



Thank you!

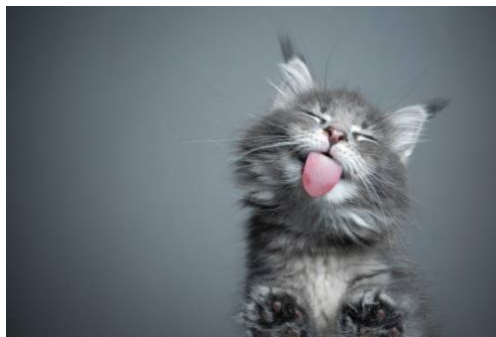
We are so grateful that you've considered fostering. Letting a pet stay in your home while it finds an adoptive family can be a very rewarding and sometimes challenging experience. As a foster parent, you will work closely with the rescue to be sure your foster is ready for adoption, both medically and socially.

It is important that as a foster you understand the risks and responsibilities that fostering entails, so we have written this short guide to help familiarize you with our process.

Fostering Space/Setup

Often kittens and some cats have not been medically cleared to be in contact with other cats/pets when they go into foster care. For this reason, it is imperative to have a separate space to keep your foster away from other household animals. This is also why we require all current pets to be up to date on vaccines. Your separate foster space should include:

- **Easily washable surfaces** - between fosters it is necessary to clean the living space; we recommend cleaning first then sanitizing with dilute bleach (1 part bleach to 30 parts water and let sit for 10 min).
- **Cage** - for use at least initially with small, frightened, or sick fosters. (Provided by CCR)
- **Bedding, bowls, brushes, litterbox, and scooper** - do not share with household animals.
- **Hand sanitizer** - before handling your own pets, wash your hands.
- **No open windows with screens** - scared/shy kittens have been known to push their way through screens to escape if frightened enough - only crack windows and be sure your screens are still secure.
- **No hiding places** - you should always be able to access your foster easily; this means no beds, dressers, sofas, etc. to hide under, in or behind.
- ***Our organization will provide litter, litter boxes, food and toys for your foster cat and/or kittens.***





Potential Medical Risks/Contagious Conditions

Not all fosters will experience severe medical issues, but some will and it's important to be aware that these conditions are the reason we take so many precautions with our fosters. Because most foster kittens are often placed directly into homes from living outside, they are coming into your house having been exposed to several unknown contagious conditions. The following list is ordered from most common to least common:

1. **Parasites** - roundworms, hookworms, pinworms - just to name a few. We treat every kitten and cat for these worms, but this takes some time. Parasites in kittens are usually passed from mom to babies, but these parasites can spread by sharing litter boxes, sharing scoopers, sharing bedding, grooming - which is why it's important to have separate everything for your fosters.
2. **Fleas** - if a kitten is under 2 months/2 pounds it is not recommended to apply flea medication. In these situations, we would recommend dawn dish soap baths - keeping the head out of the water, while the body of the kitten is under the water line and fleas can be drowned. Fleas may migrate to the head, so be sure to have a small cup of soapy water to put in. Be sure the kitten is kept warm during this process, drying the kitten fully with a towel or hair dryer from 2 ft away. If the kitten is old enough to get flea meds, it may take a day or two to fully resolve. If your foster has fleas, you will want to vacuum and wash bedding often. *Can be passed to other animals in the house if precautions are not taken - consider keeping other household animals on regular flea preventatives while you have fosters.*
3. **Diarrhea** - one of the most common issues with kittens, due to their fragile nature. Many things cause diarrhea, such as stress, change in food, weaning, parasites, viruses. It's important to work with the foster coordinator to be sure your kitten does not dehydrate and that we get to the root of the problem. A stool sample or vet visit may be needed.
4. **Eye Infections/Conjunctivitis** - milky green discharge, crusty/closed eyes, inflammation/irritation in and around the eyes. Kittens are often hosts to viral and bacterial eye infections. Treatment can range from warm soaks to antibiotic ointment or drops depending on the severity.
5. **Upper respiratory viruses** - these viruses can cause runny eyes, runny nose, sneezing, coughing, etc. Because they are a virus, they *can pass to other household cats*. Most serious viruses are covered in vaccines that we ask all your household cats to be up to date on but do wash your hands often to limit spread. Some upper respiratory viruses resolve on their own, but if discharge is milky green/yellow or your kitten is lethargic, not eating/drinking, has additional symptoms the virus may have progressed to bacterial infection, and you may need antibiotics - contact foster coordinator.
6. **Ear mites** - characterized by excessive black wax and peppery bits in the ear usually accompanied by excessive scratching/head tilting. Can be resolved with a cream applied once daily for 7 days. *Can spread with direct contact to other household animals.*



