

Foster FAQ

Thank you for your interest in Fostering for the Henry County Humane Society! Because of people like you we are able to save more lives! We recommend saving this form and/or printing it out for future reference.

How many animals can I foster at once? How often can I foster per year?

- You can foster up to two groups if you are able to keep them fully separated and utilize separate supplies. Exceptions will be made at the discretion of the Foster Coordinator.
- You are more than welcome to foster for other organizations as well, you can have foster animals from different organizations in your care at the same time if you are able to keep them separated
- Length of time between fosters is completely up to you! "Regulars" are fosters that prefer to take foster animals "back to back". The day of your fosters return appointment, we will offer to send someone home with you, or see if you prefer to take a break before taking your next foster(s) home.
- **Foster appointments (including pickup appointments, re-check appointments, and vaccine appointments) are completed Monday through Friday between the hours of Noon-6:15pm.**

How will you contact me if there's an animal in need of a foster home?

Upon approval of your foster application. You will only be contacted when animals are in need of foster placement that you have selected on your foster application. You may change your selection at any time by contacting the Foster Coordinator. Your selection on your application will only be used to determine if you will be contacted.

- **Animals that are considered urgent foster placement cannot stay at the shelter overnight.** The foster coordinator will also contact active fosters via text, email, or phone call whose application fits the description of the animal(s) in need of foster placement. Examples of urgent cases include puppies and kittens 4-5 weeks old and younger, sick animals that would need continued care after hours, and in some cases pregnant/nursing animals.
- If you are contacted when an animal is in need of foster placement and you are unavailable, simply let the Coordinator know you are unavailable at that time. Let the Coordinator know when you would be available so you are not contacted until then!
- You may be contacted via email, text, or phone call when an animal is in need of placement. You are always welcome to say no, but if you do not respond to these requests we may assume you are taking a break, and stop reaching out. You will be on our active foster list for an entire calendar year unless you let us know you are done fostering!

Text message is the primary method of communication when you have a foster animal in your care. You must be able to answer texts from the foster department within 24 hours.

What is a quarantine period?

- For any foster pet you bring home, we highly recommend a 2-week quarantine period. Most diseases have an incubation period of 2 weeks. Resident pets should be kept separated for two weeks and any other foster pets you have should be separated for at least two weeks. We also recommend washing your hands in between interacting with foster animals and resident pets. If a resident animal develops an illness or internal parasite, HCHS is not responsible for the care or treatment of that animal.

Our Foster Coordinator can provide additional information on fostering adult dogs or puppies 8 weeks of age and older if you are unable to complete a quarantine period! • Most diseases have an incubation period of 2 weeks. This means that an animal can come into contact with a disease but they may not show symptoms for up to 14 days. So, for example, if you were to bring home a "healthy" kitten and immediately introduce to your resident animal(s), there's always that possibility that the kitten could start showing signs of a contagious disease a few days later.

- **Please note: Every cat and kitten is FeLV tested upon intake, but if the kitten is too young, or too sick, we might not be able to perform the blood test and it will be postponed. If that's the case, you would be taking home a kitten that has a pending blood test. We don't see FeLV often, but if the kitten is positive with it, there's a possibility it could be spread to your cat if not kept separated. You are more than welcome to ask us if the kitten(s) you are taking home have been tested yet. But keep in mind even if they are FeLV negative, we still recommend a 2week quarantine period.**

What happens if my animal gets an illness from my foster animal?

- Any illness or injury that may occur with your animals is your responsibility. We can treat our own "owned" animals, but cannot send you home with medication for a resident pet. That will be up to you and your veterinarian. We recommend resident pets be separated from fosters for this reason as well as be up to date on vaccines, and preventatives as per your veterinarian's recommendations.
- **It is required that your animals are up to date on age appropriate vaccines and medical care per your veterinarian's recommendations. (See below)** Medical records of resident pets are required upon request. Resident animals must be UTD on vaccines to be able to foster for the safety of your own pets, as well as ours. If your animal becomes sick with a contagious illness, please refrain from bringing home a foster until your Veterinarian gives you the okay they are no longer contagious.

Medical care that should be performed on resident animals prior to fostering with HCHS (At the discretion of your Veterinarian):

Dogs: DA2PPv, Bordetella, Rabies (if age appropriate), UTD on a flea/tick prevention.

