



Animal Welfare  
League Qld  
Est. 1959

# FOSTER CARER MANUAL



# Welcome to Animal Welfare League Queensland's foster program!

AWLQ is one of Queensland's most dynamic and best-loved charities. Our organisation is the leader in the zero euthanasia movement nationally and is considered a national leader in animal welfare. AWLQ locally provides a safe haven for close to 10,000 stray and homeless animals each year while also assisting other communities in saving homeless animals.

In addition to our shelter work, we are committed to keeping pets and people together by providing lifesaving support and resources to people in need with companion animals. We are known for our grassroots and innovative community-based animal welfare work, including our community vet clinics, Getting to Zero, Golden Hearts Seniors' Support Program and the National Desexing Network.

**Fostering is one of the most important ways to help animals in need. Providing our residents somewhere to stay for a short time helps save lives.**

We see nearly 3,000 kittens and puppies come into our care annually. For this reason, AWLQ has also established a strong foster network for those companion animals not ready to be made available for adoption, with more than 200 animals being out in foster care at one time and close to 300 in peak kitten season.

We promise to never euthanise a healthy, sociable or treatable animal in our care. And we believe that all animals in our care deserve to have the best possible chance at finding a loving, permanent home. **Our foster carers have one of the most critical roles at the shelter – they allow us to keep our promise to thousands of animals yearly.**

AWLQ has created this guide to assist you throughout your fostering experiences, detailing the various health concerns that may arise whilst you have animals in your care. However, it is essential to remember that this guide is for informative purposes only and all health subjects need to be brought to the attention of AWLQ veterinary staff as soon as possible.

**Once again welcome to AWLQ, and thank you for choosing to foster.**

Kind regards,

**AWLQ Foster Department**



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## Contact information

**Foster House Opening Hours:**

Beenleigh Animal Rehoming Centre  
Monday to Sunday from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm

Gold Coast Animal Rehoming Centre  
Tuesday to Saturday from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm  
(Closed Sunday, Monday and Public Holidays)

Ipswich Animal Rehoming Centre  
Monday to Friday from 8:00 am to 5:30 pm  
Weekends and Public Holidays from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm

Warra Animal Rehoming Centre  
Monday to Friday from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm  
Saturday to Sunday from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm

Willawong Animal Rehoming Centre  
Monday to Friday from 12:00 pm to 5:00 pm  
Saturday to Sunday from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm

**Foster House Telephone Lines:**

Beenleigh – 07 3807 0580

Gold Coast – 07 5509 9020

Ipswich – 07 3059 7131

Warra – 07 3150 3038

Willawong – 07 3714 2800

**Foster House Email Addresses:**

Beenleigh and Gold Coast – [fostering@awlqld.com.au](mailto:fostering@awlqld.com.au)

Ipswich – [ipswichfoster@awlqld.com.au](mailto:ipswichfoster@awlqld.com.au)

Warra – [warrafoster@awlqld.com.au](mailto:warrafoster@awlqld.com.au)

Willawong – [willawongfoster@awlqld.com.au](mailto:willawongfoster@awlqld.com.au)

**AWLQ Animal Rehoming Centres:**

Beenleigh – 07 3807 3782

Gold Coast – 07 5509 9000  
(Monday only from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm)

Ipswich – 07 3059 7131

Warra – 07 3631 6800

Willawong – 07 3714 2800

**Emergency on-call vet nurse:** **0438 191 242**  
(For after-hours and public holidays, life-threatening health emergencies only)

**Please note that the emergency on-call vet nurse contact number must only be used outside general opening hours.**

**If you need assistance regarding a foster animal during regular business hours, please call the relevant Foster Office.** If you cannot speak to anyone on the phone at any time, please send an email as the mornings can become quite busy with appointments.

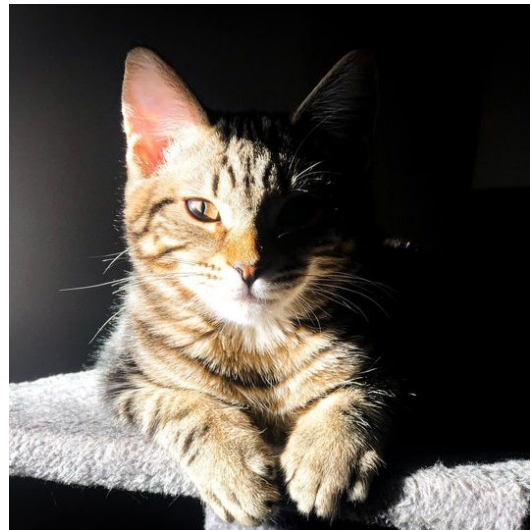
## AWLQ Foster Carer Support Group on Facebook

For all of those on Facebook, we have a Facebook Group you can request to join a part of to keep in contact with the foster program. **Please only request to join the group that is relevant to your region.** These are as follows:

- Beenleigh and Gold Coast - AWLQ Foster Carer Support Group
- Warra – TBC
- Willawong – TBC

The group allows current foster carers to share stories, photos and advice, see who gets adopted each week, learn about training days and get-togethers and be notified of any particular cases needing foster.

To connect with this group, all you have to do is search for the group, answer some simple questions and request to join – upon administrator approval, you will be accepted.



## Foster vet checks

All foster animals in your care must receive regular checks by an AWLQ veterinarian. Because our vets run on a tight schedule, all foster animal vet checks must be allocated an appropriate appointment time.

All foster vet check appointments are to be made through your relevant AWLQ Foster Coordinator. Please do not contact AWLQ Community Vet Clinics for foster appointments.

If you cannot make a vet appointment for your foster animal, please call your relevant AWLQ Foster Office, giving us as much notice as possible, so we can rebook you a time.

**For any urgent health-related issues outside of opening hours, please call the on-call vet nurse on 0438 191 242.**

## Vet checks and surgery drop-offs

### Beenleigh and Gold Coast

- Scheduled vet check appointments – drop-off for ALL animals is at the FOSTER VET CLINIC.
- DOG and PUPPY scheduled surgery appointments – drop-offs are at the FOSTER VET CLINIC.
- CAT and KITTEN scheduled surgery appointment - drop-offs are at the FOSTER OFFICE on Tuesday to Friday and at the FOSTER VET CLINIC on Monday.

### Ipswich

- Scheduled vet check and surgery appointments – please drop-off all animals to reception at the Ipswich Animal Rehoming Centre.

### Warra

- Scheduled vet check appointments – drop-off for ALL animals is at RECEPTION. On arrival please inform reception you are there for a scheduled vet check appointment and they will assist you.
- Scheduled surgery appointments – are on Tuesday (cat only), Wednesday (dogs only) and Thursday (both). Animals must be dropped off between 9:00 am and 9:30 am in a fasted state.

### Willawong

## Foster item list

Whilst AWLQ can supply you with any items you require, including food and litter, we would very much appreciate it if you could purchase any necessary items needed for the foster animals you take on.

Please remember that it is important to properly wash and disinfect all items between each foster animal you care for.

Please return any items you have borrowed from the AWLQ Foster Office in a clean condition, and please put an opening date on any food.

Cat and kitten carers - the following items will be helpful for you to have at home ready for your next group of fosters; food bowl/s, litter tray/s, bedding, toys, and a cat scratch post.

Dog and puppy carers - the following items will be helpful for you to have at home ready for your next group of fosters; food bowl/s, bedding, toys, puppy pads, and lead.

**Note: You do not need to provide any medication for your foster animals. AWLQ's veterinary staff will dispense any required medication. All medication must be given as instructed. Please do not stop medicines unless recommended by AWLQ's veterinary staff.**



## Cleaning schedule

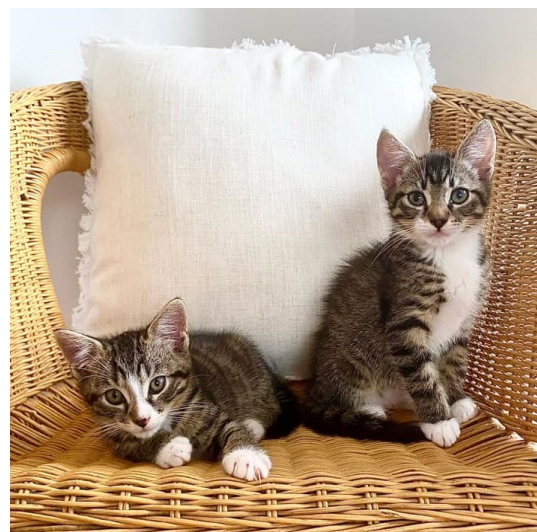
It is vital to ensure that the items used for foster animals are cleaned and disinfected thoroughly before taking on your next foster case, especially if they have been previously exposed to the disease.

If you have returned healthy animals, standard household disinfectant will be more than enough to clean your foster items. Combine the disinfectant with hot water and dry in the sunshine to ensure that your items have been thoroughly cleansed. This includes all litter trays, food bowls, toys, bedding and the area in which they are kept.

