FOSTER GUIDE BOOK





Quick Reference

TEN LIVES CAT CENTRE

Ten Lives Cat Centre

12 Selfs Point Road, New Town, Tasmania 7008

Telephone: 03 6278 2111

Opening hours

WEEKDAYS – We are open from 10am each morning and close at 4pm each afternoon.

WEEKENDS - On weekends, we are open from 10am until 4pm Saturday and CLOSED Sunday.

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS - We are CLOSED all public holidays.

AHVEC

AHVEC - After Hours Veterinary Emergency Centre

37 Derwent Park Rd, Moonah

Telephone: 1300 302 912

Opening hours

WEEKDAYS - Open from 6pm each evening and close at 8am each morning.

WEEKENDS - On weekends, AHVEC are available 24 hours, opening at 6pm Friday until 8am Monday morning.

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS - OPEN all public holidays.

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What to do if foster kitties get hurt or are unwell



Who to call and when

Monday - Saturday 10am - 4pm, Closed Sunday & Public Holidays

If your foster kitty becomes unwell or is injured during the above times, please refer to guidelines for sick cats and kittens in the Foster Care Guide Book. If medical advice and or treatment is required please call 6278 2111 during Centre opening hours. If the phone lines are busy and it is not a life-threatening emergency please leave a message with your full name, contact number and reason for your call. A staff member will return your call as soon as they can.

After Hours

If your foster kitty becomes unwell or is injured outside Centre opening hours and after referring to the guidelines for sick cats and kittens in the Foster Care Guide Book they require medical attention that cannot wait until the following day please call the afterhours emergency vet.

AHVEC on 1300 302 912

37 Derwent Park Rd, Moonah

Unsure if kitty needs to be seen after hours? The friendly staff at AHVEC will be happy to talk to you.

Welcome to the team

Thank you for opening your heart and home to help our cats and kittens that find themselves at the Centre for various reasons. Your assistance is invaluable whether you foster once or many times, even if you are fostering to adopt, you are helping the Centre to free up space for other cats and kittens that need our help. It also gives our foster cats and kittens a normal loving home environment while they get ready for their forever home.

This booklet will provide information you will need to know while fostering, please take the time to read through it. There are guidelines and contact numbers on the inside of the front cover for when your foster cat or kitten requires veterinary care. Please familiarise yourself with this information so you know what to do in the event of an emergency. Welcome aboard and let's get started!

Home sweet home

You've just collected your foster cat/kitten(s) from the Centre and arrived home, now what?

We recommend (in the initial stages) you provide them with one room, just until they settle in and get used to you. This will be less overwhelming for them and will reduce the chance for escape!

Once your foster cat/kitten(s) has settled in you can, very slowly, introduce them to other areas of the house and your animals if you wish, refer to the 'Introducing Cats to other Pets' hand-out supplied. In the initial stages, no one is likely to get on particularly well and your own pets may get very stressed. Some foster carers prefer to keep their fosters in one room or area (spare room or spare bathroom) for the whole duration of the fostering period which is fine, as long as they are getting lots of love and attention. Rooms need to be in a quiet area of the house, have a window for natural sun light and views, and be a comfortable temperature during cold and hot weather. Scared kitties that just want to hide may need a crate which will make them feel more secure and easier to handle, please contact the Centre for advice.

All foster cats are to remain indoors or in a fully enclosed cat run AT ALL TIMES!! Please make sure anyone living in your home or coming to visit is aware of this. Please take care when opening windows and doors, they can squeeze through very small openings. If a foster kitty does get out, please contact the Centre immediately.

Place litter tray, food and water bowls on opposite sides of the room where kitty will stay. You may want to tape down heavy duty plastic to protect carpets, but ensure ALL edges are securely taped to prevent kittens from crawling under and becoming trapped. A cardboard box with a large hole cut out of one side makes a great bed, hidey hole and play centre. Old towels or jumpers make nice warm bedding. Once this is set up let your kitty out of the carrier and sit quietly with them while they settle into their new surroundings.