Cats: FVRCP, Rabies (If age appropriate), FeLV tested negative, UTD on a flea/tick prevention

Who is responsible for the vet care of my foster animal?

- HCHS is responsible for veterinary care and cost for our animals. All of our vaccines, deworming are done inhouse all other and surgeries and medical procedures are done at Napoleon Veterinary Clinic house.
- When fostering an animal, please be prepared to bring your foster pet to the shelter at least once every Two- Three weeks. Puppies and kittens have vaccines and deworming done every 3 weeks. When you pick up your foster animal, an appointment for your foster will be set at that time. Please be prepared to schedule your animals next vaccine/return appointment each time you visit the shelter with your animal. An text reminder will be sent to you 24 hours before your scheduled appointment. **Please be sure to be on time for your appointments, and to notify the Foster Coordinator at least 24 hours before your appointment if you cannot make it.** Foster appointments (including pickup appointments, re-check appointments, and vaccine appointments) are completed Monday through Friday between the hours of Noon-5:00pm.
- You may not give your foster pet over the counter medications, home remedies, or take them to another Veterinarian without prior approval from HCHS.
- It is your responsibility to monitor your foster animal and watch for signs of illness. You must contact the foster coordinator immediately if your animal is: Sneezing and/or having discharge from eyes/nose | Congested breathing | Loss of appetite | Lethargy (lack of energy) | Abdominal pain and bloating | Fever | Low body temperature | Vomiting | Diarrhea lasting more than 24 hours| Diarrhea with blood present|Cough that lasts more than 24 hours|

How long should I expect to foster an animal for?

- Kittens 8 weeks and older and 3-4 pounds can be Spayed/ Neutered and placed up for adoption. Puppies are Spayed/ Neutered at a later date but are still placed up for adoption. Length of time an animal will need to be fostered depends on the individual animal. If you take home a 4-week-old kitten, the kitten would need fostered for roughly 4 weeks.
- If you take home a pregnant dog/ cat. She would need fostered for until her puppies reach at least 8 weeks of age.
- Typically, once an animal is ready to be placed up for adoption, he/she will return to the shelter and stay here until they are adopted. If the animal has a medical condition and/or we feel it may take a little longer for them to be adopted, we will give you the option to take the animal back and foster them until he/she is adopted!

What should I do if I am bitten by my foster animal?

- The state of Ohio requires HCHS to keep record of all bites that break skin regardless if the bite was intentional or accidental. HCHS is required to quarantine the animal for 10 days to monitor for symptoms of Rabies, even if the animal has been vaccinated against Rabies. At the end of the 10-day quarantine, a veterinarian will perform a “post-bite” exam and release the animal from the 10day quarantine. All animals that are old enough to receive the Rabies vaccine (3 months of age) are required to be vaccinated against Rabies prior to being sent to a foster home.

- If you are bitten by your foster animal, you must email or text the Foster coordinator as soon as the incident occurs. Failure to report the incident may result in termination from the program at the Discretion of the Foster Coordinator.

Where should my foster Cat be housed?

- When you first bring your foster(s) home, we would suggest confining them to a single small room set up with food, water, and litter box so that they can acclimate to a smaller area before giving access to the rest of the home. The ideal “foster” room would be one that has either linoleum, hard wood, or tile flooring. Carpet or cat trees cannot be properly sanitized, and we do not recommend those items for at least the two-week quarantine period. We would suggest keeping your foster(s) in the room until you have confirmed that they are eating, drinking, and using the litter box, no longer hiding, and not showing any symptoms of illness before giving access to the rest of the home or introducing to your resident pets.
- It is under the fosters discretion if foster cats should be introduced to resident animals. Please keep in mind HCHS is not liable for illness or injury caused by your foster animal. The Foster Coordinator will inform you of any behavioral information we have on the cat before you take him/her home. If the cat is aggressive towards other cats or animals, you will be informed prior to taking said animal home, and instructed not to do introductions.
- **Do not allow your foster cat to go outside.**

Where should my foster kitten(s) be housed?