When your previous foster case may have included animals with contagious diseases, even more care must be taken when guaranteeing that your foster items are entirely cleansed. Bleach and water are a great way to kill bacteria, and combined with sunshine will ensure that your items are clean and ready to go for when you bring your next foster animal/s home. In addition, it is a good (however not compulsory) idea to purchase a veterinarian-grade disinfectant when dealing with more intense diseases, the most common of which is a chemical called F-10. This chemical can be bought from local vet clinics and larger produce stores and is extremely handy at home. F-10 is easily diluted with water and can be used to clean all surfaces.



**Note: In regards to items that have come in contact with contagious diseases that are more difficult to eliminate, such as ringworm, any items that cannot be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected must be discarded.**





## Foods toxic to animals

While we love our foster animals and wish to spoil them as best as possible, we must remember that not all human foods are fit for animal consumption. Below are some examples of foods that you should not be feeding your foster animals as they are toxic and can cause extreme discomfort.

### Alcohol

Alcoholic beverages and food products containing alcohol can cause vomiting, diarrhoea, decreased coordination, central nervous system depression, difficulty breathing, tremors, abnormal blood acidity, coma and even death. Therefore, under no circumstances should your foster animal be given any alcohol.

### Chocolate, Coffee and Caffeine

These products all contain substances called methylxanthines. When ingested by pets, methylxanthines can cause vomiting and diarrhoea, panting, excessive thirst and urination, hyperactivity, abnormal heart rhythm, tremors, seizures and even death.

### Citrus

The stems, leaves, peels, fruit and seeds of citrus plants contain varying amounts of citric acid and essential oils that can cause irritation and possibly even central nervous system depression if ingested in significant quantities. However, small doses, such as eating the fruit, are not likely to present problems beyond minor stomach upset.

### Coconut and Coconut Oil

The flesh and milk of fresh coconuts contain oils that may cause stomach upset, loose stools or diarrhoea. In addition, coconut water is high in potassium and should not be given to your foster animal.

### Grapes and Raisins

Although the toxic substance within grapes and raisins is unknown, these fruits can cause animal kidney failure.

### Macadamia Nuts

Macadamia nuts can cause weakness, depression, vomiting, tremors and hyperthermia in dogs. Signs usually appear within 12 hours of ingestion and can last approximately 12 to 48 hours.

### Milk and Dairy Products

Because animals do not possess significant amounts of lactase (the enzyme that breaks down lactose), milk and other dairy-based products can cause diarrhoea or other digestive upset.

### Nuts

Nuts – including almonds, pecans and walnuts – contain high amounts of oils and fats. In animals, these fats can cause vomiting, diarrhoea, and potentially pancreatitis.



### **Onions, Garlic and Chives**

These vegetables and herbs can cause gastrointestinal irritation and damage red blood cells. Although cats are more susceptible, dogs are also at risk if they consume large amounts.

### **Eggs**

Raw eggs contain an enzyme called avidin that decreases the absorption of biotin (a B vitamin), which can lead to skin and coat problems.

### **Bones**

The animal can potentially choke on the bone or sustain a grave injury should the bone splinter become lodged in or puncture your foster animal's digestive tract.

### **Salt and Salty Snack Foods**

In animals, large amounts of salt can produce excessive thirst and urination, or even sodium ion poisoning. In addition, your animal may have consumed too many salty foods, including vomiting, diarrhoea, depression, tremors, elevated body temperature, seizures and even death. We encourage you to avoid feeding your foster animal salt-heavy snacks like potato chips, pretzels and salted popcorn.

### **Xylitol**

Xylitol is a sweetener in many products, including gum, candy, baked goods and toothpaste. It can cause insulin release in most animals, leading to liver failure. The increase in insulin leads to hypoglycemia (lowered sugar levels). Initial signs of toxicosis include vomiting, lethargy and loss of coordination. Symptoms can progress to seizures. Elevated liver enzymes and liver failure can be seen within a few days.

### **Yeast Dough**

Yeast dough can rise and cause gas to accumulate in your animal's digestive system. This can be painful and cause the stomach to bloat and potentially twist, becoming a life-threatening emergency. In addition, the yeast produces ethanol as a by-product, and a dog ingesting raw bread dough can become 'drunk' (see alcohol above).

Other food items that can be dangerous for your foster animal include apple seeds, apricot pits, avocados, cherry pits, mouldy foods, mushroom plants, mustard seeds, peach pits, rhubarb leaves, tea, and tomato leaves and stems.

**Note: You must always follow the feeding instructions as advised by AWLQ veterinary staff and the foster coordinator. If you feel your foster animal has ingested one or more of these toxic foods, refer to the contact information sheet and alert the appropriate AWLQ staff member as quickly as possible.**

## **Creating a safe environment for cats and kittens**

Many of the tips in the section 'Creating a Safe Environment – Dogs and Puppies' can also be applied to fostering kittens. Still, felines can find unique dangers all on their own.

Kittens and cats are, by nature, curious about their surroundings, so you will need to ensure there are no hidden 'escape routes' that lead outdoors for your indoor-only feline. Suppose you have young children or any concerns about the cat getting out. In that case, you can even post minor signs at each doorway reminding the family to close them carefully and watch for cats/kittens!

Keeping your toilet bowl closed after use is a must for tiny kittens. Move glass or breakable treasures inside a locked cabinet or use special anchoring clay to keep them secured from being knocked over by a curious paw.

Always keep your washing machine and dryer doors closed and check carefully before and after each use to ensure that your cat/kitten hasn't somehow gotten inside.

For some reason, all kittens love exploring underneath the refrigerator – ensure they cannot get under or behind the fridge by filling up those spaces or putting boards or other material there to keep the kittens out.

Be aware that not all cat toys are safe – be especially careful about leaving any string, yarn, thread, needles, safety pins, rubber bands, or small pieces of toy-like eyes or bells that can quickly come off and be ingested. Unfortunately, having a feline swallow a foreign object is a relatively common and often fatal event that almost always could have been prevented. Make sure that any toys you make or purchase have no minor or sharp pieces that can poke or be chewed off and swallowed.

Cats seem to love household items such as twist ties for plastic bags, but these can be deadly. Twist ties can be swallowed and perforated intestines.

You can make aluminium foil balls that your cat will love because they are easy to bat around and make a nice noise on hard floors, but be sure to wad the foil up very tightly so your cat/kitten can't chew off and swallow bits of foil and be sure the ball is large enough not to be eaten.

Other types of potential hazards for cats and kittens include anything with loops on them, such as grocery paper or plastic bags with the carry handles still on them; litter box liners of the drawstring type if they are pulled closed and the loop is left where kittens can get stuck in them. Even the vertical pulls for window blinds. These can potentially be deadly if the cat/kitten gets their head caught in the loop. Keep ALL plastic bags safely away from felines.

### **Toilet Training**

Toilet training is one of the first things you must consider when bringing your new foster home. Initially, kittens are stimulated to toilet by their mother grooming and cleaning them. At around one month of age, a kitten will begin to toilet themselves by following their mother's example and digging in loose material (litter or soil). The following notes are to assist you properly toilet training cats and kittens.

### **Choosing a Litter Tray**

The first step is to choose a litter tray and litter type for your cat or kitten to use. Try and use the

same kind of litter that your cat or kitten used before you took them home; that way, it is familiar and comfortable for them.

Please note that we do not use a crystal or clay-type litter for kittens as they may try to eat them, causing intestinal blockages and perforations. Please only use the newspaper-type litter (Breeders choice) or the recycled woodchip litter (Catmate) provided by the foster office.

There are many types of litter trays, including ones with covers. Your cat or kitten may need one with short sides so it is easy to get into. This is also an excellent way to find out where you should place your tray as some cats can be susceptible to where they toilet.

### **Keeping Litter Trays Clean**

Cats are fastidious, so keep the litter tray as clean as possible. Ensure that you only use pet-safe detergents and always have an extra tray in your home, especially in multi-cat households. If you are away for long periods, it is a good idea to use more than one litter tray so that if one is soiled, your cat can always use the other. Do not place these trays next to each other. If you have more than one cat in your household, it is recommended to use one more litter tray than there are cats.

### **Litter Tray Training**

Cats and kittens tend to go to the toilet after eating, after they wake up, and after play. Therefore, supervise your foster animal/s at these times to ensure that they are using the litter tray correctly. You may need to confine them to a small area containing the litter tray if you cannot supervise them to reduce the chance of a mistake.

Remember that it is normal for a new cat or kitten to have a toileting mistake. If your foster animal/s have an accident, do not punish them as this can often cause them to become afraid of toileting. As a result, they may continue to go to the wrong place. Instead, confine your cat or kitten away from these areas with easy access to a litter tray. Ensure you clean all mistakes with an ammonia-free detergent to remove all urine scents from the site. You can also move some of your cat or kitten's faeces into the litter tray to encourage them to use it.



## Creating a safe environment for dogs and puppies

Puppies have a lot of energy and a natural curiosity. This makes them so much fun but could also lead to harmful situations. So please carefully look through the area your puppy will stay in to ensure it is safe. Think of it as child-proofing your home, except that a puppy is smaller and more active than a baby and can get into even more things. The following tips are designed to help you keep your foster animals safe.

