



FOSTER CARE GUIDELINES

updated July 2014

HISTORY

Kitty Cat Connection was formed in October of 2006 as a 501(c)3 non-profit organization made up solely of foster homes and volunteers.

MISSION STATEMENT

To rescue cats & kittens, provide foster care and vet care for cats and kittens and to find homes for them.

FOSTERING WITH KITTY CAT CONNECTION:

KCC relies on our wonderful network of foster homes. KCC does not have a shelter, so without our foster homes, we would have no way to help the many cats and kittens in need. We consider our foster care network an absolutely vital part of our ability to care for cats in need.

Your responsibilities as a foster home include:

- Providing KCC with a signed waiver [foster home questionnaire, and signed foster agreement - do we want to consider something like either of these if we are not doing home visits?]

- Ensuring that all personal animals in your home are up-to-date on vaccinations and are spayed/neutered

- Tending to the foster cat's basic needs

- Providing a safe and loving indoor environment

- Communicating with KCC staff regarding health and behavioral concerns

- Arranging for the cats combo testing, vaccinations, spaying or neutering, and any other medical needs, as well as keeping records of all medical procedures

- Bringing cats and their complete adoption files to adoption events

Our responsibilities include:

- Providing supplies for you (including food, litter, litter pans/scoops, cage, bedding, toys, medications)

- Any receipts can be mailed to PO Box 902085, Kansas City, MO 64190 or given to the Treasurer for reimbursement.

- Providing some health care services for the cat (including vaccinations and microchips)

FOSTER COORDINATORS:

Sandy Coffman, Phone: 816-516-6006 or 816-510-4400, E-mail: sdcoffman_2000@yahoo.com

Sharon Jones, Phone: 816-532-0244 or 816-392-8820, E-mail: bsjones007@aol.com

Kim Johnson, Phone: 816-352-5251, E-mail: chataboom@yahoo.com

Lisa Beckenbaugh, Phone: 913-424-9880, E-mail: llbecken@yahoo.com

ADOPTING A FOSTER CAT:

We are always delighted when one of our foster placements turns into a permanent home for that cat or kitten. We will waive the adoption fee, but all adoption paperwork must be turned into the appropriate person.

FRIENDS/FAMILY ADOPTING A FOSTER CAT:

During the time you have your foster cat/kitten, it is likely that a friend or family member will meet the cat, and may end up wanting to adopt him/her. The adoption process is the same for a friend or family member as it is for anyone. Without our adoptions fees we would be unable to continue our mission and helping as many cats/kittens as we do.

Please note that all foster cats remain the legal property of KCC and are considered to be in the custody of KCC until adoption paperwork is completed. It is to be made clear to all adopters that if the person cannot keep the cat for any reason, KCC will take the cat back and find another home for it.

TYPES OF FOSTER CARE SITUATIONS:

Bottle babies: kittens between birth and 5-6 weeks old who normally would still be nursing from a mother cat (please note that bottle babies are very labor intensive and require feeding every 2 hours, 24 hours a day during early weeks – they are not for everyone!) Use non-clumping litter for small kittens who tend to ingest litter through the nose and mouth and litter can accumulate in their intestines.

Kittens and/or mom cats with kittens: kittens need to stay in a foster home environment until they are weaned, weigh enough and are healthy enough for spay/ neuter and adoption; kittens also do not have a well-developed immune system, so we prefer to keep them with their mom if at all possible.

Feral kittens: young kittens who are born outside without human contact that need to be socialized to life with people – this takes patience and skill, very rewarding foster experience!

Semi-social/behaviorally challenged adults and older kittens: we sometimes have older kittens or adult cats who have experienced mistreatment, or who just aren't used to being around people, and we are always in need of people willing to work with these kitties to help them learn to adjust to life around humans

Other opportunities: sometimes we have farm cats who need a place to stay for a few months while they recover from an illness or injury.

ADOPTION EVENTS:

All adoption events are held at PetSmart, 8970 N Skyview Ave, Kansas City, MO 64154 (off of Tiffany Springs Road and North Skyview Avenue) from 9:30 am to 4:30 pm. There are two shifts, 9:30 am to 12:30 pm and 12:30 pm to 4:30 pm. In the morning, please arrive 15 minutes early to help set up and in the afternoon, it is expected that you will stay to help tear down.

PetSmart and the State of Missouri require that all cats and kittens at adoption events be spayed or neutered and have a rabies shot if old enough. Also, please bring the originals of all medical records to the adoption events along with completed Petsmart Adoption Form, KCC adoption contract, Intake Sheet, and cage card.

The adoption center is also available for cats and kittens for a one week stay. Spaces are very limited. Coordination for space is through your foster coordinator and must be scheduled one week in advance.

