

Kitten Litter Raising

The first months of a kitten's life help shape who they become as a cat!



HELPFUL TIPS

To prevent fear, aggression & anxiety

REDUCE STRESS FOR MOM

Make mom's pregnancy as stress-free as possible. Keep her comfortable and well-fed. Stress hormones can hurt the kittens.

FIRST FEW WEEKS

After kittens are born give them and Mom a clean, warm, quiet place to sleep inside. In most cases, Mom will do all the work to feed and clean her kittens for the first few weeks. Check on them every few hours, to make sure they are warm and well-fed, and that Mom is producing milk. If Mom leaves their area, keep the kittens warm. They cannot regulate their own body temperature until they're several weeks old.

TIP: Mother cats may move their kittens (even to a new spot in the same room) if they feel their nest was not safe, or is uncomfortable.

HEALTH & MEDICAL CARE

Get them to a vet to be checked out when they are 2-3 weeks old. Later, at 6 weeks old, kittens will need their first in a series of 2-3 vaccinations.

Kittens should not be exposed to germs or public surfaces until they've been completely vaccinated.

QUESTIONS? Email info@nagifoundation.org



FOOD & NUTRITION



- Kittens get nutrition from mom the first couple weeks, like humans, and begin nursing within a few hours to receive colostrum, which is full of important nutrients and antibodies to prevent infection.
- If mom did not make it, or is missing, get kitten milk replacer/formula (like KMR) and bottle-feed. Do not feed cow's milk. It does not have the necessary nutrition that kittens need and it contains lactose, which cats can't digest.
- Around 5 weeks, kittens begin to wean so you should start slowly introducing Gruel - 2 parts wet kitten food mixed with 1 part warm water to make a soupy consistency. Feed on a saucer or very shallow bowl.
- Mom also needs good nutrition during this time. She needs more calories than usual to nourish kittens so she should eat as much as she wants. Feed her wet or dry kitten food - it has more calories and nutrients.



Kitten Gruel or Slurry?

Some kittens need more help transitioning to solid foods. If they don't eat the gruel, try offering slurry. Mix kitten milk replacer with a small amount of wet kitten food. Start slow with tastes on your finger or spoon and let them get used to the new flavors and texture before letting them eat from a saucer. Slowly increase the ratio to more wet food and less formula and eventually remove the milk replacer and try Gruel again.

SOCIALIZATION

Socializing kittens is **CRITICAL**. It will mean the difference between a cat that can happily live with humans and one that can't. The more positive interactions they have with humans at a young age, the better chance they have to become social, friendly kittens.



- First few weeks, on a daily basis gently touch all four paws, ears, tail, and stroke the back. Pick up and hold kittens close to your body to keep them warm. Expose them to low-level noises like soft music and talking.
- At 4 weeks old start picking up paws, apply gentle pressure to toes, softly touch insides of the ear, pick up and hold with a towel, introduce to a crate, and toys.
- At 8 weeks old start to expose to more sounds at low volume, like babies, dogs, street noise, doorbells etc. You can also start introducing more people: men, women, people with different heights, people with hats, beards, glasses etc. but don't allow people to be aggressive in handling them. Take it slow.

Want to learn more about kitten raising?

www.KittenLady.org is a great resource with free comprehensive guides and videos