7. **Ringworm** - like athlete's foot, this fungal infection can take 2-4 weeks to show up and is characterized by hair loss around the face and paws. Because it can take so long to start showing signs, this is another reason to use precautions between fosters and household animals. This dermatitis can be spread through direct contact or through fungal spores left on brushes, bowls, bedding etc. *This can be spread to other animals and people in the household.* Depending on severity, treatment could involve topical application of antifungal creams, sulfur baths twice a week, and/or oral antifungal medication. **Luckily ringworm is not very common**, but we have seen it in kittens more often than adults and have experience treating/caring for these kittens that would otherwise be put down in other shelters due to the contagious nature of the infection.
8. **Feline Leukemia Virus (FeLV)** - this infectious disease has no cure and can lead to death in some cats. It can cause cancers, blood disorders, and lower the immune system in cats. It is spread through saliva, nasal secretions, and other bodily fluids. We test all our cats for FeLV. Testing is done with a simple blood test at the vets but is most accurate at older ages, so we tend to test when the kitten is fixed.
9. **Death** - it is possible that you may have kittens that die for unknown reasons. As with any living creature, we can't predict sudden/emergent events such as cardiac arrest, stroke, blood clots, congenital anomalies, etc. Inbreeding, found in colonies of unfixed cats, or in hoarding situations can result in congenital problems. Some kittens come to us in terrible condition, sometimes too far gone after living outside for weeks without care - we do the best we can to give them supportive care to get back on their feet, but even with veterinary supervision we do lose some. We will do our best to work with our vets and you on how to best care for sick kittens, but sometimes life is unpredictable, and we want to be up front about that possibility.

Cat Bites

Although it is rare, sometimes volunteers can suffer from a cat bite. We take cat bites very seriously, and speaking from experience, all cat bites should be checked by a doctor. If you are ever bitten by a cat/kitten, wash the site immediately with warm water and soap and apply bacitracin and seek medical attention. Even the smallest wound (pin prick) can result in a serious infection. Coastal Cat Rescue highly recommends all volunteers who are bitten by a cat to seek immediate medical attention. We also ask that a member of our Board of Directors be notified if any bites occur as we want to make sure all our volunteers are safe as well as our cats.





Fostering for Other Shelters/Rescues

To ensure that foster cats/kittens are kept separate from other unvaccinated and untested animals, **we do not allow our fosters to foster for multiple shelters/rescues**. This is the only way for us to prevent and limit the spread of contagious conditions among the animals and is a necessary means to prevent CCR from being held liable for the spread of a contagious condition. If a foster parent is found to be fostering for a different shelter(s)/rescue(s) while also fostering for CCR their foster cats/kittens will be moved to a new foster home and they will be asked to leave the rescue. As a reminder, foster cats/kittens must also be kept separate from other family pets in a secure location.



Medical Responsibilities

Before being placed into adoptive homes, kittens must have a series of distemper vaccines and deworming doses which will be your responsibility to either administer, or schedule the administration with one of our board members:

- **Distemper vaccines** - can be started as early as 6 weeks or 1.5lbs. We give a series of 3 shots separated by 3 weeks. This does involve subcutaneous administration with a needle.
- **Deworming doses** - We use Pyrantel Pamoate which is very safe and can be used in kittens as young as 2 weeks. Given orally, you will need to be sure your kitten has 3 doses separated by 10-14 days and dosed at 0.1mL per pound.
- **Contact a foster coordinator with any concerns/changes in health** - you may need to bring the kitten to a local vet for further treatment but that needs to be arranged by the CCR so we can cover the cost.
- **Optional Subcutaneous Fluid Administration** - if your kittens become dehydrated due to illness, being able to administer fluids under the skin can be lifesaving. We can teach you how to do this if you're interested and involves inserting a needle under the skin but no worries, we have Board members who can do this as well as our local vet.