### Indoor hazards

- Toxic plants.
- Electrical cords, computer cables or wires (tie up loose cords and keep them out of sight).
- Drawstrings from draperies or blinds.
- Cleaning supplies, rags, sponges, chemicals, and detergents.
- Remote controls, knick-knacks.
- Candles, potpourri, air fresheners.
- Toilet tissues or Kleenex.
- Fireplaces, wood stoves.



Be careful of your foster animals around furniture. A rocking chair can harm a tail or leg, and a curious puppy may crawl under an open recliner or sofa bed.

Keep doors and windows closed. Keep screens on windows and sliding glass doors securely fastened and in good repair.

Many dogs will eat cat faeces from litter boxes. Aside from being a nasty habit, it can be dangerous. Cat litter can cause intestinal obstruction, not to mention intestinal worms the cat may have passed on.

### Outdoor hazards

- Please do not leave your puppy outside unsupervised.
- Petrol, oil, paint, fertilisers, pesticides, etc., should be in secure containers and out of reach.
- Be especially careful with antifreeze and rat poison; both taste good to dogs and can be deadly if ingested.
- Pools, ponds, hot tubs and drainpipes are also dangerous.
- Fire rings, barbecues and other fire/heat sources
- Walk around your property and look for other areas and items that could be hazardous (broken glass, nails, sharp objects)
- Many outdoor plants, flowers, and shrubs are poisonous.
- The list could go on and on. Ask yourself, 'if I were a puppy, would this be an interesting place to explore? Would this be fun to chew, shred, carry or hide?'

### Toilet Training

Toilet training should start as soon as your puppy gets home. Puppies urinate frequently, and success in house training depends on anticipating their needs – they should be allowed to relieve themselves at least every two hours. You can usually tell when a puppy 'wants to go' because they will look

around anxiously, walk in circles and start sniffing in right corners, looking for a place. That is your cue to whisk them outside.

### **Commands**

Whatever the weather, puppies should be taken outside after they have woken up or have had something to eat and drink. Once out of the house, say a command such as 'Go Now' so they know it is okay to relieve themselves. Praise them when they go but ignore them when they fail. If you do find a puddle inside, don't tell your pup off unless you catch them in the act; otherwise, your foster animal/s will have no idea why they are being punished. **Never, ever 'rub their nose in it.**

### **Paper Training**

You can paper-train small breeds and young puppies on newspaper or 'wee pads'. Praise them with lots of affection when the newspaper is used and ignore them when it is not. Be careful not to get into the habit of praising with food treats because you risk overfeeding. Puppies go to the toilet around 12 times a day, sometimes even more! Over time, move the newspapers towards the door and then out into the yard. Take a small piece of soiled paper outside, as the puppy recognises its unique scent and will want to reinforce it.

### **Teaching your Puppy to Wait**

An alternative method to paper training is crate (puppy playpen) training, where puppies are taught to wait in their own unique space before they are taken outside. The key is allowing them to relieve themselves at least every two hours, especially after eating, sleeping, or playing.

### **Dealing with Indoor Accidents**

If your foster puppy has an accident, don't be angry. Instead, always clean the floor thoroughly to remove the odour from the spot; otherwise, your foster puppy will continue to go to the toilet in the same place.

### **Retraining an Adult Dog**

Regarding adult dogs, start by keeping them confined to a designated space. Make a point of taking your foster dog outside regularly, and when they 'go', offer lots of hugs and praise. In the same way for puppies, if there is an indoor accident, neutralise the area to prevent them from toileting there again.

### **Stick to a Routine**

Toilet training is an integral part of general puppy training, and handling it can have a tangible impact on your relationship with your puppy. If you stick to a strict routine, your foster dog or puppy will quickly learn to be clean in the house, the first step to being house trained. However, be sure not to become complacent, or your foster animal/s training can lapse. Continue with the toilet training routine until you are sure that your foster dog or puppy knows never to go indoors and can wait to go outside. Gradually phase out numerous outdoor trips, but if there are any accidents, begin increasing the number of visits again.

## Feeding guide for cats and kittens

Following the correct feeding procedure for your foster cat or kitten is essential. All food you require for your foster animal/s will be provided to you at the time.

### Dry biscuits

Your foster cat or kitten must always access dry food and water. For healthy foster animals, biscuits need to be their primary form of food, with wet food given only as a treat. The dry food delivered to you at the foster office is a mixture of kibble, the primary type being Purina Pro Plan. Pro Plan possesses the nutrients that felines require to maintain a healthy diet. Kittens should have access to dry food and water at all times. Kittens under six weeks of age will be fed Royal Canin Mother and Babycat wet and dry food.

### Wet food

Wet food is to be given only as a treat for healthy animals; however, for unwell cats and kittens, it can be given more often as an enticement to eat. The recommended amount of wet food to give to a healthy cat or kitten equates to ½ of an 85g tin of wet food per kitten per day and one container of wet food per adult cat, which can be divided into two meals and given both morning and night. If you are having trouble with your foster animal not eating, please refer to this manual's 'Loss of Appetite' section.



### Special diets

For animals prescribed specific foods, it is always important to follow the instructions from the foster coordinator and the feeding guide on the back of the packet.

**Note: Under no circumstance should foster cats and kittens be fed milk. This includes branded 'cat milk'.**



## Feeding guide for dogs and puppies

Following the correct feeding procedure for your foster dog or puppy is essential. All food you require for your foster animal/s will be provided at the time.

### Dry Biscuits

Your foster dog or puppy must always access dry food and water. For healthy foster animals, biscuits need to be their primary form of food, with wet food given only as a treat. The dry food delivered to you at the foster office will have a feeding guide printed on the back, giving you a reading of how much dry food to give your foster dog or puppy, depending on their weight. It is advised that you split this amount into two feeds for dogs and 3- 4 meals per day for puppies depending on age. The foster office will notify you.

### Wet Food

Too much wet food can cause upset stomachs, so creating a wet and dry food mixture for your foster dog or puppy is a good idea. Mix through 1 tablespoon per feed of wet food, mixed with dry food.

### Special Diets

For animals prescribed specific foods, it is always important to follow the instructions from the foster coordinator and the feeding guide on the back of the packet.





## Fostering pregnant cats

Most of the mums with kittens come through the pounds and are usually found by concerned public members. Often a stray cat will start hanging around someone's house, and they will put food out for her, not overthinking it; after a few weeks, she rewards them with a litter of babies.

The kittens will all grow at different rates, so don't be too concerned if you notice a kitten that wishes to be a bully or a kitten that appears a lot smaller than the others (the runt), as these kinds of dynamics are pretty standard.

**Note: If at any point you are worried that one or more of your kittens is unwell or simply failing to thrive, contact the foster office to make an appointment with the veterinary staff.**

As mentioned, many of the mother cats placed in foster have been living on the streets for some time before their arrival, so many may not be in the best condition to raise a family and produce milk to feed a litter of hungry mouths. In addition, most mother cats received are only young and have not finished growing before they find themselves pregnant and losing much of their nutrition to their growing babies. Finally, please note that underweight mums tend to rapidly consume their food which can cause them to fall ill, so feeding them smaller, more frequent meals may be necessary.

### Pregnancy

Pregnant cats are usually more than capable of caring for themselves, although they need close attention and monitoring during labour.

During your foster cat's last two weeks of pregnancy, ensure she is kept away from other pets and small children, particularly other cats, to avoid transmitting certain infectious diseases. Try to keep her as quiet and inactive as possible during this time and get her accustomed to the maternity bed. Remember, she may reject your soft bed in the corner of a room, so ensure she has some choice on where to give birth and try not to move her from her chosen spot. Ensure that the area the mother will have her kittens is warm enough, quiet and undisturbed – it is best to try to get her familiar and comfortable in her chosen environment.



When the time comes for your foster cat to give birth, it is essential to observe the delivery so that you can step in if there are problems, especially for first-time mothers. However, too much interference will slow labour and upset the cat. Generally, everything will go smoothly, so try not to intervene unless necessary; be sure to contact the foster office if you have any concerns (if out of hours, get the emergency nurse). Also, try to limit the number of spectators because although the family may want to be involved, this may upset the mother.

### Labour and giving birth

Labour has three stages. The first stage can pass without you noticing, but the cervix and uterus are preparing for delivery. Contractions are occurring but may not be visible from the outside. During this stage, the mother (queen) will become very restless, pace as though she is looking for something, and become very vocal. She may also make unproductive trips to the litterbox, feeling as if she needs to pass a motion, but hopefully, she will settle into her maternity bed. If she is not well accustomed to her bed or prefers another location, she may choose another suitable spot. Do not

move her or make her use the maternity bed if she does not want to during labour. It is always safer to let her give birth where she chooses, then move her to a suitable bed or location once the babies have been born. Also, be sure to note that she may also start to experience some vaginal discharge at this time.

