Arlington Animal Services

Foster Guide Book

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Contact Names and Numbers

Please call the Foster Coordinator with any questions or concerns.
Please call the Foster Administrator Mon- Fri 10am to 6pm to schedule Foster animal veterinary care.

Volunteer Foster Coordinator: Dennis Finigan at 214-500-0805, dennis.finigan@arlingtontx.gov

Foster Administrator: Christie Compton at 817-459-6191, christie.compton@arlingtontx.gov.

The Foster Coordinator is also available at any time for emergencies and time sensitive questions at the number listed above.

In the event of an emergency during business hours any day of the week, where you cannot contact the Foster Coordinator, you can contact the Foster Administrator: on duty at the shelter where you picked up your animal.

Emergency Protocol and Contact Information

If there is an emergency or urgent need for your foster animal, contact the Foster Coordinator, Dennis Finigan at 214-500-0805. If you have any non-urgent questions regarding the health of your foster, contact Stephen Anthony, Arlington Animal Services Veterinary Technician at 817-459-6397. Arlington Animal Shelter Hours:

Monday thru Friday 10:00AM-6:00PM, Saturday 10:00AM-4:00PM

Please note that if you decide to take a foster animal directly to an emergency veterinary facility without prior approval from Dennis Finigan or Stephen Anthony, Arlington Animal Services will not be responsible for any of the costs incurred.

Thank you for opening your heart and home to one of our shelter's animals. You are giving young, injured, sick, abused and under socialized animals a chance to grow or heal to help them get ready to find permanent homes. Your work not only helps the animal that you will have in your care, but it opens up more room in our shelter to help many more animals.

HOW Fostering WORKS

1) You'll receive emails as animals are identified as being in need of foster care, from the Foster Coordinator that give detailed descriptions of those animals needing Foster homes. **It is important that you do not forward these e-mails on to others outside of the foster program, as these animals are not yet available.**
2) When you see an animal that would be a good match for your household and lifestyle, you simply respond to the email letting the Foster Coordinator know so that they can make the necessary arrangements. In the email, include the **date and time that you would like to pick up the animal** and **what supplies you will need.**
3) The Foster Coordinator will respond and let you know that an appointment has been made and the staff and supervisor of the shelter are expecting you.
4) You will pick up the animal at the shelter where it is staying and any supplies you will need. There will also be a form that you sign, taking responsibility for the animal while it is in your care.

In order to remain an active foster you must accept one foster case every 6 months. You are also required to send pictures and updates on your foster pets! ☺

Items Our Organization Will Supply:

The number of foster animals our organization is able to support is limited by the annual resources available to the program. Foster caregivers are encouraged to donate supplies for their own foster animals in order to maximize the number of animals fostered by our organization each year. Some supplies are available to give or loan to Foster caregivers who require them in order to foster. The following is a list of supplies recommended for the care of your foster animal. Please ask if there is anything that you need.

- Food and water bowl
- Dog or Cat Food – always provided by the shelter
- Crate (For cats get a large dog crate to accommodate the litter box, bed, and food.)
- Baby gates or exercise pens when available. Supply is limited.
- Bedding (a clean, old blanket or towel or a dog bed that is washable)
- Flea comb/brush if needed
- Toys
- Flat buckle collar (stays on the dog at all times) & Leash
- Training treats when available
- Litter box and litter
- Medications

Wish List Items

These are supplies that you may find useful while you are fostering. They are always in demand for the program. Purchasing your own is recommended.

- **Unscented Baby Wipes** – Sometimes called "Natural" or "Hypo-Allergenic" these wipes are best for cleaning the messy bottoms and faces of little puppies or kittens.

- **Puppy Potty Training Pads** – While there are few things that are absolutely certain in life, one thing is that puppies are messy! Potty Pads make cleaning up much easier and help train puppies to "go" in a certain area making them much more adoptable!

- **ESBILAC Puppy and KMR Kitten brand Formulas** – Just like with adult dogs, it is important to keep babies on a consistent diet. These are the brands of formula that we choose to feed our bottle babies. We appreciate donations of any size that these formulas are available in!

- **Bottle Kits** – Bottles and nipples should not be reused from litter to litter. In the spring and summer these kits are in very high demand! We use both the 2 ounce and 4 ounce bottle kits.

- **Digital Scale** – Puppies and kittens cannot be spayed or neutered until they are at least two pounds and two months of age. A small digital scale is very important for tracking the growth of the little ones!

- **K & H Microwavable Warmer** – Puppies and kittens cannot regulate their own heat, so it is important to keep them warm. Traditional electric heating pads can get too hot and water bottles cool off too quickly. These warmers can keep babies comfortable all day or overnight. They are also the perfect size to fit inside a plastic bag for easy clean up!

- **Exercise Pens of Any Size** – Fosters must be able to keep the foster animals safely away from their own personal pets. Crates are great for certain situations, but sometimes are too small. Exercise pens are wonderful for exercise and play time!

- **Enzymatic Cleaners** - such as Simple Solution or Nature's Miracle – These cleaners are very useful in getting rid of any evidence of accidents from our tiniest of fosters. We love that foster volunteers want to take these animals into their home, but we understand they would like to keep their home fresh and clean.

- **Odoban Disinfectant and Deodorizer** – This cleaner is a great disinfectant and deodorizer for any surface and any mess pets may make in your home.

While any of these items will greatly benefit the program, some are in higher need than others. If you have friends or family interested in supporting the Foster Program, but cannot foster at this time, please let the Foster Administrator know. Thank you!

Sample Foster Request

Oh, what a beautiful mornin'! I hope it will continue into a beautiful day! It's great weather to get your four-legged kids out for some fresh air – on a leash or in a yard, of course! So get out there and put a smile on everyone's face!

Previous Request:

- **Elvis** is quite possible the sweetest dog ever to cross our threshold! He has nothing but love for every person and animal that he meets. He also has a strong affinity for couches; he would love to lay on yours with you for a while!

New Request:

- **Florence & Mumford and Miss Higgins** (her two kittens), are just beautiful and kittens offer hours of entertainment. Florence loves to be held and the kittens play with each other for hours!

Animal Name & Number	Reason for Foster	Approximate time in Foster care	Notes
 Elvis 13868951	Ear Infection	2 weeks (date)	**Elvis** is 2 years old and about 45 pounds. He is friends with everyone he meets. He will be a great ambassador for the AAS! Elvis is recovering from an ear infection and we want to be sure that it doesn't come back before he gets adopted. He needs ear drops two times a day.
 Florence & Mumford 110138376 & 110158401	Nursing Mother and Kittens	3 Weeks (date)	**Florence** is 8 years old and a real doll. She's been a great mother to her babies, but as they get older, she is more interested in lap time with you. Her kittens are very playful and well socialized. They will be lots of fun for the whole family!

PREPARING TO FOSTER:
Preparing Your Home for Your Foster Pet

It is important to ensure that your home and Foster room are safe; animals can and will do the most unlikely things.

