

## CARE OF ORPHAN KITTENS

### IMMEDIATE CARE

The newly found kitten is usually chilled (body cool to the touch, may cry constantly) and or dehydrated (mouth & tongue dry, mucous membranes pale, scruff does not spring back quickly when pinched).

-- Warm it up slowly, with your body heat only! (DO NOT use hot water bottles, heaters, blow dryers, etc.!) )

-- Give it 5-10% glucose in water (available at drugstores -- ex: Pedialyte) 1/2 cc per ounce of body weight per hour.

\*\* DO NOT FEED A CHILLED KITTEN -- its intestines are not working, so it may bloat and die!

### WHAT TO DO NEXT

\*\*\*\* CHILLING IS THE GREATEST THREAT TO AN ORPHAN KITTEN'S SURVIVAL. DEHYDRATION IS A CLOSE SECOND. FOLLOW THESE INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY TO AVOID LOSING THE KITTEN (S) \*\*\*\*

-- BED should be enclosed with a heating pad inside set on low, 3/4 on the bottom and 1/4 up the side. Cover with waterproof layer, then thick absorbent bedding (such as a cloth diaper). If needed, cover part of box to trap heat and warm up the air.

\*\* Bed MUST have an area not covered by the heating pad, so the kitten can move away if it gets too hot.

\*\* Change the bedding daily--more often if necessary--to prevent sores from urine burn.

\*\* Young kittens can not retain body heat, so both low and high temperatures can chill them (high temps by expanding surface blood vessels & radiating off too much heat). Keeping the temperature of their surroundings at the proper level is CRITICAL! (Hang a cheap thermometer, such as those sold for aquarium use; down near where the kitten sleeps.)

Feed a kitten milk substitute such as Borden's KMR (available at vet clinics, pet stores and feed stores). Follow the directions on the can for amounts to feed.

\*\* DO NOT feed cow's milk or human baby formula -- they may cause diarrhea, and dehydrate the kitten to death.

\*\* Warm formula to 100°F, or slightly warm to the skin. Nipple hole should be large enough that milk drips out slowly when held upside-down.

**\*\*Do NOT hold the kitten on its back to nurse--keep it upright, on its stomach. Hold the bottle at 45° angle, keeping slight pull on the bottle to encourage suckling.**

**IF THE KITTEN IS TOO WEAK TO NURSE--it must be tube fed. See your veterinarian!**

**\*\*Frequent feedings help prevent chilling. Too frequent may not allow stomach to empty completely, causing the milk to ferment and the kitten to bloat. Follow the schedule, unless kitten is weak or dehydrated.**

**\*\*Kitten should gain weight according to the chart below. If less, see your veterinarian.**

**---Elimination--kittens less than 4 weeks cannot urinate or pass feces readily on their own. After feeding, wipe bottom with warm, moist cotton balls to stimulate them to go. When done, wipe belly, then apply thin layer of baby oil. Kitten should urinate after each feeding. It may pass feces less often.**

**\*\*VERY IMPORTANT NOTE\*\***

**Very young kittens rarely cry--frequent crying indicates a cold, hungry, or sick kitten, or one that is in pain.**

<u>AGE</u>	<u>SURROUNDING TEMPERATURE</u>	<u>FEEDING FREQUENCY</u>	<u>EXPECTED WEIGHT</u>
0-1 WEEK	85-90 F	6 TIMES/DAY	3-4 OZ AT BIRTH 6-8 OZ BY 1 WEEK
1-2 WEEKS	80-85 F	5 TIMES/DAY	8-10 OZ
2-3 WEEKS	75-80 F	4 TIMES/DAY	10-12 OZ
3-4 WEEKS	70-75 F	3 TIMES/DAY	12-14 OZ
4+WKS	70 F	3 TIMES/DAY	14 OZ & UP

Normal development (or, How to Tell the Kitten's Age)

5-8 DAYS	EARS OPEN
8 DAYS - 2 WEEKS	EYES OPEN
2 1/2 WEEKS	CAN CRAWL
3 WEEKS	EARS ERECT. STANDS UP. CAN LEARN TO LAP FROM A DISH.
3 1/2 WEEKS	SIGHT & SOUND ORIENTED (FOLLOWS NOISE OR FINGER WITH HEAD)
4 WEEKS	CAN ELIMINATE WITHOUT HELP.