Once your foster's confidence has improved let them out to explore other areas of the house a few rooms at a time, then they can have full run of the house if you wish. Relocating the litter tray it is best done by putting another tray with some old and new litter in it in the desired location, once used consistently remove the other tray. Food and water bowls should be kept together and can be moved to a more convenient location in the home. Keep trays close to play areas for kittens who get distracted playing and are likely to have accidents.



Dr Sophia Yin has wonderful information on her website for training cats, giving medications and dealing with some problem behaviours go to https://drsophiayin.com/category/cat_videos/

What's next?



- · Have fun, play, cuddle and spend time with your foster kitties.
- Expose them to as many different people, noises and household items as possible. Make it fun and enjoyable, not scary and stressful, i.e go slowly. Always reward good behaviour with praise and or a few bits of their dry food.
- Only feed food that has been provided or recommended.
- Provide fresh water daily (no milk or kitten milk please as this can cause diarrhoea).
- Scoop the poop daily, or more often for litters of kittens and change litter regularly.
- Only use organic plant or wood based litter. Clumping litter and clay litter is dangerous for kittens.
- Give all medication as prescribed. If you are not sure how to give the medication please ask the Centre for information or a demonstration.
- Record food input and waste output, medications and any other treatment on record sheets. Weigh kittens daily and put on record sheets.
- Young orphan kittens who are eating food will need faces etc wiped clean several times per day. Start with wiping faces first then move onto other areas of the body in need of cleaning. Always dry and keep warm after cleaning.
- Any queries contact the Centre on 6278 2111.
- Make appointments for any revisits, vaccinations or surgery when due by phoning 6278 2111 or emailing reception@tenlives.com.au.
- · Give worming and flea treatments when due.
- Read sections on Keeping Fosters Safe and make any changes necessary.
- Just like humans all cats and kittens booked in for surgery must fast prior to their anesthetic and surgical procedure. Please ensure they have no access to food from 10pm the night directly prior to surgery. Do not restrict water.

FOSTER CARE GUIDE BOOK

Keeping kittens and cats safe

PET SAFETY STARTS WITH YOU!

Like babies and toddlers cats and kittens have no concept of danger and easily get themselves into all sorts of trouble.

Home safety

Falls from high places can cause serious injury, ensure kittens do not have climbing access to curtain, book cases, wardrobe etc.

Looped curtain and blind cords pose **entanglement and strangulation** risks. Ensure curtains are folded up high out of their way, and cords are either split/cut at the loop or folded and pegged up high out of their reach.

Kittens will often chew electrical cords which puts them at risk of **electrocution**. Please ensure they are well supervised around any electrical cords.

Toilets, spas, filled baths, dishwashers and washing machines are all **drowning** hazards for kittens and cats. Always keep toilet lids down and the door shut, put up signs to remind others living in the house and visitors. Always empty baths immediately after use, and keep spa covers firmly in place when not in use. Please keep the doors to washing machines and dishwashers closed at all times and check when using that no one has snuck in.

Dryers, refrigerators and even ovens can be **fatal** if curious cats and kittens sneak into these while the doors are open.

Reclining chairs and some gym equipment are also dangerous for cats and kittens as they can become **caught** within the mechanism and seriously injured.



At Risk of **Electrocution**

At Risk of Drowning At Risk of Suffocation

THESE ITEMS ARE NOT CAT TOYS

Cat-proof your house by preventing cats having access these things:

- String, yarn, ribbon and dental floss
- Paper clips
- Pins and needles
- Rubber bands and hair ties
- Plastic bags (especially drycleaner bags-they could suffocate)
- Anything else that your cat might chew, including electrical cords.



Balls of wool may look innocent enough but due to the design of cats' tongues with fine barbs facing towards the back of the mouth it is very easy for them to ingest wool as they try to get it out of their mouth.

Wool once swallowed can cause a blockage or serious damage to the intestines which can be life threatening.

Cat toys with long cords or dangly bits are for supervised play only and must be stored in a cat-proof cupboard when you aren't around to control the stick. They are not good for unsupervised play as the pointy ends can cause damage to your foster cat/kittens eyes, mouth and body. The string on dangly toys, wool and other toys with long stringy parts are dangerous as they run the risk of strangling or choking cats or kittens.