Stage two is the delivery. Some kittens will be born head first (like human babies), but others will appear feet first, which is quite normal. Kittens usually come at 30-45 minute intervals, sometimes over an hour. Stand and watch at a safe distance and only intervene if necessary; for example, if you see her straining excessively without producing a kitten, there is bloody discharge, or she passes kittens in rapid succession with no time to clean them/break the amniotic sacs.

Once a kitten is born, the mother will break the amniotic sac (thin membrane around each kitten containing fluid). If not, you may need to help her tear the sac using a towel (never a sharp object), so the kitten can breathe. The membrane is easily broken. If you need to do this, rub the kitten gently and clean their mouth with a towel to stimulate breathing.

After each birth, some mothers will eat the placenta, but all should clean every kitten carefully. You will have to step in if she fails to remove the membranes from the kittens' faces. First, gently clean the mouth and nose, then quickly dry the kittens against the grain of the fur using a clean cloth or towel (facecloths work well because they are big enough to cover the kitten but won't get in your way). Finally, firm rubbing with a warm cloth will dry and warm the kitten and stimulate it to take its first breath.

The third stage is the passage of the placentas, and in cats, this occurs after each kitten. Ideally, count the number of placentas the cat passes to ensure this is the same as the number of kittens.

### **After birth**

The entire delivery generally takes between 2 and 5 hours but can last up to 24 hours. If you notice the mother having trouble giving birth at any time, contact the emergency nurse or foster office to discuss the next step. If your foster cat appears to be straining unproductively for an hour or more during the birth, also contact the AWLQ foster office on **5509 9020** or the after-hours vet nurse on **0438 191 242**.



Litters are usually between four and six kittens, although litters of just one or two can occur. Once all the kittens are born, let your mother have time to clean and feed her kittens. Do not handle them unless this is necessary for their health. If the mother does not seem to be taking care of her kittens (that is, if she is not cleaning or feeding them), then please consult the foster coordinator or the after-hours vet nurse if after hours.

**Note: Please call the foster office to advise the foster coordinator of the new family when born, and remember to contact us if you have any concerns during the birthing process. For after-hours problems, please call 0438 191 242**

### **Weaning and handling**

Weaning kittens should not be forced as it occurs naturally between 3 and 7 weeks of age. An average to large litter (4 or more) will start to wean between 4 and 5 weeks of age, while single kittens or litters of 2-3 can often wean later because more milk is available. Some mother cats are

particularly over-protective and will prevent their kittens from weaning (this is particularly common for those who have had just 1 or 2 kittens).

You may need to step in and encourage the kittens to try solid food, beginning with wet food or dry food that has been soaked in warm water; it can be a good idea to start the process by putting a small amount of wet food on the skin between your thumb and forefinger and then hold this in front of the kitten – it will likely try to ‘suckle’ the food off you initially, but will soon start chewing.

Once eating wet food, try sprinkling dry food on top of the wet food to encourage the kitten to eat dry food. If you are concerned that your foster kittens are not receiving sufficient milk from their mother but are not quite old enough to start weaning, contact the foster office for advice. Please weigh young kittens regularly, approx. every 3-4 days.

Handling is also very important for young kittens. If the mother cat you are fostering seems to be at all nervous or skittish, her little ones will need as much human socialisation as possible from a very early age. It is safe and acceptable to hold and touch kittens from as young as a few days, though the more important stage starts at about 10-14 days when they are wanting to move around and explore their environment. This is generally one of the most enjoyable aspects of fostering.



# AWLQ Vet Treatment Protocol

## Parasitic treatment for cats and kittens

**Worming** - Kittens should be wormed every two weeks until they are 12 weeks of age, then every month after that until they are six months old. From then, and depending on which product is used, worming your cat every three months will maintain effective worm prevention.

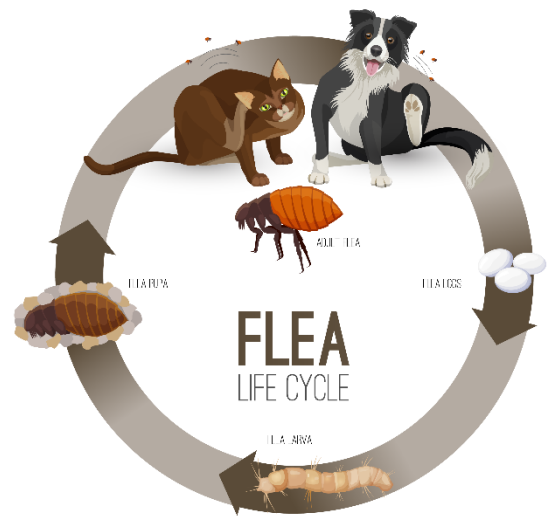
**Flea treatment** - every four weeks

**Vaccinations** - *Companion F3* is a modified live vaccination used to immunise cats and kittens against Feline Calicivirus, Feline Herpes Virus and Panleucopaenia.

All kittens receive an *F3* at **six weeks old**.

A booster is given every four weeks until the kitten is **16 weeks old**.

All cats and kittens require a minimum of **two F3** vaccinations before being due yearly.



## Parasitic treatment for dogs and puppies

**Worming** - Puppies should be wormed every two weeks until twelve weeks, then monthly until six months. Once they have reached six months of age, a puppy can transfer onto an 'adult' worming schedule. All adult dogs need to be wormed every three months for effective protection.

**Flea treatment** - every four weeks

Treat fleas, ticks and worms from 12 weeks of age with NexGard Plus once per month.

**Vaccinations** - *Protech C3* is a modified live vaccination used for immunisation against Canine Distemper, Canine Hepatitis and Canine Parvovirus.

*Protech Bronchi – Shield III* is used to immunise dogs against kennel cough. When used with the *Protech C3* this vaccination becomes a *C5*.

All dogs and puppies receive a *C5* at **four weeks old**.

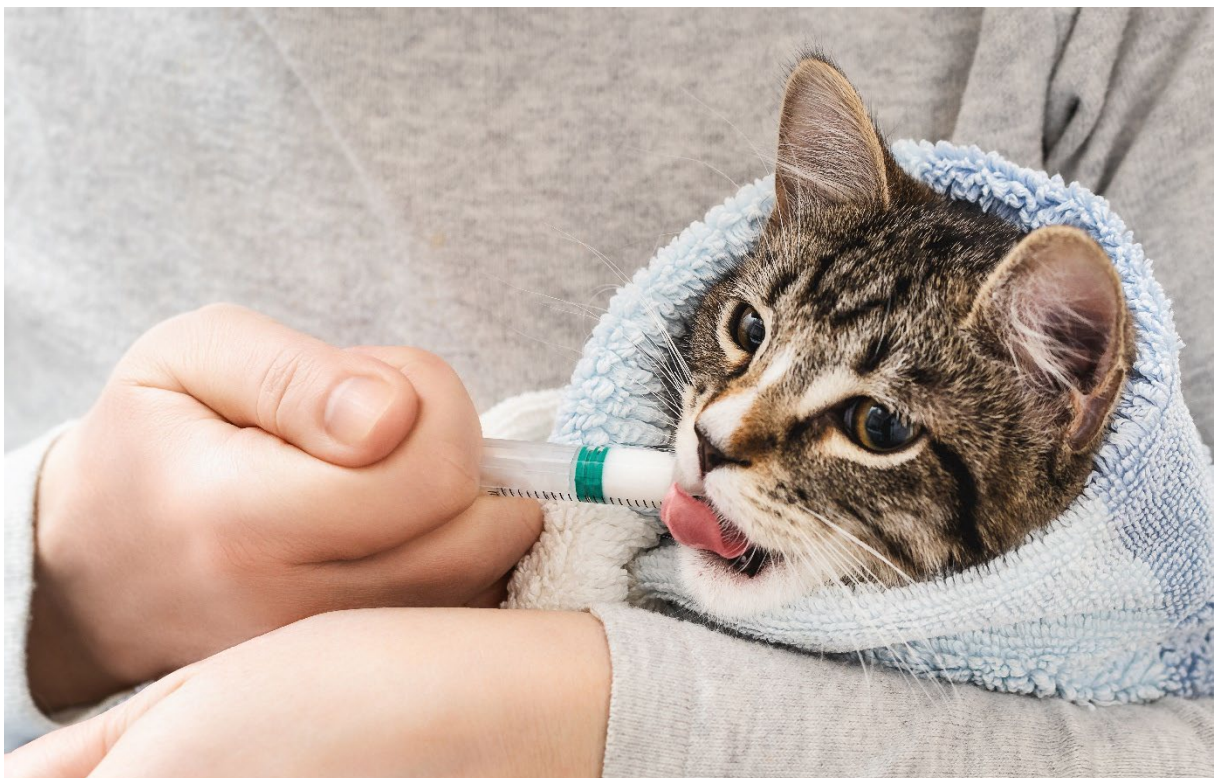
A booster of a *C3* is given every **two weeks until eight weeks** when a *C5* is given. After the **8-week C5** they continue to receive a *C3* every **two weeks until 12 weeks**.

