

Hand Rearing Kittens



Hand rearing kittens is a time consuming process requiring a lot of patience, persistence and care. Please read the following information carefully and talk to your vet or nurse if you have any other questions.

Environment

Kittens should be placed in a crate or box lined with towels or another easily cleaned warm material.

The box/crate should have a heat source and should be big enough for the kittens to move away from the heat source if they get too hot. However, because of the limited mobility of very young kittens, they may not be able to move sufficiently far enough away from the heat source, so their temperatures need to be monitored. Hot water bottles or heat lamps are often used.

Feeding

- ~ Kittens should be fed in a similar position as if they were nursing naturally.
- ~ Therefore they must not be fed while lying on their back.
- ~ Milk formulas are available for kittens and these will have feeding guidelines

on how much to feed depending on the age and weight of the kittens (refer to feeding guide below).

- ~ Kittens less than 2 weeks every 2-3 hours round the clock, from 2-3 weeks can be fed every 4-6 hours then every 6-8 hours at 4 weeks.
- ~ Bottles and teats designed for feeding are available from your vet, and these need to be sterilised between uses.
- ~ From 3 weeks offer milk in a saucer gradually mixing in small amounts of kitten food.

Stimulating kittens

- ~ The mother would normally lick the area under the tail to stimulate the kitten to urinate and defecate: You will need to clean this area with damp cotton wool or tissues after a feed to ensure regular toileting.
- ~ After 2 weeks, most kittens will use a litter tray by themselves.
- ~ Kittens should defecate at least once a day, but if no motions have been passed after 48 hours they may be constipated, please contact your vet for advice.

Some signs of illness

- ~ Common signs are persistent crying, decreased activity, reluctance to feed, failure to gain weight, and weakness.
- ~ Crying for more than 20 minutes is abnormal. It may indicate that the kitten is cold, hungry or ill. Eventually the kitten will stop crying and become weak and cold.
- ~ Since newborn kittens can become seriously ill and die very quickly, contact your vet or nurse for advice if you are concerned about a kitten's behavior.

Feeding chart

This is just a rough feeding guide to help with your feeding process amounts and weights may vary.

Weight (kg)	Amount in mls	Amount in oz	Time
0.1-0.3	5-12		2-3
0.3	12		4
0.35	15		4
0.4	18		5
0.45	21		5
0.5	24		5
0.6	30	1	5
0.7	36	1.5	5
0.8-0.9	52	1.75	6
1	60	2	6
1.2	68	2.25	6
1.3	75	2.5	6
1.4	90	3	6

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