



MORRIS

ANIMAL REFUGE

- America's First Animal Shelter -

Cat Foster Care Manual

1242 Lombard Street - Philadelphia, PA 19147

(215) 735-9570

www.morrisanimalrefuge.org



Why Foster?

Foster homes are an essential part of rescuing! It provides temporary homes for animals in need, and it also helps with overcrowding at the shelter. When you open your home to a foster animal, you are not only saving his / her life, you are also freeing up a kennel spot to save the next animal in need! Fostering can be time consuming, but it is a very rewarding experience. The Refuge is in need of loving homes who can accommodate moms with nursing kittens, litter of orphaned neonates, and adult cats until they are adoption ready!

The more foster homes we have, the more animals we can save!

Responsibilities:

As a foster you must be willing and able to:

- Provide basic care such as food, water, shelter, medication, and training.
- Isolate your new foster for a minimum of **two weeks**. This is very critical and will help you keep an eye out for illnesses!
- Keep your fosters up to date on vaccines, and any necessary medical care by coming back to our facility for follow up care.
- Promote your foster, and find them a loving permanent home!

Contact Information

Hours of Operation:

Mon, Tue, Thu, Sat	8:30 am – 4:30 pm
Wed, Fri	8:30 am – 7:00 pm
Sun	8:30 am – 4:30 pm

**Thursdays the Refuge is closed to the public.*

Address: 1242 Lombard Street - Philadelphia, PA 19147

Telephone: (215) 735-9570

Fax: 215.735.6398

Website: www.morrisanimalrefuge.org

Elisa Mellis, Director of Operations

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(610) 212-6966

Josiah Ortiz, Medical & Foster Care Coordinator

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(267) 357-3794

Ashley Rivera, Volunteer & Assistant Foster Care Coordinator

arivera@morrisanimalrefuge.org

General Inquiries

Foster@morrisanimalrefuge.org

****In the event of an emergency please contact the Elisa or Josiah!****

Preparing for a Foster / Basic Care

It is important to make your home ready for a new animal! MAR will provide food, litter, medication and any other supplies you may need.

Where to Keep Your Foster(s)

It's recommended to keep your foster isolated from your resident pets for a minimum of two weeks. This isolation period will help you identify any illness your foster may be carrying and will reduced stress for both the foster and your resident pets. During these two weeks, your foster should be placed in a quiet area where they can decompress. Many fosters choose to use a spare bedroom or bathroom and use a crate. Once the two weeks have passed, and you are confident that they are not sick, you can start to introduce them to your resident pets.

Cat Proofing

Before letting your foster(s) settle in, please ensure that all areas are pet-safe!

- Check for any small spaces, holes or nooks a cat may be able to fit in.
- Heating and air vents should be properly covered.
- Hide / secure any breakable items.
- Any window in the room should always remain closed or securely

screened.

- Keep trash cans covered or away completely.
- Secure any loose wires, and keep them out of reach.
- Keep all medications, cleaners and other chemicals on high shelves.

Food

Moms with nursing kittens, and kittens who are eating on their own should have access to both dry and wet food. Wet food should be offered twice a day and dry food and water should be available all the time.

Neonatal kittens (under one month old) who are not eating on their own should be bottle fed KMR (Kitten Milk Replacer). These kittens should *never* be given cows milk as it is not good for their digestive systems. Bottle feeder kittens will need to be fed every 2 - 3 hours and will have to be stimulated to eliminate.

Borderline kittens (~ 5 weeks old) can be slowly weaned off of KMR and can be introduced to gruel by mixing wet food with water. You can either keep bottle feeding or start syringe feeding to avoid messy kittens. Over time, you can gradually decrease the water in the mixture and introduce them to wet food in a bowl.

Kittens eating on their own (~ 6 - 7 weeks) should be offered both wet and dry food.

Litter and Litter Boxes

Litter boxes should be placed somewhere that is easily accessible, and cleaned daily. Clumping litter is not safe for kittens under 12 weeks! Clay / Non Clumping litter is best to use.

Foster(s) Should Always Have:

- Clean water and food at all times.
- Clean litter box(s).
- Bedding, such as small beds or blankets. Heating pad or heat source for neonates.
- Toys - will keep your foster(s) entertained and out of trouble!