Tinsel and fake "icicle" drapey stuff and most of the fun stuff on Christmas trees, are dangerous to cats. Cellophane grass used to line Easter baskets is also dangerous.

Put dangly toys like this away when not in use in a cupboard that cats/kittens cannot open and get into.





Rubber bands and hair elastics/ties are choking hazards and cats should not play with them as toys.

Other choking risks: small eyes and noses on soft toys can be swallowed or inhaled. Plastic bits can break apart, leaving sharp edges which can cut tummies on the inside. If toys need faces either use non toxic paints, non toxic permanent marker pens or sturdy embroidery. Stuffing can be made of cotton, kapok, polyester fibers, plastic, foam beads, etc and all are dangerous if they get out of the toy. Beads are a choking hazard. The polyester fibres are like string and cause internal damage. Cotton and kapok can block your pet's digestive tract. Keep a close eye on the seams, once they start to give way, replace the toy.

Check all toys for wear and tear daily and if broken bin it!

How to get the most out of your cat's toys

Like children, cats can become bored with their toys, keep them exciting by rotating toys frequently, making only a few available at a time. Keep a variety of types easily accessible. If your cat has a favorite, like a soft "teddy" that it loves to snuggle with, leave it with them all the time.

Provide toys that offer a variety of uses – at least one toy to carry, one to wrestle with, one to roll and one to snuggle with. "Hide and seek" is a fun game for cats to play. "Found" toys are often much more attractive than a toy that is obviously introduced.

Cats should have many interactive toys as this kind of play is important for cats, as they need active "people time" – and such play strengthens the bond between them and people.

How to make do-it-yourself cat toys

Here are some household items that make great cat toys:

- Round plastic shower curtain rings
- Ping-pong balls and plastic practice golf balls with holes. Try putting one in a dry bathtub; for many cats, the captive ball is much more fun than one that escapes under the sofa.
- Paper bags with any handles removed. Paper bags are good for pouncing, hiding and interactive play. Plastic bags are not a good idea; many cats like to chew and swallow the plastic. Plastic bags can also pose a risk of suffocation.
- Empty cardboard tubes from toilet paper and paper towels, unwind a little cardboard to get them started.
- Cardboard boxes. Fasten some together with strong packing tape and cut out doors and windows to make a fun cat play house.
- You (or your kids) may even enjoy making your own toys, such as felt mice stuffed with catnip. There are loads of ideas on the internet but remember to follow the toy safety guidelines above.







POISONS - Keeping kittens and cats safe

Please cat-proof your house by preventing kittens and cats having access to these things:

- All prescription, non prescription medication and illicit drugs
- All household cleaning products inc laundry detergents
- All chemicals and gardening products
- All flea products and medications that are used for dogs
- All pesticides as pyrethrum is very toxic to cats

Never give cats any over-the-counter medicine unless advised to do so by your vet, and never give or use dog products on cats.

People food can be toxic to cats

Many items commonly found on kitchen shelves, pantries and benches can harm your cat. Keeping food items where your cat can't get to them and keeping pantry and cupboard doors closed will help protect your cat from serious food-related illness.

If it isn't commercial cat food then it's not good for cats and can be dangerous for cats to eat.

Plants that are toxic to cats

Numerous house plants and cut flowers are toxic to cats. Lilies and all types of daffodils are especially toxic. All parts of these plants (flowers, leaves, steams, stamen and pollen) are extremely toxic to cats and have caused tragic deaths. Aloe vera which is good for people is toxic for cats.

If you have house plants and cut flowers in your house please check if they are toxic to cats. The Pet Poison Helpline website has an extensive list of toxic plants and other toxic substances around the home which you can access by using the following link

http://www.petpoisonhelpline.com/poisons/

DANGER

If your cat eats or comes into contact with any toxic plants or any other dangerous items, you will need to seek immediate veterinary assistance. We also recommend that you take part of the toxic plant with you for easy identification to help with treatment.

For any poisoning please call the Centre immediately or if afterhours call

AHVEC on 1300 302 912



DANGER

-Π

When to call the vet!