- 0-2 Weeks Old- A typical “cat carrier” would be ideal for kittens this age. You may also utilize a plastic tote without the lid. The only thing needed in the carrier would be a heat source, a cool area for the kitten(s) to move off of the heat source, and a fleece blanket. Providing a small stuffed animal will also allow the kitten to cuddle up to something!
- 3 Weeks Old- kittens this age are beginning to crawl and urinate/defecate by themselves. A cat carrier will still be sufficient, as long as it is big enough to allow a small litter box. Sometimes fosters will also use things such as storage bins (without the lid), play pens, or dog kennels. Please keep in mind these items will need to be able to be sanitized, not just cleaned.
- 4-6 Weeks Old- A small room, bathroom, play pen, or dog kennel would be ideal at this age. We would not recommend allowing the kitten to free roam in your house without direct supervision. Introducing your foster(s) to resident animals can begin around 5 weeks old under your discretion. Never leave your foster alone with a resident animal. We recommend a 2-week quarantine period first, and only introduce if your foster appears healthy, and is not having diarrhea.
- 7+ Weeks Old- A small room or bathroom would be ideal at this age. Kittens are active and curious and would need adequate space to run around and explore. The ideal room would have either linoleum, hardwood, or tile to be able to be properly cleaned and sanitized.
- **Do not allow your foster kitten(s) to go outside.**

Where should my pregnant/nursing cat be housed?

- A room with either linoleum, hard wood, or tile would be ideal. The mother cat should have an area away from resident animals to allow her to raise her kittens. Her kittens can begin to be socialized around resident animals after their quarantine period, and when they are around 4-5 weeks of age. Maternal Aggression – As moms hormones are increased, her natural instincts are to protect her kittens, and she may become aggressive towards humans or other animals. Do not try to introduce your resident pets to your foster mom as this adds too much stress to the environment. Sometimes if mother is experiencing a high volume of stress, she may begin to reject her kittens.
- Give mom lots of options where she can create a nest for her and her babies. Boxes, bins, a covered dog crate (left with a secured open door) are all good options a mother may choose to have/house her kittens. Keep in mind that it is up to the mom cat where she wants to have her babies. You may put in a lot of thought and energy into creating the “perfect nest” but mom may choose under the bed instead!
- An ideal room would be one that the kittens can grow up in would be ideal. If you have to move the family as the kittens age, it may stress mom out.
- Food, water, and a litter box should be close to the nest so the mom does not have to travel far from her babies. Keeping the water dish elevated is safer for young kittens to limit the chance of accidental drowning.

Where should my foster Dog be housed?

- Dogs should be kept indoors in a crate when alone or unsupervised. If your foster dog is not crate trained, a dog proofed-room would be ideal.
- Dogs should be on a leash at all times when outdoors unless in a fenced in backyard. Some dogs are able to jump/ climb fences. **Never leave a dog outside unsupervised, or tethered unsupervised.**
- Foster dogs are not allowed to visit dog parks.
- A dog to dog meet and greet can be done with any resident dogs prior to taking him/her home with you if you are unable to keep your foster separated from resident dog(s) long term.
- We do not do cat to dog introductions. Any history with other animals will be given to you prior to taking home a foster dog. If you are going to be introducing your foster dog to other animals, please inform the foster coordinator before taking the dog to foster.
- Most dogs in a shelter have unknown background history. HCHS will do their best to match you with a dog that is suitable for your household. We recommend all members be present when picking up a foster dog. If you have children under the age of 12, we highly recommend they be present when picking up a potential foster dog, especially if we do not have history on how the dog does with children.

Where should my foster puppy be housed? (10 weeks and under)

- A large puppy pen may be set up for puppies 5 weeks and under to be housed in. Please keep in mind puppies go through crucial developmental stages and socialization periods. Puppies should not be left in seclusion often and should be properly socialized.
- Puppies between 6-8 weeks old can be allowed supervised access to your home after the two-week quarantine period. Puppies should be left in a large play pen or puppy proofed bathroom with access to an area to relieve themselves inside. (ex. Puppy pads)
- Puppies 8 weeks old can begin crate training. Keep in mind that puppies this age can only hold their bladders for an average of 1-3 hours. If they will be unsupervised in a crate for a longer period, they should be housed in an area with access to a place to relieve themselves inside with puppy pads.
- **Puppies under 8 weeks of age need to be housed indoors only**, unless otherwise approved by HCHS. At this age, a puppy's immune system is not fully developed, and they are more prone to diseases such as parvovirus.
- Puppies are not permitted to go into pet stores, parks, or dog parks.
- Puppies are not allowed to interact with any unvaccinated dogs or puppies.

Where should my pregnant/nursing dog be housed?