Any dog or puppy over **12 weeks** receives a single *C5* which is then due in a year.

**Note: The foster office will advise you when these appointments will take place. Please do not purchase or administer your own worming or flea treatment. All vet treatments are to be administered by AWLQ veterinary staff or the foster coordinator.**

## How to administer liquid medication for cats and kittens

1. Get the medication ready – shake the bottle if necessary, and withdraw the appropriate amount of liquid into the dropper or oral syringe provided by the veterinarian.
2. Bring the cat to the place you will give the medication, talking in a happy voice. If you do not sound worried or concerned, the cat will be less likely to feel that way as well. Sometimes it is helpful to wrap the cat in a blanket or very large towel so just the head is sticking out. Place their back end against something so they cannot back away from you.
3. Pick up the syringe or dropper (using your dominant hand).
4. Using your other hand, gently (but firmly) grasp the cat's head from above with your thumb on one side of the hinge of the jaw and your fingers on the other.
5. Place the tip of the dropper or syringe into the mouth until it is just past the teeth.
6. Slowly administer the medication. Give the medication in small amounts with a slight pause between each portion. Be very careful not to give it faster than your cat can swallow it. Your cat may spit out some of the medication – if this occurs, DO NOT re-administer another dose.
7. Hold the cat's mouth closed and have the head in a normal position; this will make swallowing easier. Gently rub or blow on the cat's nose as this often simulates a cat licking its nose and then swallowing.
8. Wipe off any medication the cat may have spit out onto themselves using a soft, moist cloth.
9. Talk softly and stroke the cat, or give another type of praise that the cat will enjoy (i.e. a food treat). This will make the next time easier. Remember, the more efficiently you can give the medication the easier it is on both of you.
10. Wash with soapy water and rinse the syringe/dropper thoroughly. Return the medication to the refrigerator (if necessary).



## How to administer tablets for cats and kittens

1. Place the tablet where it will be handy.
2. Bring the cat to where you will give the tablet, talking in a cheerful voice. If you do not sound worried or concerned, the cat will be less likely to feel that way. Sometimes it is helpful to wrap the cat in a blanket or huge towel, so just the head is sticking out. Place their back end against something so they cannot back away from you.
3. Hold the tablet between your thumb and index finger (using your dominant hand).
4. Using your other hand, gently (but firmly) grasp the cat's head from above with your thumb on one side of the hinge of the jaw and your fingers on the other.
5. Tilt the head back over the shoulders so the cat looks up at the ceiling. The lower jaw will automatically drop a bit.
6. Place one of your free fingers of the hand holding the tablet between the lower canine teeth (the long front teeth) and push down.
7. Quickly place the pill as far back in the cat's mouth as possible, getting it over the 'hump' of the tongue. Do not place your hand too far in, or the cat may gag.
8. Close the cat's mouth, hold it closed, and lower the head to a normal position, making swallowing easier. Gently rub or blow on the cat's nose, which often stimulates a cat to lick its nose and then swallow.
9. Talk softly and stroke the cat, or give another type of praise that the cat will enjoy (i.e. a food treat). This will make the next time more manageable. Remember, the more efficiently you can give the medication, the easier it is on both of you.



If you need to break a scored tablet, here is a simple procedure that should work for any tablet that has a somewhat rounded surface:

1. Place the tablet on a flat, hard surface.
2. Place one thumb on each side of the score.
3. Press down with both thumbs

### **How to administer liquid medication for dogs and puppies**

1. Read the label for the proper dosage and, if instructed, shake the contents of the bottle. Fill the syringe or dropper with the medication.
2. Firmly grasp the dog's muzzle while holding the syringe or dropper with the other hand.
3. Gently squirt the medication into the pouch between the teeth and cheek.
4. Hold the dog's jaw closed and tilt the head back slightly.
5. Stroke the throat or blow on the nose to encourage swallowing

### **How to administer tablets for dogs and puppies**

1. Place the tablet between the thumb and the index finger of one hand. Firmly grasp the upper jaw with the thumb and index finger of the other hand.
2. Gently fold the upper lip over the teeth as you open the mouth. This will reduce the chance of being bitten.
3. Rotate your wrist to tilt the head upwards. Use your middle finger to slowly open the lower jaw.
4. Keep your middle finger over the small incisor teeth and deposit the tablet as far back on the tongue as possible. Immediately close the mouth. Keeping your hand over the mouth, put the head down to facilitate swallowing.
5. Stroke the throat or blow on the nose to encourage swallowing.
6. Alternatively you can place the tablet in a small meatball of wet dog food.

**Note: If you take home a foster dog who has been prescribed medication, it is useful to know the proper way to medicate to make the process easier for you and the dog. Always follow the instructions given by the veterinarian. Be sure to administer the total amount of medication over the number of days instructed.**

## Cat flu

Cat flu is the name given to a viral infection of the upper respiratory tract in felines. It is a common disease in cats and not usually fatal in otherwise healthy adult cats but can remain dormant in the system. However, the outcome can be different in young kittens and immune-suppressed cats.

Cat flu is commonly caused by the Feline Herpes Virus – 1 or the Feline Calicivirus.

Feline Herpes Virus is the more serious of the two. Sometimes referred to as URI (upper respiratory infection), the virus infects the eyes' membranes, nose lining, pharynx, sinuses and throat.

Cat flu, in general, is a very contagious disease and can spread from cat to cat quickly.

The most common symptoms of the Feline Herpes Virus include:

### Eyes

The virus affects the membranes of the eyes. This can also be referred to as conjunctivitis. When a secondary bacterial infection occurs, the eyes are swollen and red with a discharge that is often purulent (filled with pus). At times the cat may develop corneal ulcers.



### Nose

Sneezing is the most common symptom. The nasal lining will become inflamed; this is known as Rhinitis. There will be discharge that starts as clear fluid and can develop into a thick green mucous as the disease progresses. This can affect the cat's ability to smell and their want to eat.

### Fever and Lethargy

Cats will sometimes develop a fever. Cats' normal body temperature range should be between 37.7 – 39.1 degrees Celsius.

Cats will often lose their appetite and sometimes become dehydrated. A pinch test is a simple way to check a cat's hydration. A well-hydrated cat's skin will bounce back flat after being released. If you suspect a cat is dehydrated, gently pinch some skin on the back of the neck/shoulder area.



If the skin stays up and does not go back down, the cat is severely dehydrated and needs to see the vet. The cat is moderately dehydrated if the skin takes a second or two. If the skin snaps straight back down, the cat is well hydrated.

If you are unsure, or your foster cat does not appear to be eating and/or drinking, please call the foster office for advice.



The most common symptoms of *Feline Calicivirus* are:

### **Mouth and Tongue**

The most common symptoms of the Calicivirus are ulcers in the mouth, tongue, palate, lips and tip of the nose. A sign that the cat has ulceration is drooling. In addition, ulcers will affect the cat's wants and ability to eat.

### **Fever and Lethargy**

The virus does not always cause a fever. The cat may lose their appetite, but this is generally from mouth ulceration. The infection becomes more serious when secondary infection occurs. Cats will often also become dehydrated. A way to check hydration is with the pinch test; refer to 'Fever and Lethargy' in the *Feline Herpes* section for more information on this test.

### **Joints**

This virus can cause joint pain, most commonly limping.

### **Nose and Eyes**

This virus causes cold-like symptoms. This will result in runny noses and eyes; however, it does not cause ulceration of the eyes.

### **Treatment of cat flu**

Cat flu is rarely fatal in otherwise healthy cats. Infected cats require intensive nursing and support. Kittens and immune-suppressed cats are more likely to develop severe symptoms and can sometimes prove fatal. Pregnant cats may abort, and queens may spread the virus to their kittens, resulting in death.

Medications need to be prescribed by a veterinarian. An oral antibiotic may be dispensed to help treat the infection. An eye drop or ointment will help to treat the eye infection, which also needs to be dispensed by a veterinarian.

Keeping the eyes and nose clean by bathing in warm water will help the cat to feel better. When wiping the eyes, wipe from the inside out and never use the same wipe twice or after wiping the nose.

If the cat becomes dehydrated, it may require fluids either subcutaneously or by an intravenous line. If the cat loses their appetite, offering food with a strong scent can encourage them to eat. Warming up tinned food with boiling water or heating it in the microwave will help to release the smell. Tuna or roast chicken can also encourage cats to eat. Kittens are particularly susceptible to 'crashing' from inappetence, so it is imperative to ensure that your foster kitten is eating and drinking to avoid dehydration and lack of nutrients.

Tinned food provided by the foster coordinator can also be mixed into a slurry with warm water, and a syringe fed carefully into cats and kittens refusing to eat. Sometimes a little taste of some force-fed gruel is enough to get them eating again. Steam therapy will also help to ease congestion. The steam from a hot shower will help. Place the cat in the carrier in the bathroom and run the shower near the cat, ensuring the cat is nice and dry for at least 15mins up to 3 x per day.



## How is cat flu spread?

Infected cats must be kept isolated from other cats; this includes your cats, even if fully vaccinated.

