



Peninsula Humane Society & SPCA

Are you leaving a young kitten with us? Please read this!

Young kittens are about the cutest things around, yet they can present a very difficult situation for open-admission shelters like PHS/SPCA. Unless we have volunteers willing and ready to provide immediately care, we are left with just once terrible choice: euthanizing the kittens. Let us explain....

Kittens under eight weeks of age have an immature immune system and are highly susceptible to a variety of illnesses. Keeping them healthy in a shelter environment can be extremely challenging because, due to their young age, they are at risk of becoming dangerously ill from diseases that adult cats can easily fend off. Additionally, the 'round the clock care kittens require is sometimes beyond our resources, given we regularly care for 600-1,000 animals daily.

Our trained staff looks at several physical characteristics to estimate a kitten's age: size, physical coordination, eye color and ability to care for themselves (eat/drink/urinate/defecate).

To address underage kittens' needs, PHS/SPCA has a robust foster care program and a Kitten Nursery located in our Center for Compassion. Both programs are staffed almost exclusively by volunteers. We make every effort to place underage kittens into a foster home. However, this depends on the age and health of the kittens as well as available resources. **We cannot guarantee that any kittens will go to a foster home, the Kitten Nursery or will be placed for adoption. It is important that you understand this sad reality before leaving a kitten with us.**

You may choose to care for these kittens in your home and return them to the shelter when they are eight weeks old. Even then, we are still unable to guarantee

that any animal will be placed for adoption, though odds are certainly more favorable. If you choose to care for them during this critical period and to keep them, please have them spayed or neutered as soon as soon as they can safely -- medically speaking -- have that surgery.

Even one litter, as you can see from the one you are bringing to us now, makes a difference in the numbers of underage kittens that flood into our shelter every year.

Below, we've provided initial guidelines about caring for underage kittens. Please review this information before you leave and commit to providing this care. We encourage you to take the kitten/s to a veterinarian within 24 hours. We can offer you a free starter package with supplies to care for these kittens until you can get to a vet and/or pet store.

Again, if no foster home is available and our Kitten Nursery is full, the kitten/s you brought us will be humanely euthanized soon after being received. If you want to care for these kittens temporarily, care for them with the intention of keeping them long-term or if you know someone else willing to care for them right now, you must make your decision at this time and tell our Receiving staff. **The one way you can guarantee that these kittens will not be euthanized is to take them home with you now.**

We apologize for being so direct and we are certainly sad whenever any animal loses his or her life. Still, this honest approach is the only one we feel comfortable with, considering the strong emotions involved.

please see reverse

You can help animals with gifts of time and financial support.

Please call 650/340-7022 x328 for volunteer opportunities, including foster care.

Donations can be sent to PHS/SPCA, 12 Airport Blvd., San Mateo, CA 94401, Attn: Development.



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Underage Kitten Care

The information below is only a summary/overview of the care kittens need. It is not a substitute for veterinary care or more complete information. Other resources for kitten care are listed below as well.

Age of kittens	Required Room Temp	Required Feedings	Food Type Given	Other
1 week	85 – 90° F	Every four hours	Kitten Milk Replacer <i>(do not use cow's milk)</i>	Kittens must be stimulated to urinate and defecate after each feeding.
2 weeks	80 - 85° F	Every six hours	Kitten Milk Replacer <i>(do not use cow's milk)</i>	Kittens must be stimulated to urinate and defecate after each feeding.
3 weeks	75 - 80° F	Every eight hours	Kitten Milk Replacer <i>(do not use cow's milk)</i>	Kittens must be stimulated to urinate and defecate after each feeding.
4 weeks	70 - 75° F	Three times daily	Kitten Milk Replacer <i>(do not use cow's milk)</i>	Kittens must be stimulated to urinate and defecate after each feeding.
5-7 weeks	70 - 75° F	Three times daily	Kitten Milk Replacer/ canned kitten food gruel	Kittens are learning to use litter box.
8 weeks	70 - 75° F	Twice daily	Canned & dry kitten food	Kittens are using litter box fairly reliably.