Medical Information & Concerns

Depending on the age of your foster(s), you may have to come back to MAR multiple times for booster vaccinations, dewormer and other medication or testing. Please pay close attention on revaccination dates, which can be found in your foster paperwork.

It is important for fosters to observe any changes in an animal's appearance, behavior and health in order to detect any signs of illness. The following are symptoms that will require immediate attention:

- Difficulty breathing, erratic breathing pattern, gasping for air.
- Very high or low body temperature.
- Very pale, blue, or grey gums.
- Weight loss.
- Diarrhea.
- Vomiting.
- Sneezing or coughing.
- Seizures or neurologic symptoms.
- Accidental injury or trauma, including but not limited to cuts and fractures.
- Unable to stand or walk.
- Failure to eat or drink. (Two days for adult cats, one day for kittens)
- Signs of lethargy or uncharacteristic / abnormal behavior.
- Straining to urinate or not urinating for more than 24 hours.
- Failure to defecate for more than two days.
- Difficulty giving birth.

If your foster(s) is experiencing any of these symptoms, please call Elisa or Josiah immediately!

Scheduling Spay / Neuter

If your foster is at the appropriate weight (2 lbs for kittens), free of any illnesses and not on any medication, please email foster@morrisanimalrefuge.org to schedule an appointment to get them spayed / neutered. Please remember to include the animal's ID number and gender.

Pre-Surgery Care

In order for your foster to undergo surgery, they must be in good health. Your foster should not have access to any food or water starting at midnight the night before surgery.

Day of Surgery

Surgery is a same day procedure. You can drop your foster off between 8:30 am - 10 am, and once your foster is ready to be picked up, you'll receive a phone call.

Post-Surgery Care

Limit activity and place your foster in a quiet place to recover. A small amount of food should be given 4 - 6 hours after surgery. If your foster vomits, do not be alarmed, it is a side effect from the anesthesia. However, if your foster does continue to vomit throughout the night, please call Elisa or Josiah.

You will receive a detailed sheet of after-care instructions when you pick up your foster.

Finding an Adopter

Online Promotion

Many adopters start their search for their new pet right online! Using social media is an effective way of giving your foster exposure. Post your foster on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc. You can also promote them to your family and friends!

In your foster folder, you'll find a bio questionnaire which can be filled out and sent to foster@morrisanimalrefuge.org along with a few photos. We'll then create a bio and post your foster on MARs website and other social media sites.

Adoption Events

Attending adoption events is a great opportunity to get your foster adopted. Email foster@morrisanimalrefuge.org to find out about any upcoming events!

Off-Site Placement

We have one PetSmart location located on 13th and Chestnut where we can house cats. If your foster is fixed, up to date on shots and free of any illness please email foster@morrisanimalrefuge.org to inquire about placing your foster at this location.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What if I have to leave town and my foster(s) isn't ready to be adopted?

A. Occasionally things come up that require you to leave town before your Fosters are ready to be adopted. No worries! If this happens, please call us to arrange for the foster animals' care.

Q. How much time do I need to spend with the fosters?

A. As much time as you possibly can! The more time you spend with your fosters, the more you will help with their socialization. You'll also spot symptoms when/if your fosters are not feeling well - with young kittens that could be critical since they are so fragile. Besides, it's a lot of fun to play with your foster animals!

Q. What if I get overwhelmed and can't take care of my foster animals any longer?

A. If you feel that you are unable to give adequate care to your fosters, contact us right away and make arrangements to bring the animals back to the shelter.

Q. How long will I have to foster for?

A. While there is no certain time frame, ideally cats and kittens should be in foster care as short a time as possible. Neonates will have to be over 2 lbs / 8 weeks in order to be spayed/neutered and adopted out.

Q. My foster(s) kitten has reached 2 lbs, what's next?

A. If your foster(s) is over 2 lbs and not sick or on any medication, please contact us to make an appointment to bring the kitten in for surgery!

Q. Can I adopt my foster animal?

A. Absolutely! Foster parents are given the first opportunity to adopt. (Standard adoption fees will still apply).

Q. Who do I call in case of a medical emergency?

A. Call the Director of Operations immediately at (610) - 212 - 6966!

Q. Can I take my foster animal to a private vet for medical care?

A. No, you must seek all medical care at the shelter. MAR will not / cannot reimburse for any outside veterinary care!