The virus spreads via cat-to-cat contact. This contact can be discharged from the eyes or nose and sneezing. The virus can live outside the cat's body for some time, so infection can be transmitted via bowls, bedding, cages, or anything else the infected cat may have come in contact with. This includes yourself! And the virus can be carried on our clothing or hands if sufficient PPE and hygiene protocols are not followed. The herpes virus can live outside the cat's body for approximately 24 hours, but the Calicivirus can last 7 to 10 days.

Other species or humans cannot contract cat flu. Cats that have flu recover at a faster speed in a foster home.

Sodium hypochlorite, or household bleach, is one of the most effective and inexpensive disinfectants. Always follow instructions and dilution ratios on the label of the bottle. Always ensure bleach is fully dry before allowing an animal to walk on the cleaned surface.

## Loss of appetite

*An excellent insight into how an animal feels is through their desire to eat. One of the first questions you will be asked if you call someone concerned about your foster animal is, "are they eating?". Seriously unwell animals will not eat.*

The following are some tips to encourage them to eat before seeing the vet:

- Warm up wet food by pouring some boiling water over the top (allow to cool before offering). This will release the smell and entice them to eat. For cats/kittens, try Hills A/D wet food Royal Canin Baby Cat as it has a good, mushy consistency or strong fishy cat food for cats that are not feeling well. For dogs, Hills A/D or cooked chicken tend to work well.
- Take some wet food on your finger and put it in their mouth. They will hopefully recognise the taste and begin to eat. You can also syringe small amounts into their mouth. Make sure you do this slowly and never give too much at once as they can aspirate. Please call the foster office before you consider syringe feeding for advice.
- If they have cat flu, ensure their nasal passages are clear of discharge.

If, after 24 hours, none of these tips has worked, a foster check appointment needs to be made as soon as possible. Please call the foster office to arrange. The vet will assess the animal's hydration. If they are not moderately hydrated, they may give them subcutaneous fluids, but the animal may require hospitalisation for IV fluids if they are severely dehydrated.

## Common illnesses cats/dogs

### Coccidiosis

Coccidiosis is a parasitic infection of the intestinal tract caused by a microscopic protozoan parasite called coccidia. Most adult cats and dogs carry coccidia, but their immune system keeps it in check. Healthy adults not showing any signs can still shed the parasite in their faeces. Kittens and puppies under six months and immune-suppressed cats or dogs are most likely to start showing symptoms.

## What are the symptoms of Coccidiosis?

The most common symptom is diarrhoea. However, the severity can vary, and mucous and blood may sometimes be present. Cats and dogs may also begin to vomit and lose their appetite, resulting in loss of condition and dehydration. In severe cases, the animal may die from this infection if left untreated.

## How Is Coccidiosis diagnosed?

Coccidiosis is diagnosed through a faecal exam. First, a sample is collected in faecal float and taken to the vet. They will then look at the sample underneath a microscope and diagnose it. If the animal has negative results but continues to show symptoms, another sample may need to be collected.

## How is Coccidiosis treated?

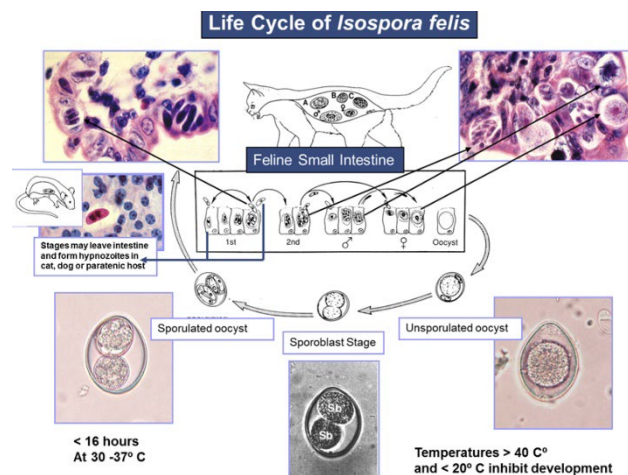
Medication can be dispensed to treat this parasite and give the animal time to develop immunity. Good sanitation is essential during and after treatment. Household bleach should be used to wash bowls and litter trays to avoid reinfection. Bathing may help to wash away anything solid from the cat's coat.

## How to prevent Coccidiosis

- Maintain good hygiene – ensure litter trays are at least scooped once per day
- Prevent hunting and killing of rodents
- Proper sanitation
- Avoid stress where possible

## Can Coccidiosis infect humans and other animals?

*Isospora felis* is the most common species of coccidiosis found in cats and is not contagious to humans or other animals.



## Diarrhoea

Frequent looser liquid bowel movements characterise diarrhoea. It may come on suddenly and be short-lived, or it may last for a week or month on and off.

## What causes diarrhoea?

- Change in diet

- Ingestion of spoiled food
- Bacterial or viral infection
- Internal parasites such as hookworm, roundworm, coccidia and Giardia
- Certain medications
- Within a week of being given a worming preventative

### Treatment for Diarrhoea

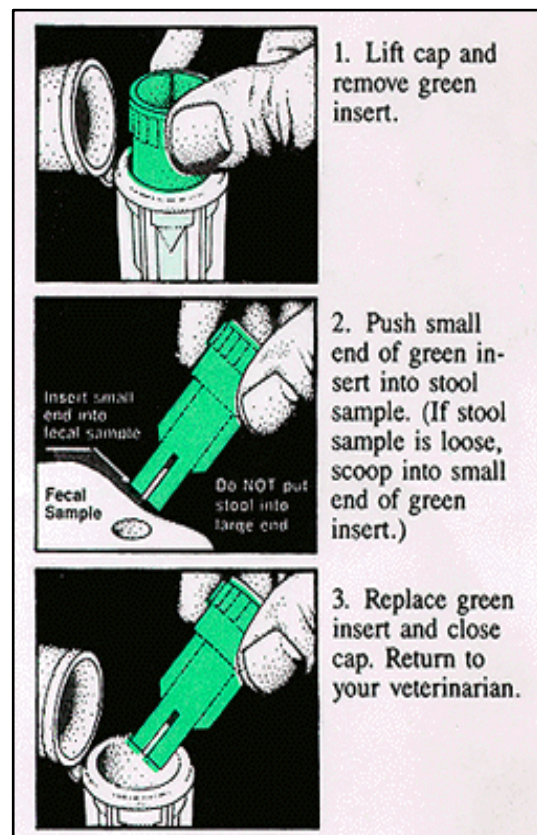
If the animal has had diarrhoea for over 24 hours, the foster office needs to be notified so that the information can be passed on to AWLQ veterinary staff. Diarrhoea will cause the animal to lose hydration and appetite and become lethargic. A sample should be taken so the vet can look at it under the microscope and dispense the required medication. If dehydration occurs, the animal may need subcutaneous fluids or even go on an IV drip. Preventative treatments should be kept up to date to avoid a worm burden.

### Performing a Faecal Float

Step One: Collect the faeces – the best stool samples to get are fresh on the same day the faecal examination will be performed. Attempting to perform a faecal float on a stool sample several days old is likely to be unhelpful because most of the eggs, worm larvae and protozoan oocysts will have altered in appearance to the point of being unrecognisable. In addition, some worm eggs hatch within hours of defecation and consequently will not be visible in the faecal float resulting in a false negative.

Step Two: Remove the green filtration from the analyser and use the end of it to place a sample of faeces into the bottom white casing. The sample should be approximately the size of a 10-cent piece or smaller.

Step Three: Replace the green filtration basket with the white case of the faecal analyzer. The filtration base will squish the faeces as it is returned to their correct place. Press down on the green filtration basket until it is locked in place.



### Ear mites

Ear mites are tiny eight-legged parasites that feed on the wax and oil in the animal's ear. All cats/kittens and dogs/puppies are susceptible to ear mites. However, outside, cats and dogs are more commonly found with them. Highly contagious, ear mites are passed via animal to animal contact and are barely detectable by the naked eye. An ear mite has a life cycle of three weeks.

### What are the Symptoms of Ear Mites?

- Excessive scratching and rubbing of the ears

- Head shaking
- Black or brown granular secretion
- Strong odour
- Obstruction of the ear canal
- Scratches or scabs around the ear

#### **Complications of untreated ear mites**

In addition to skin infections, ear mites can cause blood vessels inside the animal's ear to rupture from intense scratching and head shaking. They are also highly uncomfortable for the animal.

#### **How are ear mites diagnosed?**

A vet will use a cotton tip to take a sample from the ear. This sample will then be looked at under a microscope.