- A large "puppy-proofed" room with either linoleum, hard wood, or tile would be ideal. The mother dog should never be allowed to interact with resident animals.
Maternal Aggression – As mom protects her puppies, she may become aggressive towards humans or other animals. Do not try to introduce your resident pets to your foster mom as this adds too much stress to the environment. Sometimes if mother is experiencing a high volume of stress, she may begin to reject her puppies.
- Mom should also be allowed access to a whelping box. A kid's pool would be sufficient!
- The room should be easy to clean, as well as allow enough space while the puppies grow.
- Some fosters set up a large kennel in a basement or garage. Keep in mind the space must be temperature regulated for the health and safety of mom and puppies. **Heat lamps are not a sufficient source of heat and are not recommended for use by HCHS.**

What is “puppy-proofed” or “kitten-proofed”?

To puppy or kitten proof a room/area, is to take away certain items and make the area as safe for puppies and kittens as possible. Young animals are curious in nature and bound to get into something they shouldn't. But we should do our best to make sure they are not exposed to dangerous situations or things as possible!

- o Contain wires and cords
- o Rocking chairs
- o Reclining chairs – kittens/small puppies can easily crawl inside or under the foot rest resulting in trauma from being crushed
- o Toilets - keep lids closed at all times
- o Bathtubs- keep water drained at all times
- o Doors - make sure foster animals are not behind doors that are being opened
- o Exits - keep unscreened doors and windows closed at all times when not in use
- o Washers and dryers - can crawl inside of the machines unnoticed or get stuck behind them
- o Other appliances - make sure that kittens cannot crawl behind or under refrigerators, ovens, etc.
- o Holes - make sure any holes in drywall or cabinetry are plugged or blocked
- o Small objects - rubber bands, strings, paperclips, and other small objects can be accidentally ingested
- o Chemicals - make sure they are put away
- o House plants - many are poisonous to cats, make sure they are out of reach
- o Electrical cords - can be sprayed with bitter apple, covered with tape or "cord covers" to prevent chewing.

Is Fostering Right for Me?

Foster families are vital to our organization and act as a temporary guardian for a variety of animals. A foster provides housing and care away from the shelter for a variety of reasons - and our fosters are a vital part to our organization and helping our animals in need.

Remember, "goodbye is the goal!" The end goal is to get your animal adoption-ready and on their way to their forever home so your home is then ready for the next animal in need! If this sounds like a program that fits your lifestyle and your passions, our foster program may be the perfect fit for you!

What Should I Be Prepared for with Fostering?

Becoming a pet foster parent can be an incredibly rewarding experience, but there are a few things to keep in mind as you prepare to become a part of our foster network!

- You are able to sign up for the type of animal and cases you are prepared and equipped to handle. Animals are sent to foster homes for a variety of reasons - from being too young for adoption, unavailable for adoption medically, or the animal is struggling behaviorally in a shelter environment.

- Although fostering is an incredibly rewarding experience (and can be fun), there are associated risks with fostering, especially when fostering young and neonatal animals or medical cases. Please keep in mind that although HCHS will provide you with all resources and medical care you will need, you may have to deal with the loss of a foster animal depending on the types of animals you choose to foster.
- "Goodbye is the goal!" Be prepared for the end goal of saying goodbye to one foster animal, and bringing another one into your home. Fostering is not a trial run to adopt an animal, and the point of our foster placements is to be a temporary home for our animals until they're ready for adoption!

What Do I Need for Fostering?

- **Quarantine space** - For any foster pet you bring home, HCHS recommends a quarantine period away from any resident animals in a room or bathroom that can be easily cleaned and sanitized. This is to help limit disease exposure to resident animals, as well as future fosters, as the typical incubation period for many diseases is 14 days.
- **Schedule Flexibility** - Foster animals will have to regularly return to the Henry County Humane Society for check-ups and vaccinations throughout their time in foster. Appointment times for check-ups and vaccinations are currently offered Monday through Friday during operating hours of 12pm-5pm.
- **Internet and email access** - All correspondences with our foster department and foster coordinator will take place through email or text message. We ask that all fosters be able to easily access their email and phones and respond to emails/texts within 24 hours of receiving them.

Do I Have the Time to Commit to Fostering?

- **The length of time in a foster home is usually 2-8 weeks**, although shorter and longer foster commitment may be available from time to time. The expected length of time for a foster animal will be discussed prior to you taking them home.