which mum cat will generally eat.
- On average, cats will have a litter of 4-6 kittens, but this does vary.
- A new kitten should be birthed approximately every 10-60 minutes, but sometimes there can be multiple hours between kittens.
- Sadly, there can sometimes be stillborn kittens. If there is one, remove it away from mum and the nest as soon as possible.
- Kittens should start to feed from mum within 1-2 hours of birth.

Kittens under 4 weeks old

- The kittens must be weighed daily, at the same time each day, to ensure they are gaining weight.
- Newborn kittens generally weigh between 80-120g. If any kittens weigh less than 80g, contact your Foster Officer as this kitten may need more assistance.
- The kittens should gain on average 10g per day. If a kitten loses weight for 1 day or plateaus for 2 days, contact your Foster Officer.
- Mum cat will do everything for the kittens at this age, so you won't have to worry about feeding, grooming and toileting.
- If there is a runt kitten that's smaller than the rest, keep a close eye on it to ensure it has access to a teat, and is not getting pushed away by its siblings.
- When the kittens reach around 4 weeks old, mum cat will gradually stop toileting them.
- At this stage, place a low sided litter tray near the nest for the kittens to use – they usually figure this out pretty quickly, but it can be a messy process.
- Throughout this period, it's important to ensure mum cat has enough food – feed mum as much as she wants, and have dry food available at all times.

Weaning

- From 3-4 weeks, the kittens will start to show some interest in mum cat's food.
- Offer the kittens some kitten wet food mixed with warm water or Wombaroo milk formula, using a low sided bowl for easy access.

- Over time, decrease the amount of water/milk in the food until the kittens are eating plain wet and dry kitten food.
- By 5-6 weeks, the kittens should be eating wet and dry food without assistance, but they may still feed from mum occasionally.
- By 8 weeks, the kittens should no longer be feeding from mum.

Socialisation

- It's important to socialise the kittens to set them up for success in their forever home.
- From 3 weeks onwards, handle each kitten regularly to help them become friendly and confident.
- Introduce the kittens to new people, including men, women, and children.
- Allow the kittens to explore different rooms with different flooring (carpet, tiles, hardwood etc.).
- Play with the kittens with different toys (wand toys, soft toys, balls etc.).

Overall, have fun! Thank you for opening your home to a mum cat and her babies, and keeping everyone warm and fed. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact your Foster Officer or the SDCH team.

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