#### **How to treat ear mites**

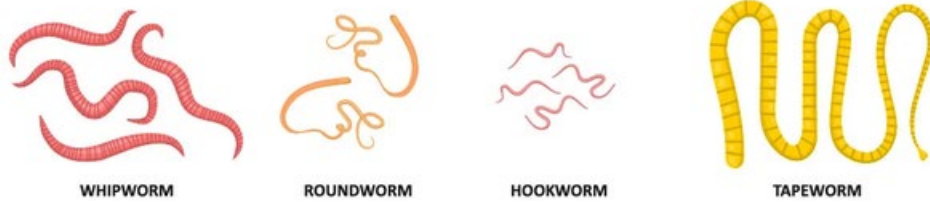
A vet will usually dispense ear drops. Remove the cap of the ear drop container, place the ear drop pointed end into the ear canal, and squeeze. Gently massage the ear. This will need to be done twice per day. If the cat is placed under sedation, the veterinary staff will do an ear flush to remove any debris that might still be in the ear.



#### **Intestinal Worms**

One of the most common problems in cats (and dogs) is intestinal worms. A faecal sample will need to be provided to diagnose if the animal has worms so the vet can look at it under the microscope. In addition, preventative treatments must be updated to avoid illness related to worm burdens.

## COMMON TYPES OF WORMS IN CATS AND DOGS



There are a variety of different worms, but the most common four are:

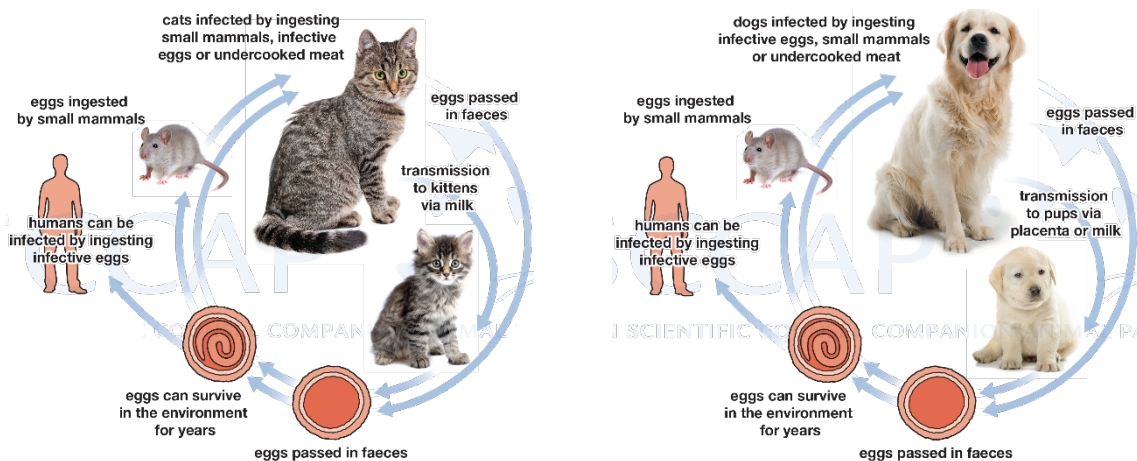
### Roundworm

A large percentage of kittens and puppies are born with roundworm or their larvae in their tissues. It is transferred to the developing animal in the uterus from the mother. Roundworm larvae can also be transmitted to nursing babies. The larvae make their way to the intestinal tract, where they can grow to 12.5cm.

The adult worm will start shedding eggs and try to house them in the host animal's intestinal tract. Female roundworms can produce around 200,000 eggs in just one day. These eggs have a hard outer shell which allows them to exist in soil for years.

Animals with active roundworms in the intestines often have swollen bellies and poor growth. The worms may be seen in vomit or stool and, if not treated, can create an intestinal blockage in severe cases and cause death. Roundworm also affects adult cats and dogs. However, the larvae can remain dormant in tissue and activate in the late stages of pregnancy.

Worming the mother does not affect the larvae in the tissue and cannot prevent the worms from infecting the newborn. Almost all wormers work on the adult parasite in the intestinal tract.



### Tapeworm

Tapeworm is transmitted through fleas. Fleas consume tapeworm eggs and then jump onto the cat (or dog). Tapeworms can grow to 15cm and can be broken up into 90 segments though it is just the last segments that are released into faeces. Therefore, many cases can just be diagnosed by seeing

these segments when the animals pass faeces, but otherwise, a vet can see the eggs under a microscope.

### **Whipworm**

This parasite is seen more commonly in dogs. Adult whipworms look like tiny pieces of thread, although they are rarely seen in faeces. Instead, they live in the cecum, the first section of the large intestine. Infestations are difficult to prove because the whipworms shed comparatively fewer eggs. However, if a dog presents with chronic weight loss and passes stool with a covering of mucus, whipworm may be the cause. Whipworm seldom causes death but is a nuisance for the dog and can be treated with an all wormer.

### **Hookworm**

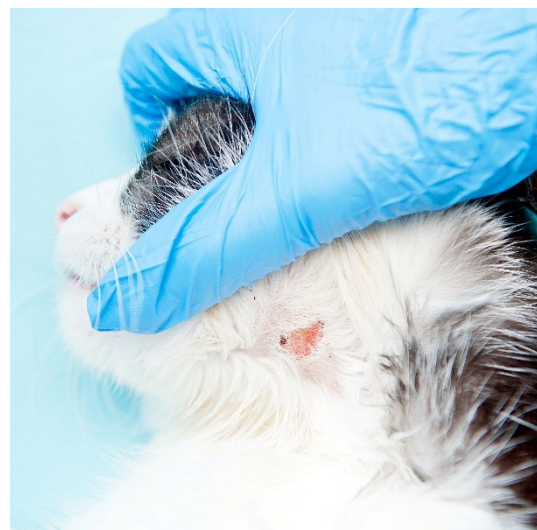
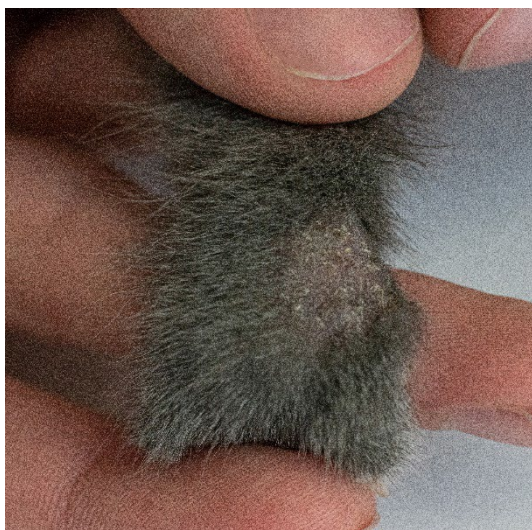
This parasite is again more common in dogs. They are tiny, thin worms that fasten to the small intestine wall and suck blood. Hookworm is spread via larval migration in the uterus, from contact with the larvae in stool-contaminated soil or ingesting the eggs after birth. Hookworm larvae can also be transferred from the nursing pup through milk. A severe hookworm infestation can kill puppies, often making them anaemic from losing blood to the hookworm. In dogs, hookworm is a common illness cause, with symptoms of bloody diarrhoea, lethargy, weight loss and pale gums or anaemia. Medication dispensed from the foster vets is used to treat a hookworm infestation.

### **Ringworm**

A ringworm is not caused by a worm, as the name suggests. Instead, it is caused by a fungus that infects the skin, hair and nails. It is a highly contagious disease that leads to patchy, circular hair loss that can be spread to other pets and humans. Any animal can develop ringworm; younger, stressed, or immuno-suppressed animals are more susceptible.

#### **What are the symptoms of ringworm?**

Classic symptoms of ringworm in animals include skin lesions generally found on the face, chin, ears and forelimbs. The lesions appear flaky, bald patches that sometimes look red in the centre. There may be localised areas of redness or dandruff in mild cases, while in more severe cases, lesions can be all over the body. Animals can have ringworm spores on their coats and not develop lesions.



### **How does an animal develop ringworm?**

Ringworm is highly contagious and can spread through direct contact with an infected animal or another vector. This can be as simple as a litter tray, bowl, bedding or other materials the infected host has been in contact with. Ringworm spores are notoriously hardy and can survive in an environment for a year if not sanitised correctly.

### **How is ringworm diagnosed?**

The first sign of ringworm is scaly hair loss patches. If this is noted, a vet appointment should be made. The cat will be looked at under a black light. Approximately 50% of the case will glow an apple green colour under this light. A fungal culture, also known as a Fungassay, will be taken regardless of whether the lesion glows if the vet thinks it is suspicious. Hair is plucked from the area and placed in the middle of the Fungassay. The culture is kept at room temperature and monitored for colour change and fungal growth for 14 days. Positive results can show in as little as 48 hours.

### **Treatment for ringworm**

Ringworm is treated with oral medication, and they may also be bathed in a medicated shampoo provided by the AWLQ foster vets. The cat must be kept away from other animals and in a cleanable area to avoid infection to other pets. Ensure you wear the appropriate PPE provided by the foster office or vet team and use basic hygiene.

## **Conjunctivitis**

Conjunctivitis is the inflammation of the conjunctiva of the eye. The conjunctiva is a mucous membrane similar to the lining of the mouth and nose.

### **What causes conjunctivitis?**

The conjunctiva is the moist tissue covering the eyeball's front part and lines the eyelids. Breeds with allergies or auto-immune skin diseases tend to have more problems with inflammation of the conjunctiva. They are also more likely to have dry eyes, resulting from a condition in which the animal is allergic to substances in the environment, such as pollen, that would not usually cause health problems.

