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**FOSTERS: FEEDING KITTENS**

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**Foster Care Sheet: Feeding Kittens**

**Feeding Kittens- where to start?**

• Kittens should always have full access to dry kitten food and water at all times. Purina Kitten Chow is a favorite for older kittens and Royal Canin Mom and Baby Cat for young kittens.

• Offer 3oz canned food 3-4 times a day PER kitten. Each kitten is different. Some prefer pate, while other prefer shreds or chunky. Experiment with different flavors, consistencies and brands.

• Baby Cat Canned is a great option for kittens that are just learning how to eating solid food (3.5-5 wks). It can be mixed into a slurry with formula and syringe fed.

**How much should kittens eat per day?**

This chart is based on the weight of kitten, nutritional needs and average caloric content of canned/kitten food

1lb: 4-7oz canned\* or 1/4-1/3 cup dry\*\*
1.5lbs: 5-7.5 oz canned or 1/3-1/2 cup dry
2lbs: 6-8oz canned or 3/8-1/2 cup dry
2.5lbs: 7-9oz canned or 3/8-1/2 cup dry
3lbs: 8-9.5oz canned or 1/2 to 5/8 cup dry
3.5lbs: 8.5-10.5oz canned or 1/2 to 5/8 cup dry
4lbs: 9.5-11oz canned or 5/8 cup dry
5lbs: 10-13oz canned of 3/4 cup dry

\*Standard size canned cat food: 5.5 oz (large, tuna fish size, Friskies, Nine Lives), 3oz (small, Fancy Feast, Meow Mix) \*\*Most kittens will eat a combination of canned and dry food to fulfill their nutritional requirements.

**How do I know if my kitten is eating enough?** The kitten is gaining weight. Kittens over 4 weeks old should gain about 0.5oz to 1oz per day. If your kitten fails to gain 0.5oz per day, please contact veterinary staff for advice. Once kittens reach 3lbs, their growth starts to slow down and will not gain every single day, but should still be gaining at a steady rate.

**How often should I feed kittens?** 3.5-6 weeks –Offer gruel (Canned food mixed with water or formula) 4 times a day. Dry kitten food available at all times. For kittens just learning to eat kibble, you try to add warm water to kibble or mash up kibble into smaller bits. Sit with them at each feeding and encourage them to eat. 6-8 weeks– Offer canned food 3-4 times a day. Dry kitten food available at all times. >8 weeks- Offer canned 3 times a day. Dry kitten food available at all times.

**Tips for Feeding Kittens**

1. Use a wide shallow, tip-proof bowl for dry food. Use a saucer or small paper plate for canned food.
2. Ideally, each kitten should have their own plate of food to decrease competition. Timid kittens can easily get pushed aside by their siblings.
3. Canned food that has been refrigerated should be warmed prior to giving to kittens.
4. Mixing water or unflavored Pedialyte with canned food may make it easier to kittens to eat.
5. If kittens are not eating well, try a variety of flavors and brands. Most kittens under 3 months prefer pate food because it is easier for them to eat. However, there are some kittens that will happily eat chunky/gravy type canned food.