

Even one litter, as you can see from the one you are bringing to us now, makes a difference in the pet overpopulation crisis plaguing our country.

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

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

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

Underage Kitten Care

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

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

References:

The Guide to Handraising Kittens by Susan Easterly

Kitten Fostering Handbook by Cat Care Society

<http://www.alleycat.org/pdf/basickittencare.pdf>

<http://www.maddiesfund.org/help/kittens.html>



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

Young kittens are so cute, yet they present a very difficult situation for shelters like PHS/SPCA that are required by contract to provide their cities' and County's animal control work. Unless we have volunteers willing and ready to take these kittens into their homes for a short fostering period, we are left with just one choice -- euthanizing the kittens. Let us explain....

Kittens under eight weeks of age are not yet old enough to be held at our shelter and are considered underage. Young kittens have an immature immune system; they are highly susceptible to a variety of illnesses and we are unable to keep kittens for an extended length of time. Additionally, the 'round the clock care kittens require is beyond our resources. Further, the County, which has contracted us for dog and cat sheltering services, does not subsidize the cost of caring for kittens under the age of eight weeks.

Our trained staff uses a variety of physical characteristics to estimate their age. These include the age/size, physical coordination, eye color, ability to care for themselves (eat/drink/urinate/defecate) and other physical characteristics.

We **may** be able to place underage kittens into a foster home. However, this depends on the age and health of the kittens as well as available resources. **We cannot guarantee that any kittens will go to a foster care provider or will be placed for adoption. In fact, when we have underage kittens and no foster care providers, it is almost a certainty that these kittens will be euthanized. It is important that you understand this sad reality before leaving a kitten with us.**

You may choose to care for these kittens in your home and return them to the shelter when they are eight weeks old. Even then, we are still unable to guarantee that any animal will be placed for adoption, though odds are certainly more favorable. If you choose to care for them during this critical period and to keep them, please have them spayed or neutered as soon as they can safely -- medically speaking -- have that surgery.

-- please see reverse --

**You can help animals with gifts of time and financial support.
Please call 650/340-7022, ext. 328 for volunteer opportunities, including
foster care. Donations can be sent to PHS/SPCA, 12 Airport Blvd.,
San Mateo, CA 94401, Attn: Development.**