How to Dog Proof a Room

Walk into the room that you plan to use and confine your foster dog, and ask yourself:

- *Is there room for the crate (dog's safe place)? A* crate is not a place of punishment, but a safe haven for your pet. Be sure to put it in a quiet, low traffic part of the room. Put a bed or blankets in the crate so it is a comfortable place for your pet to rest.
- *Is there quick access to the outside for bathroom breaks?* Potty pads are a good option if this is not possible. They can be placed in the room "just in case."
- *Is there anything that can be chewed, such as drapes, couch, rugs, shoes, etc.?* If there is anything of value within reach of the puppy, move it. Chances are that will be the first thing that they chew on.
- *Are there exposed electrical wires?* Use zip ties or duct tape to make them inaccessible for chewing.
- *Is there anywhere the dog can hide? Will you be able to get the dog out if hidden?* Block off areas where your pet can hide out of your reach. Feeling safe is important but being stuck behind furniture is not helpful to you or your pet.
- *Are there coffee tables with objects that can be knocked off by a wagging tail*? Removing knick-knacks and "nice things" from the room is always a good plan.
- *Are there plants in the room?* If so, check the list of toxic plants in this manual. Plants should be kept out of reach from puppies and dogs. Even plants that are non-toxic can make your dog vomit after eating them.
- *How will I clean the floors?* Carpets are hard to keep clean with little ones or messy animals, an ideal space should have hard wood, laminate, tile or concrete flooring. Putting a tarp down is always recommended, regardless of what type of floors you have.
- *Can the dog get into the cabinets or closets?* We keep many poisonous and dangerous items under the sink and valuable items in closets. Out of sight, out of mind does not apply to animals! If there is a way in, they will find it.

How to Cat Proof a Room

Walk into the room that you plan to use and confine your foster cat, and ask yourself:

- *Where will I keep the litter box so that the cat can access it and it will be easy to clean?* Keep the litter box away from the food and water bowls, as they do not like to eat and potty in the same place. Can you blame them?
- *Is there anything that can be chewed, such as electrical cords or plants? (Check the poisonous plant list later in this manual.)* Cats are curious and they will chew on most anything. They can also jump five times their height, so putting things up isn't really an option.
- *Is there anything that can be knocked off and broken, such as knick-knacks or dishes?* To guarantee the safety of your treasured items, remove them from the room.
- *Is there anything that can be ruined if it is scratched or climbed on?* Move or cover these items while your foster is in your home.
- *Is there anywhere the cat can hide? Will you be able to get the cat out if hidden?* Blocking off areas where a cat can hide out of your reach will save you and your foster cat a lot of stress in the end.
- *Is the room peaceful and quiet?* Cats need human companionship, but they also need periods of peace and quiet.
- *How will I clean the floors?* Carpets are hard to keep clean with little ones or messy animals, an ideal space should have hard wood, laminate, tile, or concrete flooring. Putting a tarp down is always recommended, regardless of what type of floors you have.
- *Can the cat get into the cabinets or closets?* We keep many poisonous and dangerous items under the sink and valuable items in closets. Out of sight, out of mind does not apply to animals! If there is a way in, they will find it.

Poisonous Household Items

Outside Hazards

- **Antifreeze that contains ethylene glycol** has a sweet taste that attracts animals but is deadly if consumed in even small quantities; one teaspoon can kill a seven-pound cat. Look for antifreeze that contains propylene glycol, which is safe for animals if ingested in small amounts. Ethylene glycol can also be found in common household products like snow globes, so be sure to keep these things out the reach of animals.
- **Cocoa mulch** contains ingredients that can be deadly to pets if ingested. The mulch, sold in garden supply stores, has a chocolate scent that is appetizing to some animals.
- **Chemicals used on lawns and gardens**, such as fertilizer and plant food, can be easily accessible and fatal to a pet allowed in the yard unsupervised.
- **De-icing salts used to melt snow and ice** are paw irritants that can be poisonous if licked off. Paws should be washed and dried as soon as the animal comes in from the snow.
- **Cans and garbage** can pose a danger when cats or smaller dogs attempt to lick food from a disposed can, sometimes getting their head caught inside the can. To be sure this doesn't happen; squeeze the open end of the can closed before disposing.
- **Traps and poisons**. Pest control companies frequently use glue traps, live traps and poisons to kill rodents. Even if you would never use such methods to eliminate rodents, your neighbor might. Dogs and cats can be poisoned if they eat a rodent who has been killed by poison (called secondary poisoning).

Indoor Hazards

- **Cedar and other soft wood shavings**, including pine, emit fumes that may be dangerous to small mammals like hamsters and gerbils.
- **Insect control products, such as the insecticides used in many over-the-counter flea and tick remedies**, may be toxic to companion animals. Prescription flea and tick control products are much safer and more effective. Pet owners should never use any product without first consulting a veterinarian.
- **Human medications such as pain killers** (including aspirin, acetaminophen, and ibuprofen), cold medicines, anti-cancer drugs, anti-depressants, vitamins, and diet pills can all be toxic to animals. Keep medication containers and tubes of ointments and creams away from pets that could chew through them, and be vigilant about finding and disposing of any dropped pills.
- **Poisonous household plants** include azalea, dieffenbachia (dumb cane), lilies, mistletoe, and philodendron, among others. For a complete list go to: http://www.humanesociety.org/assets/pdfs/pets/poisonous_plants.pdf
- **String, yarn, rubber bands, and even dental floss** are easy to swallow and can cause intestinal blockages or strangulation.
- **Toys with movable parts**—like squeaky toys or stuffed animals with plastic eyes—can pose a choking hazard to animals. Take the same precautions with pets as you would with a small child.
- **Rawhide dog chews** may be contaminated with Salmonella, which can infect pets and humans who come in contact with the chews. These kinds of chews should be offered to a pet only with supervision, as they can pose a choking hazard as well. Only give your pets rawhides made in the USA.
- **Holiday decorations and lights** pose a risk to cats and dogs. Keep these items out of the reach of animals, and if possible, confine your pet to an undecorated area while you are out of the home.

Kitchen Dangers

- **Chocolate** is poisonous to dogs, cats, and ferrets.
- **Alcoholic beverages, Hops (used in home beer brewing)**
- **Apple seeds, Apricot pits, Cherry pits, Grapes, Peach pits, Raisins**
- **Avocados, Onions and Onion Powder,**
- **Candy (particularly chocolate, which is toxic to dogs, cats and ferrets, and any candy containing the sweetener Xylitol)**
- **Coffee (grounds, beans, chocolate covered espresso beans), Tea (caffeine)**
- **Macadamia nuts, Walnuts**
- **Mushroom plants**
- **Mustard seeds**
- **Potato and Tomato leaves and stems (green parts)**
- **Rhubarb leaves**
- **Salt**
- **Yeast dough**
- **Fumes from nonstick cooking surfaces and self-cleaning ovens** can be deadly to birds. Always be cautious when using any pump or aerosol spray around birds.
- **Leftovers such as chicken bones** easily shatter and can choke a cat or dog.

WHILE THEY ARE WITH YOU:

Expectations and Care

Dogs

When you first arrive home with your foster dog or puppy, confine them to a single room such as a kitchen or family room where you spend a large part of your day, as dogs need to spend as much time as possible with you.

Use a baby gate or close doors to block off the entrances to other rooms. By keeping the dog in one room, you're helping prevent "accidents" that may occur because of stress or adjusting to your routine. Use a crate in this room for times when you are away from the house.