HEALTH CARE FOR FOSTER CATS:

RECOMMENDED VETERINARIANS AND SPAY/NEUTER CLINICS

Northland Animal Welfare Society (NAWS), 3400 NW Vivion Road, Riverside, Missouri 64150; Office - 816-336-1888, Toll Free - 800-408-5191, Fax - 816-336-1886; By Appointment Only, Wed, Fri and Sat., 7:30 am - 4:30 pm, Surgeries in the Morning (am), Other Services starting at 10:00 am.

Great Plains SPCA, 5428 Antioch Drive, Merriam, KS 66202; Phone: (913) 742-7310; Monday-Friday: 7:30am-6:00pm, Saturday: 8:00am-3:00pm, Appointments Required.

The Humane Society of Greater Kansas City, 5445 Parallel Parkway, Kansas City, Kansas 66104; Phone: 913.596.1000, Fax: 913.596.2483: Monday thru Friday: 9am to 4pm, No clinic on Saturday (spay/neuter appointments only), Closed on Sunday; Call ahead at 913-596-1000 to verify times.

HOPE Clinic, 728B Cherokee Street, Leavenworth, KS 66048; Phone: (913) 651-7335; Appointments by appointment only.

GENERAL NOTES ON VET CARE:

Be sure to use only KCC approved low cost spay/neuter clinics and veterinarians. Clear required medical care with your Foster Coordinator.

Initial routine vet care: health check, stool sample check (if needed), worming, flea treatment (if needed) and combo test. This should be done as soon as possible after gaining custody of the cat, unless otherwise noted. Cats and kittens should be quarantined for a period of time away from personal cats or other foster cats to assure they test negative, have no aggressive behavior and are clear of any apparent health issues.

KCC buys FVRCP shots, dewormer, and antibiotics for upper respiratory infections (both oral and eye). Contact Kim Johnson to receive these supplies and training on giving shots.

TREATMENTS EVERY CAT MUST RECEIVE BEFORE ADOPTION:

Physical exam by a veterinarian

Flea treatment (if needed) and deworming

Combo test (FIV and FeLV) in adults and kittens after 6 weeks of age

Minimum of one FVRCP (distemper) vaccination for adults and a total of three FVRCP shots starting at 6 weeks of age for kittens, boosted every 2 weeks until twelve weeks of age for kittens (three shots total for kittens)

Rabies vaccination (done at 12 weeks for kittens)

Spay/neuter (done at 12 weeks or 3 lbs for kittens)

Microchip (usually done at spaying/neutering)

SOME MEDICAL CONDITIONS YOU MAY ENCOUNTER:

Upper respiratory illness (URI): very common “kitty cold” that many cats develop; symptoms include nasal and eye discharge, sneezing, congestion, lethargy and lack of interest in eating; we will usually provide an antibiotic to ward off secondary infections; generally clears up on its own, but more than a few days of not eating may require supportive care (sub-Q fluids, force feeding)

Calici virus: common, but potentially serious disease often seen in cats; symptoms include drooling, lesions on tongue/gums and/or on nose, bloody mouth or nose, high fever, lack of interest in eating; treatment is similar to URI, but also requires 30 days of quarantine away from other cats after diagnosis; in kittens, only symptom may be limping/lameness

Ringworm: NOT a worm, but rather a fungus that causes skin lesions; transmissible to humans as well as other animals; treated in animals with topical and internal medications (more easily treated in humans); spores can live in the environment for up to a year, so bleach must be used to disinfect

Ear mites: common in cats who were living outside; symptoms include severe itching, head shaking, “coffee ground”-like debris in ears; treated with either a 14-day course of Tresaderm or a dose or two of Ivomec

Fleas & ticks: also common in cats living outside; treatment can take up to 24 hours to kill all fleas, and may not be 100% effective; we recommend treating your own animals regularly

Intestinal parasites: common in outdoor cats; symptoms include diarrhea, “potbellied” look, and presence of worms in vomit or stool; tapeworm segments look like small grains of rice, roundworms look like spaghetti; treatment depends on the type of parasite; coccidia is another parasite, particularly common in kittens, which can cause especially odiferous diarrhea and must be treated promptly.

Coccidia is also very contagious, so any infected cat or kitten must be quarantined. Do not cross contaminate litter boxes by using the same litter scoops.

GENERAL SANITATION PROTOCOLS:

All of the above diseases/conditions/parasites are contagious to other cats (and some are contagious to dogs and humans as well). In general, you should make it common practice to wash your hands before and after handling your foster cats. You should also use separate food & water dishes and litter boxes, and you may want to consider having an overshirt that you wear while spending time with your foster cat, particularly if they are very young, or if you have an older or weak cat of your own. You may also want to consider keeping foster cats/kittens in a cage or bathroom that is easily disinfected.

BASIC CAT HEALTH INFO:

Normal adult body temperature: 100.5°- 102.5°

Normal respiratory rate: 16-40 breaths per minute

Normal heart rate: 120-140 beats per (kittens: 200-260 minute)

Normal duration of feline pregnancy: 63 days

Normal weight of kittens at birth: (about 3.53 oz.)