Non-emergency situations

Some situations below may not be an emergency but might still require medical attention. In these cases, contact the Centre on 6278 2111 to make an appointment. Some examples are:

- Sneezing but still bright and eating.
- Limping but not distressed.
- Blood in urine but able to urinate and otherwise bright.
- Blood in faeces with no other symptoms.

Helpful points to remember

If you have any concerns please contact either the Centre or AHVEC for advice.

Please DO NOT diagnose health issue yourself or use google search for advice.

Please DO NOT use any medications unless they have been specifically prescribed for that specific cat or kitten.

Err on the side of caution for kittens-they can go downhill quickly.

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Guidelines for sick cats and kittens



SYMPTOMS	COURSE OF ACTION
CHANGE IN BREATHING	
• rate? faster/slower	- if concerned about breathing and cat
 depth? shallow/deep 	/ kitten is flat / lethargic / depressed or distressed then take to vet immediately
 open mouth breathing? 	· if not sure phone for advice
• panting?	
• Gum colour? pale/blue	
DEMEANOUR	
 bright/alert/normal vs 	- if severe then take to vet immediately
 stressed/painful/distressed vs 	- if not sure phone for advice
 lethargic/quiet/slow vs 	- look out for other issues; the vet is likely to
 wobbly/disoriented vs 	ask about food and water intake, toileting, access to toxins, any injuries or wounds
• non-responsive	

SYMPTOMS	COURSE OF ACTION
SEIZURES	
 unconscious with thrashing, then periods of calm often collapsed onto side 	- count how long seizures last, how many, and how long between seizures if there are multiple
• salivating, loss of bladder and bowel control	- take to vet immediately if the cat or kitten has multiple seizures or is not coming out of seizure after a minute or two
	- phone for advice if cat or kitten only has one or two seizures lasting only a minute or two and now appears normal
TEMPERATURE	
нідн	нідн
feels hotlethargic/slow	- may not mean anything or may indicate a fever
	- if lethargic and not eating take to vet immediately
	- if otherwise bright, active and eating seek advice from the Centre during opening hours
LOW	LOW
feels coldlethargic/slow	- use a heat pad on low; cover with a towel and place in carrier; give them room to move off the heating pad if they get too hot
	- use a blow drier on low; do not hold drier in any one place for more than a second, keep it moving otherwise you can burn them
	- wrap kitten in towel that has been heated in drier or place directly on skin and cover with a warm towel
	- use latex glove filled with warm (not hot) water and use as a hot water bottle
	- take note of any changes in demeaner and seek medical advice if required

SYMPTOMS	COURSE OF ACTION
VOMITING	
• what's coming up?	- a one off vomit in an otherwise well cat or kitten > wait and see
 how frequently? diet change/access to human food/toxin access? 	- continual vomiting or an unwell animal that is vomiting > contact vet
 bright/happy vs lethargic/"sick" 	- withhold food from a vomiting cat for 6-8 hours (not for kittens), then start back on small amounts of food; if continuing to vomit contact vet. Keep water available
	- Please phone for advice for vomiting kittens
DIARRHOEA	
 change in diet? watery or puddle like? (score 6 - 7 on poo 	- changes in diet can cause diarrhoea, please be consistent and only feed food provided or recommended by the Centre
chart)	- refer to faecal chart below
• presence of blood, mucus, or worms?	- if cat or kitten is sick and faeces are very watery, very bloody, dark and runny, or rust coloured, isolate and contact vet
	- cherry red mucusy poo seek veterinary treatment immediately
	- sloppy poo in an otherwise well animal or a streak or drop of blood is not an emergency, please contact the Centre when open
PAIN / CRYING OUT	
 has there been an accidental injury 	- confine to crate or large carrier so further
• are there any bleeding wounds or sores, lumps or bumps?	damage is reduced and eating, drinking and toileting can be assessed, then make a vet appointment; depending on
• are they constipated?	the severity this may be able to wait till
• are they urinating?	morning, if unsure please call vet for advice - DO NOT give aspirin or any other type of pain medication