Show the dog or puppy where it is acceptable to go potty. If it does use the proper area for going potty be sure to reward heavily. This will help teach the dog what your routine is.

Show your pet where their food and water is. They need their own dishes, away from your pets' so that there is no concern over resource protection from any of the animals. Also, show them what toys they can play with so they will at least have an idea of what is acceptable to chew on.

Be sure to be consistent with training and expectations of behavior. It does not help a dog if you let them jump all over you for attention on the first day because you just want him to feel loved and then later refuse attention for such behavior. Teaching manners properly though positive reinforcement does not make a dog feel unwanted or unloved.

For the Safety and Well-Being of Your foster Pet:

- Place your foster dog indoors in a crate or other secure location.
- Spend as much time as possible with your foster dog.
- Place your foster dog in a room where the temperature is comfortable and the area is dry.
- Keep your foster dog **on a leash at all times** when outdoors unless in your secured, fenced yard. Do not ever leave a foster animal unattended in your yard, even if it is securely fenced.
- Place puppies indoors in a kitchen (you may want baby gates), bathroom, mudroom or laundry room with hard floors.
- Keep your foster animals separated from your own pets during the first days in your home, or for the entire time, if one of them is sick.
- Supervise your foster dog or puppy when they are with your personal pets.
- Ask about the availability of exercise pens and baby gates. We have a limited supply but will supply them when available.
- Keep foster dogs away from strange dogs. Foster dogs should not be put in a position of possibly fighting with a strange dog, reducing their chances for adoption.
- Off leash parks can be dangerous for dogs, particularly those recovering from surgery or illness or under socialized pets. These parks are not a suitable place for outings with your foster animal.
- Puppies should be around humans for socialization purposes and **must not be isolated from you.**
- Taking puppies with you to visit friends or family is not advised. Puppies are highly susceptible to illness that they can pick up anywhere.

Cats

When you first arrive home with your foster cat or kitten, confine them to a single room where you plan to keep his or her litter box. Provide the cat with food, water and bedding.

Adolescent and adult cats normally jump up on high surfaces, so consider how accessible breakable objects are. Some cats chew on exposed wires, so cover them or consider a place where they cannot access them.

By keeping the cat in one small room except when you can watch him, you're helping prevent "accidents" that may occur because of stress or adjusting to your home.

You may choose to keep your foster cat in a large dog crate containing a litter box, food, water, bedding and toys when you aren't available to watch him or her. Ask the Foster Coordinator if you think this would be useful.

For the Safety and Well-Being of Your Foster Pet:

- Keep your foster cat indoors in a quiet room or other safe location.
- Spend as much time as possible with your foster cat.
- Place your foster cat in a room where the temperature is comfortable and the area is dry.
- Keep the litter box in an accessible location.
- Keep the litter box clean. We flush the toilet each time we go, cats like a clean place to go too!
- Keep your foster animals separated from your own pets during the first days in your home, or if one of them is sick.
- Supervise your foster cat or kitten when he/she is with your personal pets.
- Keep your foster cat within the safety of your home; the outdoors is not a safe environment for any kitty.
- Kittens should be handled and spend lots of time around humans for socialization purposes and **must not be isolated from you.**

Introducing Your Foster Pet to Your Own Pets

- Keep in mind that due to the medical and/or behavioral condition of some foster animals, it may always be necessary to keep them separate from your own animals.
- If possible, a neutral territory is always the best place for new introductions of animals.
- If introductions are done at your home, take your foster dog to the yard to sniff and eliminate first. Then put the foster dog in its new room and let the resident dog out into the yard to investigate the smells left by the new dog. At that point, introductions can be made outside. This can also work in a room of the house for cats.
- If there are multiple dogs in the house, introductions should be made one-on-one.
- Behave normally. Letting the animals know that you are fine; they are fine; everything is fine!
- Remain alert and make the introductions gradually and calmly.
- Leave leashes on the dogs initially so that you can get immediate control.
- Give your own pets LOTS of love and praise.
- Go slowly with your foster pet as he/she may have been through a stressful surgery, abusive situation or many recent changes.
- Give your foster pet a chance to adjust and begin to build confidence by making your home a sanctuary for him/her to begin healing.
- Remember that some cats may not adjust to other pets easily and may need to remain separated while in your home to allow them to rest and get ready for adoption back at the shelter.
- Hold the leash loosely as you would normally; holding the leash too tensely during introductions can cause dogs to react with defensiveness.
- Do not force foster and family pets to interact. If they choose to avoid each other, allow it.
- Allowing initial interactions where the animals are safely separated can be incredibly helpful. Introduce animals using a crate or opposite sides of a fence so that each animal feels safe.
- Introduce animals in a large area so they do not feel cramped. This also makes it easier to separate them, if necessary.
- Ask a friend or family member to help. One person for each animal is a better ratio if it does not go well.
- Many small, short meetings, which build to longer time together, can help relieve stress. You do not need to have everyone together all the time from the first moment your Foster animal comes home.

Feeding Your Foster Pet

Feeding Schedule

Create a consistent schedule for feeding your foster pet. Feed at the same time every day. Create a separate space for your foster animal to eat so that he/she will feel comfortable. If you have other pets at home, **feed your foster pets in a separate room** and close the door - this will help prevent any arguments or worries over food. **Do not feed any "people food."** You do not know what the adoptive family will want to do, so don't start a habit that they will have to break. By feeding only pet food, you are discouraging begging.

It is not uncommon for animals to be finicky eaters when they are in a new environment. If they do not eat heartily for the first day or so and are otherwise acting healthy, do not fret! Feel free to contact the Foster Coordinator if you are concerned. Sometimes adding water or can food will make it more palatable. Avoid adding too many goodies to their food as we don't want them getting into any habits that will be hard to change later. (You can pamper them, just don't spoil them rotten!) ☺

Amount of food

Feeding will depend on the age, size, and species of your foster and the veterinarian's advice. In general feeding will be as follows:

- **Adult**: dry adult food twice a day, once in the morning and once at night.
- **Mothers with Babies**: dry puppy or kitten food (extra calories), three times a day.
- **Adolescent** (4 months-1 year*)*: dry food, twice a day
- **Weaned** (6-8 weeks-4 months*):* dry food three to four times a day. Moisten the food with water or formula if needed to get them to eat.
- **Un-weaned** (4-8 weeks): canned food at 4 weeks. Introduce dry food at 5 weeks and gradually change toward mostly dry food week by week 6. At 8 weeks, they should eat straight dry kibble. Babies of this age need to be fed four times a day.