Feline Herpes Virus is the most common cause of eye infections in cats and kittens. Complications of this virus may involve corneal ulcers, which, in the worst-case scenario, can result in the eye being removed.

Feline Chlamydia will generally infect young cats or kittens. It is a common cause of conjunctivitis.

Feline Calicivirus causes cold-like symptoms like the Feline Herpes Virus; however, cats can develop mouth, tongue, nose, or throat ulcers. This virus does not cause corneal ulcers.

Other less common causes can be:

- Allergy
- Injury, such as a scratch to the eye
- Foreign objects in the eye
- Congenital disabilities such as trim or absent tear ducts



### What are the symptoms of conjunctivitis?

The first sign of eye infection is redness and swelling of the eye. The eye may appear watery, and the cat may begin to squint or excessively blink. The watch may contain pus or mucous discharge that will cause the eyelids to stick together. The virus may affect one or both eyes.

### How is conjunctivitis treated?

Please get in touch with the foster office ASAP so an appointment can be made with the foster vets, who will examine the cat and dispense eye medication if needed.



### Kennel Cough

*Kennel cough, the common name given to infectious canine tracheobronchitis, is a highly contagious respiratory disease among dogs. As the name suggests, it is typified by inflammation of the trachea and bronchi. This disease is known to infect a high percentage of dogs at least once in their lifetime. Healthy adult dogs will recover quite quickly on antibiotics. However, young puppies and older dogs with a lower immunity may suffer the most severe complications from this disease and have symptoms for a more extended period. In addition, dogs will often develop clinical signs 3 – 4 days after exposure. Therefore, a dog showing kennel cough should be kept quarantined and away from other dogs to avoid infecting others.*

#### Symptoms

- A persistent cough
- Retching
- Nasal discharge
- Lethargy
- Loss of appetite
- Fever

In mild cases, the dogs are often active and eating normally; however, in severe cases, symptoms may progress into pneumonia, inappetence, fever, lethargy and even death.

### **How is kennel cough treated?**

A veterinarian will check the dog for symptoms. If they are found to have kennel cough, they will be put onto an antibiotic medication.

**A preventative kennel cough vaccination can be administered by a vet once per year.**

## **Parvovirus**

Canine Parvovirus is a highly contagious viral disease that can prove life-threatening to puppies and dogs. The virus attacks rapidly, dividing cells in a dog's body, most severely affecting the intestinal tract. Parvovirus also attacks the white blood cells, and when young animals are infected, the virus can damage the heart muscle and cause lifelong cardiac problems.

### **What are the symptoms of parvovirus?**

Parvovirus generally incubates for five to ten days before exposure before symptoms begin to show. Symptoms vary from dog to dog, but the most common ones seen are:

- Lethargy
- Loss of appetite
- Fever
- Vomiting
- Bloody, foul-smelling diarrhoea

Because of these initial symptoms, the dog may become dehydrated and infected.

### **How is parvovirus diagnosed?**

A veterinarian will need to perform a test on a sample of the dog's stool. The virus is shed in the faeces, and the test will show a positive result. However, sometimes the test may initially show as negative because the dog has not begun to shed the virus.

### **How is parvovirus spread?**

Parvo is highly contagious and can be transmitted by any object contacting an infected dog's faeces. The virus can survive in the environment for months or even years and may survive on inanimate objects such as food bowls, shoes, clothes, carpets and floors. The most common way an unvaccinated dog contracts this virus is from public places such as dog parks and pavements, especially in urban areas with many dogs.

### **How is parvovirus treated?**

There is no treatment for Parvovirus! The vet team can only provide supportive care for the symptoms. The dog will need to be hospitalised and go onto an IV drip to keep them hydrated. An antibiotic and anti-nausea medication will also have to be administered via IV. Blood transfusions are also required. Not all dogs will recover. Puppies and senior dogs are less likely to survive the illness as their immune system is weaker than an average dog's.

**Parvovirus can be avoided by the dogs receiving a yearly vaccination!**



## Conclusion

This manual is simply a guide for informative purposes only; all health concerns must be voiced to the foster coordinator as soon as possible.

If your foster animal displays any of the following medical symptoms during the foster period, please get in touch with the foster office to arrange a vet check appointment:

- Sneezing and congestion with green/yellow discharge from the nose and/or eyes
- Coughing, wheezing or heavy breathing
- Diarrhoea or vomiting
- Straining to urinate or defecate
- Bleeding from any part of the body
- Lethargy
- Fever
- Paralysis
- An extreme change in attitude or behaviour
- Not eating or drinking regularly

**Note: The foster emergency number can only be called out of hours if your foster animal cannot wait to be seen the next day. For potentially life-threatening emergencies, phone 0438 191 242 and follow the direction of the emergency nurse.**

If your foster animal goes missing, please contact the foster office immediately, check with neighbours, put up posters and notify all local vets.

Please be advised that foster dogs and puppies are not to be taken to dog parks and are not allowed off-leash while in public at any time.

Before taking your foster dog/puppy to any public place, confirm their vaccination history with the foster coordinator and be given permission first.

Without your help and ongoing support, we would be unable to continue with our success of rehoming thousands of stray and abandoned animals each year.

**Fostering is one of the most important ways you can help animals in need. Providing our residents somewhere to stay for just a short amount of time helps save lives.**

**Thank you for choosing to foster for AWLQ – you have one of the most important roles at the shelter – they allow us to keep our promise to thousands of animals every year.**

# Foster Parent Feedback Form – Cats

Cat's name: \_\_\_\_\_

How many people are living in the household? Adult's \_\_\_\_\_ Children \_\_\_\_\_

Ages of children: \_\_\_\_\_

Am I sociable with children (Y/N)? \_\_\_\_\_ Suitable ages:  0-5 years  5-10 years  10+ years

additional notes: \_\_\_\_\_

Are there other pets in the household? \_\_\_\_\_

Am I sociable with the other pets in the household? \_\_\_\_\_

Am I sociable with strangers?  Hides away  Neutral  Extremely sociable

additional notes: \_\_\_\_\_

Do I get on well with other cats?  Timid  Sociable  Dominant  Not sure

additional notes: \_\_\_\_\_

Have I ever met a dog (Y/N)? \_\_\_\_\_ Additional notes: \_\_\_\_\_

Where have I been sleeping? \_\_\_\_\_

Am I a fussy eater (Y/N)? \_\_\_\_\_ Additional notes: \_\_\_\_\_

Do I like to be picked up (Y/N)? \_\_\_\_\_ Additional notes: \_\_\_\_\_

Where do I like to sit?  On your lap  Beside you  Not very interested

Is there any place I don't like to be handled? \_\_\_\_\_

Am I scared of loud noises?  Thunder  Fireworks  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

How long am I left alone during the day? \_\_\_\_\_

Would I make a great companion cat or would I suit a home with no other cats? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Do I settle in quickly (Y/N)? \_\_\_\_\_ Additional notes: \_\_\_\_\_

What are some things that I like? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# Foster Parent Feedback Form – Dogs

Dog's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

How many people are living in the household? Adult's \_\_\_\_ Children \_\_\_\_

Ages of children: \_\_\_\_\_

Am I sociable with children (Y/N)? \_\_\_\_\_ Suitable ages:  0-5 years  5-10 years  10+ years

Additional notes: \_\_\_\_\_

Are there other pets in the household? \_\_\_\_\_

Am I sociable with the other pets in the household? \_\_\_\_\_

Am I sociable with strangers?  Hides away  Neutral  Extremely sociable

Additional notes: \_\_\_\_\_

Do I get on well with cats?  Timid  Sociable  Dominant  Not sure

Additional notes: \_\_\_\_\_

Am I sociable with other dogs?  Timid  Sociable  Aggressive  Not sure

Additional notes: \_\_\_\_\_

Where have I been sleeping? \_\_\_\_\_

Can I?  Sit  Stay  Drop  Walk nicely on lead

Do I like to play with toys (Y/N)? Additional notes: \_\_\_\_\_

Am I a fussy eater (Y/N)? \_\_\_\_\_ what time am I fed (AM/PM)? \_\_\_\_\_

Additional notes: \_\_\_\_\_

Is there any place I don't like to be handled? \_\_\_\_\_

Am I scared of loud noises (Y/N)? \_\_\_\_\_  Thunder  Fireworks  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Additional notes: \_\_\_\_\_

Have I shown any separation anxiety?  Barking when alone  Destruction  Escaping  None

Additional notes: \_\_\_\_\_

Has anything been tried to help with my separation anxiety?  Crate training  Laundry  N/A

How long am I left alone during the day? \_\_\_\_\_

Household fencing: Height \_\_\_\_\_ Type \_\_\_\_\_

Would I make a great companion dog or would I suit a home with no other dogs? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Do I settle in quickly (Y/N)? \_\_\_\_\_ Additional notes: \_\_\_\_\_

What are some things that I like? \_\_\_\_\_