SYMPTOMS	COURSE OF ACTION
PAIN / CRYING OUT CONT.	
 has there been an accidental injury are there any bleeding wounds or sores, lumps or bumps? are they constipated? are they urinating? 	 if straining to go to the toilet try to assess if struggling to urinate or defecate; this may be difficult. Consider what has been seen in the litter tray that day UNABLE TO URINATE is a medical emergency, contact the vet immediately
NOT EATING	
WELL, NO SIGNS OF ILLNESS	 warm wet food up (add warm boiled water to food) or warm gently in microwave for a few seconds (stir and check food temperature before offering to cat or kitten) If only eating dry food try chicken only variety wet food either Hills or Frisky Feast seek advice if kittens have refused food for 4 - 6 hours, or cats have refused food for more than 12 - 24 hours
UNWELL, WITH OR WITHOUT OTHER SIGNS OF ILLNESS • only eating soft food • drooling? • vomiting? • diarrhoea? • lethargic?	- Seek veterinary advice
 CAT FLU sneezing ear and nose discharge bright/eating vs lethargic/anorexic 	 clean eyes and nose gently with a soft moist cloth or cotton balls. Use a separate cloth /ball for each eye and nose to reduce cross contamination feed warm wet food try to humidify the air (turn on hot shower and place kitty in a carrier in the bathroom safely away from the hot water) if lethargic and having trouble breathing contact vet immediately

SYMPTOMS	COURSE OF ACTION
WOUNDS	
 bleeding? pus oozing? painful? how long has it been there? 	- keep wounds clean; can use saline and cotton ball or pad
	- if minor and cat/kitten is bright, eating and there is minimal bleeding then call the Centre for an appointment during opening hours
• lethargic?	- if not sure of course of action call for advice
	- if bleeding profusely, cover wound, apply pressure if possible and take to vet as soon as possible
KITTENS NOT NURSING FROM QUEEN (MOTHER)	
• is mum stressed or uncomfortable?	- place mum and kittens in crate or large carrier in a quiet/dark area
• are mammary glands swollen, red and hot?	- friendly mum - may appreciate a pat or a soothing voice
 are kittens active enough to latch on? 	- if possible examine mammary glands and contact vet if you have any concerns or if glands are hot, red and shinny
	- try to help kittens latch on
	- if kittens are bright and trying to latch on contact vet
	- feral mums will prefer to be left alone with kittens in crate or large carrier in a quiet/ dark area
	- try not to disturb mums with kittens but keep and eye on them to make sure they are nursing and kittens are content i.e. sleeping well and not crying out
	- if kittens have not fed in 4-6 hours they will need to be fed kittens formula via a bottle and teat. These are available from the Centre or (AHVEC afterhours)
	- we recommend womberoo kitten formula (or divetelac as a second choice). Follow instructions when making up formula and pay attention to hygiene (wash bottles and teats thoroughly after use)

The INS and OUTS

It is important to record your foster kitty's inputs and outputs, the Centre has charts for you to record this information. It is very important to maintain a daily record of the kitten's weight up until they are at desexing weight (850g for smallest in the litter to 1 kg). This is the most effective way to determine if the kitten is happy and healthy or if something else is going on. If a kitten does not put on any weight in a 24 hr period or worse, loses weight, it needs to be taken seriously, especially for ones under five weeks of age. Kittens will not eat if there is something wrong. So do take note of their weight each day and make sure to record them and contact the Centre if you have any concerns.

- Kittens should put on approximately 10/20 grams p/day (approximately 100grams per week).
- If they lose weight or stay the same then something is wrong. Kittens can go downhill very quickly so even just missing one feed can be dangerous.

Weighing weaning kittens is exceptionally important and if possible needs to be done morning and night. This ensures that they are actually eating the food and not just getting it all over themselves .

Recording what they are eating and their poops is important. If diahorrea occurs we will first look at what they have been eating or if there has been a change in diet. The following page contains a poop chart that all the staff use at the Centre. You will notice they are numbered from score one to score seven, so if you call the Centre with a poop concern we are all taking about the same looking poop. Poo score of two and three are normal, score four may indicate things could be on their way to being a problem. Score five may indicate inflammation in the intestine and may require a change in diet to a lower carbohydrate food. Please contact the Centre in this situation for advice. Score six and score seven need veterinary attention as it may indicate bacterial or viral infection, please contact the Centre if this occurs.