Weight of Puppy (pounds)	2-4 Months	4-9 Months	10-12 Months
2	½ cup	3/8	1/3
5	1	7/8	2/3
8	1 ½	1 ¼	1
10	1 ¾	1 ½	1 1/8
20	3	2 ½	2
40	5	4	3 ¼
60	6 2/3	5 ½	4 1/3
80	8 ¼	6 ¾	5 ½
100	9 ¾	8	6 ½
120	11 ¼	9 ¼	7 1/2

Weight of Adult Dog (pounds)	Cups of Dry Food
5	3/8 – 5/8
10	2/3 – 1
20	1 ¼ - 1 2/3
40	2 – 2 2/3
60	2 2/3 – 3 2/3
80	3 1/3 – 4 2/3
100	4 – 5 1/2

Weight of Kitten (pounds)	1-4 Months	4-6 Months	7-12 Months & Mothers
1	¼		
2	3/8	1/3	
3	½	3/8	
4	5/8	½	
5	¾	5/8	½
10		1 1/8	7/8
15			1 1/8

Weight of Cat (pounds)	Cups of Dry Food
5	¼ - 1/3
10	3/8 – 5/8
15	5/8 – 3/4

What to Expect from Your Foster Animal

Allow time for adjustment. It may take some time, though it usually takes about 24 hours for a dog to settle in, sometimes longer. Cats may take a week or more. Watch their behavior closely. On the average, Foster parents have their foster animals for 2-4 weeks. While this amount of time will not be long enough to fully train your foster pet, it will be enough time to give him a good foundation for his new family. Ask the Foster Coordinator before beginning to train your foster animal. Your foster dog may have been traumatized or stressed in a variety of ways before he came to you, so we need to be careful about how he is handled. You will be teaching him that people are good and can be trusted. You should handle and work with him every day. If he shows any signs of aggression or fear (growling over food or toys, biting, or hiding), contact your Foster Coordinator.

Children and Your Foster Pet

Children under 12 years old should NOT be left alone and unsupervised with a foster pet. Do not allow children to behave with the foster pet in a manner you would not want the child to behave with a younger sibling. Teach children to leave a foster alone when he is eating, chewing, sleeping, or any time he is in his crate.
Allow your foster pet to have its space. Observe its behavior and if it is moving away from a child or animal, allow it to be alone. If its space is not respected, it may feel threatened.

Positive Potty Training

Be patient with your foster animal. Even housetrained adult animals will make mistakes - especially if they have been at the shelter for a long time and have been going to the bathroom in their kennel. Be sure to take it out every 15 minutes when it first gets home and reward for good potty habits. Doing so allows the animals to learn your routine and what is acceptable to you. You can make trips out less frequent as the pet continues to do the right thing, but be careful of making too large of leaps in time. **Set your foster pet up for success so you both can be happier!**

If there are smells in your house from another dog or cat, some animals may "mark" out their territory. This action should be re-directed immediately by bringing the dog outside where he can finish. You will then want to use some odor neutralizer on the areas where the foster dog "marked" to increase the odds that he will not smell that area again.

You can begin to housetrain a puppy as soon as they can walk well. Even if you bring home an adult dog that is house trained, you will want to follow these guidelines for the first couple of weeks or days as necessary, as the dog adjusts to its new situation and to your schedule.

Determine where you want your foster dog to eliminate. It could be the backyard, side yard, or newspaper. When you have determined where he should do his business, take him to the same place every time, and tell him to "go potty." Take him out when he wakes up, after he eats or drinks, after a play session, or at least every two hours.

Puppies should go out every hour. Stand with him for 5 minutes. If he eliminates, praise him. If he does not go in five minutes, take him back inside, place him in his crate, and try every 15 minutes until he goes. After he has urinated and defecated, you can allow him to play.

Supervise the puppy closely while you are inside. If he starts to go, scoop him up quickly and take him to the approved spot. Keeping him confined to the room that you are in with gates, doors or leashing him to you will keep him from going in a quiet area of the house without your knowledge.

Praise when he finishes. If he goes in the house while you are not paying attention do not correct him, but remember that puppies have to be watched when they are loose in the house. Make sure you learn what he does before he relieves himself so that you can get him outside in time. Most dogs sniff the floor and either walk quickly or go in a circle just before they relieve themselves. If you see your foster dog doing this, quickly take him outside! Clean it up and go back to your schedule. Use an odor neutralizer to get rid of the smell.

Never put the dog's face in his mess, or yell at him after the fact. He will not understand you, and you will be teaching him to fear you. A common result is that the dog or puppy will find a hidden place in the house to relieve himself, such as in the dining room or guest bedroom.

Housetraining Cats

Most cats prefer to relieve themselves in a litter box, but they may not remember where it is if they are given too much freedom too soon or if your house is large and he is on the opposite end when the urge hits. For the first couple of weeks or days in your home, a foster cat or kitten should be enclosed in a small room where his litter box is any time you are not watching him. This room should also contain bedding, toys, food and water on the opposite side of the room from the litter box.

Some cats will not use a litter box that is soiled, even a little bit, so it is important to scoop the litter box every day or twice a day, and completely clean it once a week. If a cat was used to going outside before he came to the AAS, he may not want to use a litter box, but many of these cats will use the litter box if you sprinkle grass clippings or leaves from your yard over the top of the litter. Use yard scraps that have not been exposed to lawn chemicals! Do not allow a foster cat to go outside your home! Talk with the Foster Coordinator if you have problems with the cat not using the litter box even if confined.

Quality Time with Your Foster Pet

Lots of human contact is important for recovering, sick, injured or neglected animals. Human handling is especially important for the healthy development of puppies and kittens.

Attention/Playtime is a reward for your foster pet. Be sure to give your foster pet several minutes of playtime periodically through the day. If you have a shy or fearful animal, do not throw toys toward him or her, because he may think you are throwing things at him and become more fearful. When giving a dog a toy or treat, try to have him sit before giving it to him. That way he has to work to get the toy or treat - making the toy a reward.

If you are fostering puppies or kittens, **make sure they have many new experiences**, so that they are well socialized and will be adaptable as an adult. Since it's best not to take puppies out in public until they are fully vaccinated, bring new experiences to them. Have friends over and invite children over to play. Always supervise playtime with children and dogs closely! Take your foster puppy in car rides (crate them for safety) to get used to the car and not just going to the Vet. Keep in mind that puppies need to go to the bathroom frequently so be sure they eliminate before you go on a car ride, and keep the ride brief, since they will have to go again soon.

Off-leash Areas – NO OFF-LEASH PARKS

All foster dogs are required to be on leash at all times, and keeping a dog leashed in a dog park is risky. **DO NOT bring puppies to any park or pet store**. Puppies are not yet fully vaccinated and can easily pick up a virus, particularly the Parvo virus, through contact with feces and urine in areas where other dogs congregate.

How to Make Your Foster Pet More Adoptable

Our homeless animals benefit greatly from the exercise (exception of any medical condition), basic training, special love, and any attention you give them. Providing them with basic training and manners will increase their adoptability. Shy animals will benefit from your patience, a consistent routine and slowly exposing them to new people to build their confidence. Puppies and kittens need a lot of love, attention, and hand holding from humans to develop properly and feel secure. Puppies and kittens need socialization with other dogs or cats in your household. Read the handout on basic training for more tips on how to help your foster pet!

Interactions with the Public

Should you have a member of the public, someone not directly related to you or is not your close friend become interested in your animal and wish to visit with the animal, please do so only at the shelter during normal operating hours. Going to their home or having them come to your home is prohibited. When in the shelter for adoption events or meet-and-greets, please wear your volunteer shirt and remember that you are representing the shelter to the public. Additionally, any personally identifiable information that you may come across regarding the origins of the animal(i.e. address where found, domestic abuse) are to remain confidential at all times unless discussing a need with shelter staff member only.