Social Responsibilities

Kittens living outdoors may be unpredictable at first as they have no experience with humans or living indoors. They may scratch, bite, hiss/spit, and run from you, but eventually, after some patience and handling, they can become friendly and loving household pets. We are not always able to predict exactly what a kitten will be like in your home. We will work with you and your comfort level on shy/aggressive kittens, but there may always be risks of injury due to bites/scratches and the unpredictability of working with animals.

Who doesn't love a friendly, well-rounded kitten? Without proper socialization it will be hard to find a new home for your foster. Spend as much time as you can teaching them how to be a house cat - pet them, sit with them while they eat, brush them, have them sit on your lap while you watch tv, etc. If they are shying away from you, don't just let them keep to themselves - that will only teach them that if they run away from you, they are safe. You'll need to convince them that being with people is rewarding and not just uncomfortable and scary! After the foster is comfortable with you, invite friends over to meet them so they are used to meeting new people. Don't be afraid to vacuum your house with a scared kitten. They will need to adjust to loud noises that may at first seem scary. By introducing new experiences to the kittens to be sure they are well rounded and better adapted to whatever home they eventually go to.

Kittens are to remain strictly indoors during their time in foster care. They should not be left alone with small children or other animals in the household no matter how much you trust them.

Adoption Process

All foster animals are under the sole custody of Coastal Cat Rescue until they are formally adopted out. For an adoption to be officialized, an Adoption Application needs to be completed and approved; an Adoption Contract needs to be completed and signed (unless the adopter is already an approved foster); and the Adoption Fee needs to be submitted. Foster animals must be returned to the care of Coastal Cat Rescue, if they deem it to be necessary. The Coastal Cat Rescue Board of Directors has the right and responsibility to make the final determination of the transfer of animals between rescues, fosters, and adopters.

Application for Adoption

Our adoption process involves a detailed application online that covers many important aspects of caring for a new pet. We will call the adopter's vet to see how they cared for their previous pets. If they rent, we will call their landlord to be sure they have permission to have a pet in their rental. We will also speak to personal references about the potential adopter. If there are any concerns, we take an educational approach to inform adopters of things they may not be aware of such as declawing, going outdoors, etc. In some cases, we may deny applications. Applicants that are denied aren't always given a reason, and CCR reserves the right to do that. This limits the chances of that applicant withholding certain details from their application if they choose to apply at another shelter.



Fosters & Family/Friends of Fosters

If you choose to adopt your foster cat, you must let us know as soon as possible since the rescue may be lining up other prospective applicants with your cat/kitten. If you have a family or friends looking to adopt your kitten, we will ask that you instruct them to apply before promising them a kitten. We would process their application as we would with other applicants and cannot guarantee that it will be approved. All decisions that are made regarding applications are in the best interest of the kittens and cats at our shelter. Coastal Cat Rescue is an all-volunteer, non-profit that relies on donations to survive. Because the cost to provide care for kittens and other shelter animals is offset by the adoption fee we charge, we cannot offer a discount to fosters, nor family/friends of fosters.

Emergency Contacts

If you feel your cat/kittens may be ill, please contact the Adoption Coordinator or Foster Care Coordinator Immediately. If you cannot reach them, please contact Board members in the following order:

- Ellen Whitney- 339-364-0355
- Anne Walsh – 781-206-5997
- Lindsay Conlon – 202-494-8299
- Sara Ventetuolo – 401-225-3761
- Addison Hugo Morgan – 978-973-1183



Fosters do not have permission to go to a veterinarian without Board approval. All decisions on medical cat care MUST be Board approved. If a foster brings their cat to the vet without Board approval, then they are responsible for the bill of the visit.

All medical decisions regarding our cats will be made in the best interest of the cat. The only time we will euthanize will be because a cat is in pain with no positive outcome, terminal illness or advised by the vet because there is no quality of life.



Foster Agreement

I certify that I have read the information outlined in the Fostering Handbook and understand the roles, responsibilities and risks associated with being a foster parent. I agree to care for my foster cats/kittens to the best of my abilities and will keep the CCR board members abreast of any developments with my foster cats/kittens, both medically and behaviorally. If the fostering responsibilities become too overwhelming for me to manage, I will contact the CCR board, and they will transfer my foster cats/kittens to another approved foster family as soon as they can. I understand that CCR will have limited information regarding the medical and behavioral history of the cats/kittens in their care, and it is my responsibility to handle and care for my foster animals safely and hygienically.

If you have read the above handbook in its entirety and agree to its policies, please sign your name below:

Signature and Date