Small digital kitchen scales can be used to weigh small kitten. Use a washable container that you can dedicate for this purpose. Distract wiggly kittens with a food treat (a piece of dry food or a small piece of cooked chicken meat with no skin or fat) held close to their nose, this will give you enough time to record their weight.

You could also use this opportunity to teach them to sit. Once, and only when their bottom is in a sit position say the word "sit" then offer them the food treat reward. If you do this every time you weigh them they will soon get the idea. Once they are continually sitting for their treat you can then ask them to sit.

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Oops! How to deal with inappropriate toileting

Before we can prevent inappropriate toileting we need to work out why it's happening.



Cats are exceptionally clean animals and don't like dirty litter trays, faecal matter needs to be removed and disposed of straightway. If using a single base tray they need to be washed and changed daily, cats do not like wet urine soaked litter trays and will look for a clean dry place to use instead. Double sieve trays with wood pellets are good at preventing toileting issues and on many occasions, can solve litter problems. They are easy to use and use less litter per day compared to standard single trays and litter. What sets this tray type apart from other litter trays is the urine goes through the top sieve and into the

bottom tray so the cats feet stay dry, and the bottom tray is emptied daily or every other day. If you have more than one cat or kitten then you will need several trays. Very young kittens will find the sieve trays too high to get in so low single trays are best when then are first learning to use a tray. Once bigger you can change to sieve trays.

Never use clay based or crystal type litters as they are exceptionally dangerous for kittens. Dust from clay based litter is easily inhaled or ingested by either eating directly or indirectly from licking dust from fur and feet. The dust can either enter the airways causing respiratory issues or set as a mass in their digestive tract, both resulting in a very sick kitten. Crystal litter is often eaten by young curious kittens and can be toxic.

Cats do not like their food, water and litter next to each other. It is important these items are not too far apart for young kittens who are just learning to use a tray and will use it more frequently than adult cats. When a cat goes into a new environment it is important to have the litter and food etc a few metres apart and not down the other end of the house or down stairs as this will be too hard for the cat to remember in its new surroundings. It's recommended that you start with the litter where you want it to be long term and then once they have settled in move the food away to a different area. Some cats will not like their tray in a busy or noisy area with lots of movement of people or other animals.

So what to do if accidents occur and you are doing all of the above? Cleaning with the right product is essential. Any products containing **bleach should not be used** as they contain ammonia which attracts the cat to urinate in the area more. For urine use paper towel or absorbent cloths to soak up the urine till the area feels dry.



Mix Biozet laundry liquid, available from supermarkets, with water as you would to wash garments by hand and soak the area with this liquid by using a clean cloth or a spray bottle to do this. Leave on for five minutes then blot until dry and repeat the process, finish by blotting dry with a clean cloth. All cloths can then be washed as normal using Biozet. If cats and kittens have free access to bedrooms and areas where clothing are stored avoid using any bleach products to wash clothes and bedding as this may attract cats to urinate in these places.

Sometimes crating kittens short term when you are unable to supervise them will help get them on track to using the litter tray. We recommend having a litter tray in the crate as well as one outside the crate so they can chose which one to use. Once kittens get the hang of it they will happily use their tray. We loan out large dog crates if problems are occurring.

Be aware that sometimes inappropriate toileting can be a sign of illness and if urinating frequently a veterinary appointment to check urine for infection or crystals in necessary. Any cat or kitten that is straining to urinate but not passing anything must see a veterinarian immediately.

Fecal scoring



Score 1-

residue left on Oten expelled Very hard and to expel from ground when dry; requires as individual much effort picked up. body; no pellets.

residue left on ground when appearance; Firm, but not hard; should segmented be pliable; little or no picked up. Score 2 -

Score 3 -

surface; leaves Log-like; little segmentation visible; moist when picked esidue, but holds firm or no ġ

and loses form leaves residue shape visible; when picked (soggy); distinct log Very moist Score 4 ġ

Very moist but and loses form leaves residue when picked distinct logs; has distinct piles rather present in Score 5 than as shape; ġ

but no defined shape; occurs and piles or as residue when spots; leaves Has texture, picked up. Score 6 -

Score 7 -

texture, flat; Watery, no occurs as puddles.