Fostering for Outside Organizations

Foster parents cannot foster animals from the City of Arlington Animal Services Center at the same time as they are fostering animals from another organization. The shelter cannot attest to the health or treatment of animals belonging to outside organizations. If you are fostering for another organization, please wait until all of those animals have left your home, and you have sterilized their living space, to foster for the shelter.

Splish Splash – Time to Take a Bath

Bathing your foster pet can be a really great way to bond with them! It's also another way to help them get used to life in a loving home. Pets coming into the shelter may not have much experience with baths and it is good for them to learn that they aren't scary at all. Most importantly, once clean they are so much more enjoyable to snuggle!!

Bathing Dogs and Puppies

You are welcome to bathe your foster dog inside or out in the yard, weather permitting. Sometime it's easiest to scrub the little ones in the sink! Remember to go slow and give them lots of praise and reassurance. Keep them on a leash, so that they can't run off. If using a hose or sprayer, make sure the water isn't too hot or cold and that it isn't spraying too hard. It's important to keep this as positive as possible so they learn that baths are something to look forward to – it's a full body massage!

Consider when flea and tick preventative was last used or will be again before bathing.

You can use most any soap or shampoo to wash your foster dog. Shampoos formulated for dogs are certainly a great choice and Dawn is great in a pinch! More important than the type of shampoo used is how thoroughly you rinse them. Rinse for **twice** as long as you think they need. Residue left in the fur can cause itchiness and irritation. Keep this in mind if you are using conditioner too.

Use a towel to dry your foster dog as much as possible. You definitely want to avoid that "wet dog" smell! Hair dryers and blowers can be very frightening to most dogs. Please use your best judgment if considering the use of one.

Contact the Foster Coordinator before taking your foster dog to a bathing facility or groomer.

Bathing Kittens (Not Cats)

Kittens can get very messy, particularly if they aren't feeling well or they are learning to eat on their own. This condition is affectionately known as "scuzzy kitten" in the animal welfare world.

Kittens can be bathed in the sink. Dawn is the only acceptable soap to use. The most important aspect of bathing kittens is temperature. They don't regulate heat well and can get too cold and get sick very quickly. The water needs to be a warm as you'd use for a shower. Unless you like it really hot, you don't want to scorch them either. Soap and scrub them thoroughly. Keep the soap and water out of eyes and ears.

Dry with a towel immediately after taking them out of the warm water. Once thoroughly towel dried, finish drying with a hair dryer set on WARM. They must be completely dry. Most kittens will then take a really good nap after the traumatic event of a bath, so try to feed them first.

HEALTH CARE AND MEDICAL ISSUES

If you have any questions regarding your foster animal, **contact the Foster Coordinator at 214-500-0805.** They are on call all day every day and will get back to you as soon as possible. In case of an emergency during business hours and you cannot reach the Foster Coordinator, you can contact Stephen Anthony at stephen.anthony@arlingtontx.gov or 817-459-6397.

The Foster Program Coordinator gathers the needed information from the Foster volunteer regarding the health issues and schedules an appointment if necessary.

Shelter & Clinic Hours of Operation
Monday through Friday 10:00 am until 6:00 pm Saturdays 10:00 am until 4:00 pm

Even if your foster animals appear healthy when you pick them up from the Animal Care Center, they may be incubating a disease. This is why it is important to observe the 7-10 day quarantine period when you first bring your foster home. **It is very important that your companion animals of the same species be current on all vaccines for their own protection and well-being.** You may wish to discuss the fact that you are fostering with your veterinarian. Due to the increased chance of exposure to animals with diseases, your veterinarian might recommend vaccines that are not routinely given.

Common Illnesses and Medical Conditions

- **URI**- Upper Respiratory Infection can infect dogs and cats. Cats cannot give URI to dogs, nor can dogs give it to cats, but it can be spread within the same species.
  Symptoms include sneezing, coughing, discharge from the nose or eyes, lethargy, loss of appetite and elevated temperature.
- **Diarrhea**- Generally, feces should be brown and formed. Diarrhea can be a symptom of many different illnesses and parasites. Diarrhea can also be caused by overfeeding, especially in puppies. If your foster animal develops diarrhea, you will need to bring a sample of the most normal part of the stool into the Animal Care Center so that the necessary diagnostic tests can be run. Feed a bland diet of cooked white rice and boiled chicken (3 parts rice to 1 part meat) until the diarrhea subsides.
- **Dehydration**- Animals with diarrhea can quickly become dehydrated. To check for dehydration, pull up gently on the skin at the scruff of the neck. If it bounces back quickly when you let go, hydration is fine. If it does not go back or goes back slowly, your foster animal is dehydrated and needs medical attention quickly.
- **Fleas**- Fleas can affect dogs and cats. A foster animal with fleas will be given a general flea treatment called Capstar or a flea bath depending on the severity of the fleas and the age of the animal. **Do not use any over the counter flea treatments at all.** If you notice fleas within a week of having the animal in your home, call the Foster Program Coordinator. Although we do try to prevent fleas, we recommend that all of your pets be on a flea preventative such as Frontline or Advantage.
- **Worms**- Your foster will be tested and, if necessary, treated for worms before coming to your home. If you detect worms in your foster's stool, contact the Foster Administrator to arrange for treatment. Tapeworms resemble a grain of rice, and roundworms resemble spaghetti.

Signs and Symptoms of Pain and Illness

The best way to monitor your foster pet's health it to **know what is normal and report what is not. The vet will always ask about food and water intake, energy level, and for a fecal sample.**

Dog and cat owners, who recognize the early signs and symptoms of illness or pain in their animals, will not only relieve the animal's suffering but may also be able to save themselves a trip to the veterinarian. Not only is it important to recognize these signs early to relieve pain and suffering, but it is much more effective to treat an illness when it is detected early.

The foster parent should keep an accurate and detailed account of their animal's symptoms to help the veterinarian correctly diagnose and effectively treat the dog's or cat's illness or condition. Most illnesses are detected through a combination of various signs and symptoms:

- Sneezing and or coughing
- Squinting or crusting over of eyes
- Wheezing
- Vomiting
- Straining to urinate or defecate
- Twitching abnormally
- Change in attitude or behavior
- Breathing heavily
- Green mucus from the nose or eyes
- Gagging
- Tiring easily
- Diarrhea
- Bleeding from any part of the body
- Loss or decrease of appetite
- Lethargic or depressed
- Rectal temperature over 102.5 degrees

If your foster animal develops severe or bloody diarrhea, severe vomiting or is very lethargic, contact the Foster Coordinator immediately.

Temperature, Respiratory, and Heart Rate

A newborn puppy will have a temperature of 94-97° F that will eventually reach the normal adult body temperature of 101.5° F at the age of 4 weeks old. Take care when trying to take your dog or puppies temperature as the thermometer can easily be broken off in the canine's rectum. In addition, any form of excitement can cause the temperature to rise by 2-3° when the dog is actually in normal health. Should your dog's temperature reach 105° or above OR 96° or below please contact Dennis Finigan immediately!

An adult dog will have a respiratory rate of 15-20 breaths per minute (depending on such variables as size and weight) and a heart rate of 80-120 beats per minute. You can feel for your dog's heartbeat by placing your hand on his/her lower ribcage just behind the elbow. Don't be alarmed if the heartbeat seems irregular compared to a human's heartbeat, it is irregular in many dogs. Have your vet check it out and get used to how it feels when it is normal.