Normal weight gain of kittens: about 1 pound per month (12 weeks/3 pounds)

BASIC HEALTH CARE/FIRST AID ITEMS TO HAVE ON HAND:

Digital rectal thermometer & lubricant

Alcohol

Triple antibiotic ointment (WITHOUT pain relief solution)

Gauze pads & adhesive tape

Saline (contact lens solution or nasal spray)

Heating pad (especially for kittens)

Tweezers

Baby wipes (hypo-allergenic)

Scissors

Clorox wipes

Bleach for disinfecting surfaces, cat boxes and bedding

Kitchen scale (especially for kittens)

L-Lysine (powder is best as an immune booster for sick kitties)

Probiotics (capsules you can break open and mix with soft food are best for runny stool)

A good book on cat health (like The Cat Owner's Home Veterinary Handbook by D.G. Carlson & J.M. Griffin)

OTHER SUPPLIES:

Food, litter, litter boxes, scoops, bedding, toys, cages and carriers.

A WORD ABOUT CAT BITES:

IF YOU ARE BITTEN BY A FOSTER CAT, you must report the bite to your Foster Home Coordinator immediately. Even seemingly minor cat bites can become infected very quickly. Cats' mouths harbor the bacteria Pasteurella, which causes infection in about 70% of bite wounds. Wash any bite immediately with hot water and soap and allow it to bleed for a bit if possible. Do not cover the bite, and keep a close eye on it. If it becomes red, swollen, warm, or if you develop a red line across your skin, seek medical treatment right away. You will most likely need an antibiotic. You will most likely not need rabies post-exposure vaccination, but consult with your doctor for advice.

If you plan to work with cats, particularly stray or feral cats/kittens, on a regular basis, you may want to look into receiving the rabies pre-exposure vaccine series. This is a simple series of three shots given over a 3 month period. While the shots do not eliminate the need for post-exposure treatment, they do simplify and shorten post-exposure treatment. Health insurance will often cover the pre-exposure series.

EMERGENCY HEALTH CARE CONTACT INFORMATION:

Animal Clinic of Newmark, 550 N.E. New Mark Dr., Kansas City, MO 64155, Phone: 816-734-0700, Fax: 816-734-0704, Emergency Number: 816-455-5430

Tiffany Hills Animal Hospital, 9300 N. Congress Avenue, Kansas City, MO 64153, Phone: 816.880.9500

Great Plains SPCA, 5428 Antioch Drive, Merriam, KS 66202; Phone: (913) 742-7310

Kennedy's Animal Clinic, 8000 Woodson Rd, Raytown, MO 64138, Phone: 816-358-0991, Fax: 816-358-5998

Strothertowne Pet Hospital, 651 SE Bailey Road – Lee's Summit, MO 64081, Phone: 816-524-7200

Dog & Cat Clinic, 1101 N 5th St Leavenworth, KS 66048, Phone: (913) 682-7424

North Oak Animal Hospital, 8124 North Oak Trafficway, Kansas City, MO 64118, Phone: 816-436-4400

Animal Emergency Clinic, 8141 N. Oak Trafficway, Kansas City, MO 64118, Phone: 816-455-5430

WHAT CONSTITUTES AN EMERGENCY?

Please use your best judgment in determining what constitutes an emergency (and we would rather be safe than sorry), but in general, the following things always count as extreme emergencies:

Acute difficulty breathing

Temperature above 104° or below 99°

Obvious fracture or large open wound

Significant, bleeding, most vaginal bleeding, any bleeding from eye, nose, or rectum

Complete inability to urinate or defecate

Non-stop vomiting or diarrhea

Complications with labor and delivery

Complete inability to stand or move

WHAT IS NOT AN EMERGENCY?

Again, please use your best judgment, and try to report symptoms to us before they do become an Emergency so we can coach a treatment or recommended veterinarian that is KCC approved. The following can generally wait until morning or business hours to be reported:

Congestion/nasal discharge, coughing, sneezing

Drooling with red, raw tongue/sores on tongue

Red, irritated eye (with/without discharge)

Small wounds, even if infected (*unless high fever is present!)

Lump or swelling/redness at spay incision site (*unless incision is open, and/or cat is lethargic and has a high fever)

Occasional/once daily vomiting or diarrhea

Decreased appetite (should be reported promptly if it lasts for more than a day)

Straining to urinate or defecate (as long as even small amounts of urine/feces are being produced)

Increased urination or appetite

Hair loss or rashes

Worms/intestinal parasites vomited up or seen in stool

Small amounts of blood in stool

Bloody urine (*unless high fever is present)

Lethargy or decreased appetite after vaccination

These things do not constitute emergencies, but some are cause for a veterinarian visit. If you have any questions at all please call a volunteer Foster Coordinator for advice.

Be aware as a foster home for small kittens, that there are situations where a kitten falls ill quickly and dies. Many times it is a congenital condition but veterinary clinic and emergency room visits rarely help a kitten survive. This is the sad reality of caring for small kittens.