Behavior Changes

Behavior changes that are not associated with a change in the household atmosphere, such as jealousy over a new pet, child or adjusting to a new home and environment may be an indication of an illness. Signs of behavioral changes may be:

Depression (decreased or ceased activity)
Anxiety
Fatigue
Sleepiness
Trembling
Falling/Stumbling

If your foster pet shows any of these signs, it needs to be kept under close watch for a few hours, or even a few days, until positive signs develop or it has returned to normal. Do not try to exercise the animal or put him in any situation that may cause stress. Our veterinarian will want you to keep track of when the symptoms first appeared, whether they are getting better or worse, and whether the symptoms are intermittent, continuous, or increasing in frequency. Put your Observation Log to use and track any changes to show the vet.

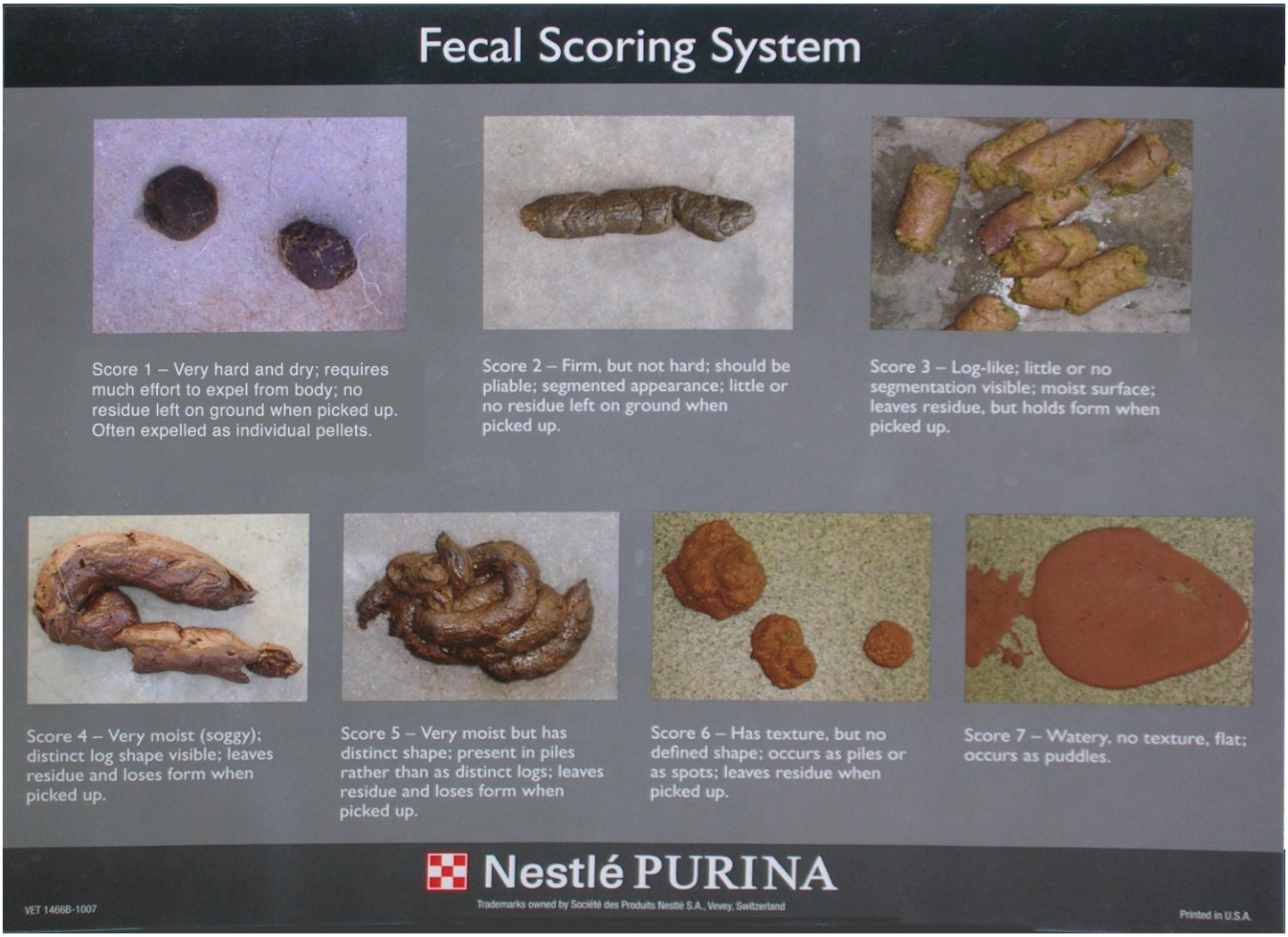
Dogs in Pain

Dogs that are in pain will likely indicate that they are suffering by giving you clues as to where the area of discomfort is. For instance, a dog that has abdominal pain will continually glance toward their belly, bite or lick the area, and will not want to leave his bed. The dog may stand hunched over, or take the 'prayer position' which is when a dog gets down on it's forelegs with the hind legs still standing, because of the pain in her abdomen area.

Dogs cannot tell you that they are hurting or cry real tears but a dog may vocalize their pain in a different way. A dog that is hurt suddenly (such as being stepped on) will cry out or whimper in pain. This also happens when an external injury or internal injury (such as an organ) is touched. Whining or vocalization that is unprovoked may be caused from an internal injury as well. Some breeds of dogs (such as the American Pit Bull Terrier) have a higher pain threshold and need to be watched more closely for signs of pain. Breeds with a high pain tolerance are more likely to endure the pain without vocalization.

Another clue to pain is a change in temperament. A dog that is in pain may show signs of aggression. Please take note of this before concluding that a dog has become vicious and let your veterinarian know so that the correct treatment can be administered. Also animals in general have days when they are just in a bad mood for no obvious reason. Take note of days of times that these mood swings occur as well as any events that might have triggered them.

The Scoop on Poop



Cats in Pain

Cats often disguise their pain so that it's difficult to tell they are feeling bad until they are very sick. Therefore it is especially important to keep an eye on Foster cats' behavior. Cats that don't feel well may do one or more of the following:

- Hide
- Sleep even more than usual
- Be irritable and avoid being touched
- Growl, hiss, swat or try to escape when you touch them or try to hold them.
- Stop eating, grooming, or using the litter box
- Sit hunched up
- Move around, unable to get comfortable

If you suspect your foster cat or kitten is in pain, contact the Foster Coordinator for advice.

Other Signs that Your Foster May Be Sick

• Ears: discharge, debris, odor, scratching, crusted tips, twitching or shaking.
• Eyes: redness, swelling or discharge.
• Nose: runny, thickened, or colored discharge, crusty.
• Coughing, sneezing, vomiting or gagging.
• Shortness of breath, irregular breathing or prolonged/heavy panting
• Evidence of parasites in the stool, strange color, blood in the stool, or lack of a bowel movement (constipation).
• Loss of appetite or not drinking as much water as normally would.
• Weight Loss.
• Strange color of urine, small amount of urine, straining, dribbling, or not going as frequently as normal.
• Bad odor coming from mouth, ears, or skin.
• Hair loss, wounds, tumors, dander or change of the skin's color.
• Biting of the skin, parasites, scratching or licking the skin frequently.

If any of these symptoms occur over a prolonged period of time, please call Dennis Finigan at 214-500-0805.

Administering Medication

Do not ever treat foster pets with over the counter medications or medications prescribed for other pets. Always contact Dennis Finigan if you are concerned about your foster pets' health.

Administering Pills to Cats

If the pill can be given with food, try hiding it in a piece of food. A small amount of butter, tuna, cream cheese, liverwurst, canned food or semi-moist food like Pounce is often used. This method rarely works with cats. If your cat will not take the pill in food or cannot have food with the medication:
Have the pill out and in a convenient place.
Bring the cat to the place you will give the pill, while talking to him or her in a happy, light voice.
Ask to be shown how to correctly —scruff a cat.

Burrito Wrap:
Sometimes it is helpful to wrap the cat in a blanket or a large towel so just his or her head is sticking out.

1. Place the cat between your knees or at eye level on a table.
2. Hold the pill between your thumb and index finger of your dominant hand.

3. Using your other hand, gently but firmly grasp the cat's head from above with your thumb on one side and your finger on the other.
4. Tilt the cat's head back so he or she is looking at the ceiling. The cat's lower jaw will automatically drop a bit.
5. Place one of your free fingers from the hand holding the pill between the lower canine teeth (long front teeth) and push down.
6. Quickly place the pill as far back in the cat's mouth as possible, making sure it is over the hump of the tongue. Do not place your hand too far into the cat's mouth because it might gag.
7. Close the cat's mouth. Hold it closed, lower his or her head to a normal position and gently rub or blow on the cat's nose to stimulate swallowing.
8. You can use a syringe to squirt some water into their mouth after you've given the pill to encourage the swallowing.
9. Talk softly to and stroke the cat or give another type of treat.

Liquid Medication to Cats

1. Start with the burrito wrap: wrapping the cat's body and legs tightly in a towel leaving only its head sticking out.
2. Insert the dropper between the cheek and teeth while tilting the chin upward.
3. Slowly dispense the medication, remembering not to give it faster than the cat can swallow. The quicker you do this, the more cooperative the cat will be.

Refrigerated medication MUST be kept in the refrigerator.

Administering Pills to Dogs

If the medication can be given with food; the easiest way to give pills is to hide it in a piece of food. A small amount of butter, peanut butter, cream cheese, canned food or liverwurst is often used.
If the dog will not take the pill in food or cannot have food with the medication:

1. Have the pill out and in a convenient place.
2. Calmly approach the dog using a happy voice.
3. Sometimes putting the dog on a surface off the floor is best, but this requires assistance.
4. Squeeze behind the upper canine teeth and tilt the animal's head back so he or she is looking at the ceiling. His or her jaw will automatically drop a bit.
5. Place one of the fingers from the hand holding the pill between the lower canine teeth (long front teeth) and push down.
6. Quickly place the pill as far back as possible inside the dog's mouth being sure to get it over the hump in the tongue. Do not place your hand in the dog's mouth too far because it might gag.
7. Close the dog's mouth and hold it closed while you gently blow or rub his or her nose. This will stimulate swallowing.
8. You can use a syringe to squirt some water into their mouth after you've given the pill to encourage the swallowing.

Liquid Medication to Dogs-

1. Insert the dropper between the upper and lower teeth in the back and tilt the chin upward.
2. Slowly administer the medication while being careful not to go faster than the dog can swallow.

Always remember to praise the dog and even offer a treat after the medication. This will make administering medication easier in the future.

Applying Eye Drops and Ointments-

1. Before administering eye medication, be sure the eye is clear of discharge. You can use warm water on a cotton ball to gently clean around the eyes.
2. Use your thumb and forefinger to open the eyelid.
3. With your other hand, place 1-2 drops (as directed) or a small amount of ointment on the eye or the pink tissue around the eye.

The foster animal will blink and the medication will cover the entire eye. When applying medication to the eye, try to avoid the animal's direct line of vision when approaching and **avoid touching the eye with the container of medication.**

Follow Up Exams and Rechecks

Puppies and kittens will have their follow up visit requirements on your foster information sheet – please follow it. Kittens and puppies that go to foster care before they are six weeks old will get their first round of vaccinations at six weeks of age. Although in many cases they can be approved to go up for adoption at that time, kittens and puppies must weigh 2 lbs. to be sterilized. If they weigh less than 2 lbs. at the time of their exam, you will be asked to keep them until they weigh enough for sterilization. Kittens and puppies stay in their foster home until they are 2 pounds AND 2 months of age.

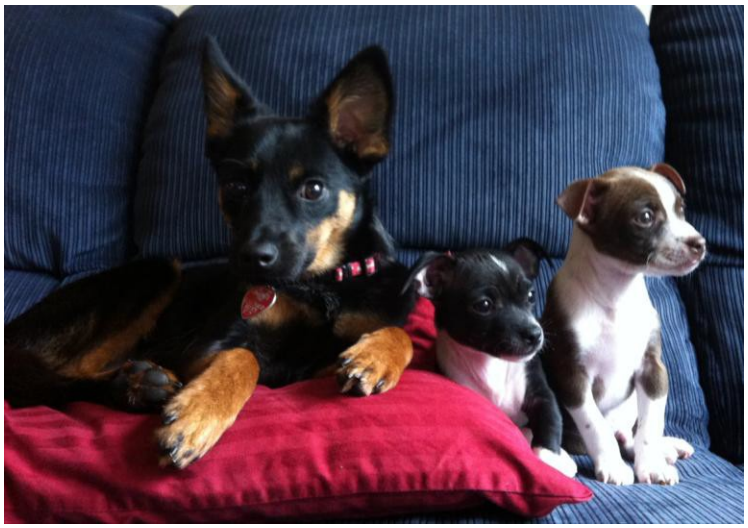
Some exams will need to be scheduled (sick animals or animals just recovering from an illness, surgical recuperations, etc.) **You must call the Foster Administrator during weekdays to schedule veterinary exams.**

It is critical that you keep any appointment you make. Please be sure to email the Foster Administrator with any information regarding your foster pet's health so that they may pass it on to the vet. Not all vet exams will take place in exam rooms. Please be respectful if you are in a staff-only area of the Vet Center for the exam. If you have concerns or questions about the medical advice from the Vet Center, please contact the Foster Administrator.

Please be prepared with the following information when you bring your foster animal to either the Vet Center or an Evaluator:

- Is the animal eating regularly?
- Is the animal drinking regularly?
- Does the animal have diarrhea?
- Activity level
- Date of last medications given
- When were the last signs of illness observed?
- **A fecal sample is always appreciated!**

All veterinary care for your foster animal should be done at the shelter. If you choose to take your foster animal to a private practice veterinarian without our permission, our organization will not reimburse you for any costs incurred.



Weekly Pet
Health Checklist

Detecting potential health problems before they become serious can save your pet unnecessary suffering and save you great worry and expense. Once a week, see whether you can answer true to all of the statements in this list.

If a statement is *not* true, call the Foster Coordinator as soon as possible.

My Pet…

- ☐ Is acting normally and is in good spirits.
- ☐ Doesn't tire easily from moderate exercise
- ☐ Has a normal appetite
- ☐ Has not lost or gained much weight
- ☐ Has not vomited
- ☐ Produces normal stools
- ☐ Produces normal urine
- ☐ Doesn't drag bottom or chew tail excessively
- ☐ Has a full coat with no missing hair or mats
- ☐ Doesn't scratch, lick or chew excessively
- ☐ Has healthy skin with no dry flakes, greasy feel, or bad odor
- ☐ Doesn't have fleas or ticks
- ☐ Doesn't have any lumps or bumps on body
- ☐ Has clean ears with no debris or order
- ☐ Doesn't shake head or scratch at ears excessively
- ☐ Has bright eyes that are free of matter
- ☐ Has normal hearing and reacts as usual to environment
- ☐ Moves and walks without stiffness or pain
- ☐ Has healthy feet and short nails
- ☐ Breathes without straining or coughing
- ☐ Has normal thirst and drinks plenty of water
- ☐ Urinates without straining
- ☐ Has a moist nose that's free of discharge
- ☐ Has pink gums with no redness
- ☐ Doesn't sneeze more than 2-3 times a day

All pet owners and Foster Volunteers should be constantly aware of any changes in their pets' health.

Using this checklist **EVERY WEEK** will help ensure that your pets basic health is being monitored, and alert you to any "out of the ordinary" conditions.

This information is for general guidance only. Should you have any concerns on any health issue relating to your foster pet, you should contact Dennis Finigan as soon as possible.

Dennis Finigan • Cell 214-500-0805 or Stephen Anthony • Office 817-459-6397

IT'S SO HARD TO SAY GOOD-BYE:
Returning Your Foster Pet

When Do Puppies and Kittens return to the Shelter?

If you're fostering puppies or kittens, you can return them to the shelter when they are eating freely on their own and weigh 2 pounds or more, with occasional exceptions for very small breeds. This is at about 8 weeks of age. If your pup is old enough but developmentally slow, under socialized, or undernourished, you may keep the pup for a while longer (please keep the Foster Coordinator updated). Keep in mind that puppies between 2-4 months of age are highly marketable to prospective families who visit the shelter.

What Happens if My Foster Needs Foster Care Again After I Return Them?

If the shelter and veterinarian determine that the animal needs foster care again within the first 30 days after it is returned from foster, and if it has not been adopted and returned during that time, you will be contacted personally and offered the option to foster the same animal again. If the animal needs foster care at a time beyond 30 days after the return to the shelter, it will be treated as a new case and the request will be sent out in the daily mailing from the Foster Coordinator. If the animal needs foster care again but was adopted and returned at any time after his time as a foster in your home, he will be considered a new case and sent out in the general mailing.

What Happens if My Foster Animal Needs to Be Euthanized After Returning to the Shelter?

Shelter management carefully assess each animal before making a decision to euthanize. Our decisions are based on the animal's quality of life now and in the future considering his situation, chances of recovery, and other indicators of suffering or wellbeing. The decision to euthanize is never made lightly. Once we have made the decision to euthanize an animal it is no longer available for adoption to staff, volunteers (including fosters) or the public.

The Foster Administrator will contact you as soon as possible to let you know that the decision has been made and offer any support that they can.

Cleaning and Sanitizing Your Home

In order to prevent disease and parasite infestations in your home; thoroughly clean areas where the foster animal has stayed.

- Wash bedding in hot water, detergent and **bleach**.
- Discard non-washable surface toys.
- Disinfect all washable surfaces with a mild bleach and water solution (bleach/water ratio of 1:32 or 4oz of bleach per gallon of water is recommended). Bleach solutions should be prepared as needed, because they lose their strength after 24 hours. Bleach is inactive in the presence of organic matter so clean up dirt, hair, feces, etc. **before** using bleach to disinfect. **Bleach solution must stay in contact with the surface being sanitized for at least 10 minutes to be effective.**
- Vacuum all carpeted areas.
- Soak toys in bleach water for 20 minutes and scrub and bleach crates, carriers, scoops, food bowls and litter boxes.
- Clean any urine or feces soiled areas with an enzyme cleaner immediately to avoid residual odor (Nature's Miracle Stain and Odor Remover works well).
- Regularly clean up all waste in the yard to decrease the risk of spreading disease.

Quarantine Periods:

Sometimes an animal is sent into a home before evidence of a serious disease has manifested. Quarantine periods are used to allow infectious diseases to die off in the environment. This protects future foster animals from being infected with the virus or disease. Specific quarantine periods are as follows:

Feline Leukemia/FIV 3 days
Sarcoptic Mange 1 week
FIP or Canine Distemper 3 weeks
Ringworm 3 months
Panleukopenia or Parvovirus 8 months

If a foster animal is infected with one of the above illnesses, the foster parent will not be allowed to bring another foster into the home for the designated quarantine period.

Once you have returned your foster pet, you will not be able to take another case home for one week. This time period allows for you to clean thoroughly, to prevent "burn out," and to ensure that if your previous foster pet comes down with illness that you are able to care for it again.

Nine Ways to Become a Successful Foster Parent

1. **Divide your time between your foster animal and your own animal and give each lots of attention and affection.**
The animal you are fostering likely has special needs that require time and energy. The animal may have lived a difficult life before coming to your home; your love and attention will help to heal the animal's physical and psychological wounds.

2. **Learn as much as you can about pet care.**
Before you bring your foster animal home, learn as much as you can about caring for that animal. Read about feeding, grooming, and training. Study the warning signs that may indicate the animal needs veterinary attention.

3. **Make your home pet-friendly.**
Before you bring your foster animal home, make sure you "pet proof" your home. For example, remove poisonous plants and protect furnishings. Keep that animal's room warm and comfortable. Also, take steps to prevent the animal from escaping.

4. **Keep your pets up to date on their vaccinations.**
All animals should be current on the vaccinations that protect them from diseases. Before you bring home a foster animal, consult with your veterinarian to make sure your own animals have received that preventive treatment they need.

5. **Keep foster animals away from your own pets.**
A foster pet may come into your home harboring contagious diseases. Even though your pets are vaccinated against many diseases, it's a good idea to keep the foster animal away from your pets as an added precaution.

6. **Recognize your limits.**
Fostering requires a great deal of time and energy – both emotional and physical. Don't overextend yourself by fostering animals too frequently; you may burn yourself out.

7. **Return the animal to the shelter on time.**
The shelter depends on you to make its program work. Be sure to return the animal to the shelter at the scheduled time. If you decide to adopt an animal you foster, go through the shelter's normal adoption process. If a friend or relative wants to adopt the animal you are fostering, that person must go through the shelter's adoption process – not yours.

8. **Understand that some foster animals will not survive.**
Many animals that arrive at the shelter come from unknown backgrounds. Despite your best efforts, the animal you foster may develop a severe illness that cannot be treated. Do the best you can to help the animal, but accept the fact that you cannot save them all.

9. **Enjoy being a Foster parent!**
Although fostering takes a great deal of time and commitment, it can be an incredibly rewarding experience. You are temporarily providing a needy animal with a loving home and helping that animal become more suitable for adoption into a responsible lifelong home.