



Foster Care Reference Guide

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Overview & Contact Information

Thank you for your interest in fostering with us at Lost Our Home Pet Rescue! By opening your heart and your home to these foster pets that are desperately in need, you are helping to save lives.

Our Mission at Lost Our Home (LOH) is helping people and saving pets. For every foster pet-parent that opens their heart and home, that is another pet saved from further suffering. A foster pet parent takes in the pet as their own, loving them and caring for all their daily needs, while helping them adapt to a new home and feel safe.

This was made to guide you through the foster process, introduce our protocols and requirements, what to expect, and more.

You aren't in this alone: Nothing sets up a foster for success more than a powerful communication tool and immediate response. By using Maddie's Pet Assistant, we are able to do just that! Maddie's® Pet Assistant is a unique app for mobile phones and tablets developed by Maddie's Fund® to help animal shelters and rescue organizations provide support to and communicate with caregivers after pets go home. The app gives caregivers the opportunity to submit questions, photos and videos and take surveys. Via submitted surveys, your organization can gather valuable information about how the pet is doing in their foster or adoptive home, especially as it relates to potential problems or challenges. Please see the following website for a quick and guide on how to download this amazing resource: <https://www.maddiesfund.org/how-to-log-into-the-mobile-phone-app.htm#Downloading>

We also have a Facebook group for our foster families to discuss their foster adventures! Join the LOH Foster Family at: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/lohfooster>

What we provide: Lost Our Home provides foster pet parents with all the necessary items required to foster, including food, bowls, beds, leashes, blankets, carriers, kennels, and even bottles and milk replacements for our bottle fed kittens. **We provide everything you need to care for your foster pet- you only need provide the love.**

Being part of the process: As a foster pet-parent, you may also have the opportunity to talk to potential adopters to inform them of all the details you've learned about your foster pet during your experience. Vital information such as the personality or temperament of the pet is important to share to ensure the pet is right for their new forever family.

Are you worried you might be tempted to adopt? You will also be able to foster for our Temporary Care Program by assisting individuals and families struggling with a crisis situation that are in need of a temporary home for their pets. The purpose of this program is to provide care and to reunite pets with their families following a crisis. This program offers up to 90 days of care. The pets in this program are great for fosters that are afraid they are going to fall in love and adopt— knowing the pet has a home already is a fail-safe to that.

Additionally, as part of our Lost Our Home family, you will enjoy several benefits:

- Knowing that your efforts are positively affecting the life of a homeless pet.
- Training classes (when available) provided free of charge by our staff and behavior and training specialists.
 - NEW: FREE sessions via Petcademy!
 - Invitations to LOH special events.
- Weekly Newsletters giving you the latest shelter/foster news.
And most importantly...
- The amazing feeling you get knowing your efforts are positively affecting the life of a homeless pet or a family in crisis.

Foster Care Contact

fostering@lostourhome.org

Emergency Contact

Emily Vivian

(480) 226-3228

(TEXT IS BEST- personal cell phone for foster use only)

emily@lostourhome.org

General Information

Lost Our Home Pet Rescue is located at:

2323 South Hardy Drive

Tempe, Arizona 85282

Main line: (602) 445-7387

www.lostourhome.org

Shelter Hours

PLEASE CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE OR FACEBOOK FOR CURRENT "OPEN" HOURS OR APPOINTMENT INSTRUCTIONS.

Foster Care Guidelines and Requirements

There are a few requirements that must be met prior to becoming an LOH foster parent.

- The support of all of the individuals living in your home, as their lives will be greatly affected by this decision.
- Personally owned pets must be current on vaccines and we require that cats and kittens be tested for FeLV and FIV prior to taking another kitty (or kitties) home.
- Your dog(s) may be required to come to the shelter to meet other dogs or puppies and be evaluated by staff depending on the foster situation.

- Download the Maddie's Pet Assistant Application. Connect with our Foster Care Team using the Maddie's Pet Assistant application.
- **Agreement to comply with all LOH policies, procedures, requirements, and recommendations made by LOH staff members.**

Foster Parent Responsibilities

Foster parents are responsible for the care and well being of the foster pets in their homes. The following are some essentials to the care of your foster pet once they are in your home:

- A healthy and safe environment for your foster pets.
- Communicating regularly with Foster Care Team.
- Transportation to and from Lost Our Home, as well as to the veterinary office as needed.
- Socialization and cuddle time to help teach the foster pet about positive family and pet relationships.

We do ask that you please foster LOH pets until they are ready for adoption or ready to go back to their owners. The length of time varies, but generally ranges from 2 weeks to a few months, depending on the situation.

Personally-Owned Pets

It is possible that your foster pet(s) may not have been sick when you picked him or her up from the shelter, but it's feasible that your foster pet becomes ill while in your home. Often, pets appear symptom free at intake, but may be incubating a viral, bacterial, or fungal infection. Please be aware of this and report any symptoms to the Foster Care Team immediately. *A list of symptoms to watch for is listed later in this reference guide for your convenience.*

Lost Our Home is not responsible or liable for any medical care to personally owned pets resulting from fostering LOH pets. **Any and all veterinary expenses for personally owned pets are the sole responsibility of the pet owner.** Whenever adding ANY new pets to a household (foster pet, pet sitting etc.), there is always a chance for any of the pets to get sick, or a chance that the pets won't get along and even fight.

It's important to always do a slow introduction of the foster pets to your personal pets. Please contact the Foster Care Team for instructions on introductions.

Our Foster Staff is well-educated in the ways in which keep your personal pets safe and healthy while fostering. To ensure the healthy and safety of your pet(s) and foster pets, we ask that:

- You wash your hands before and after handling your foster pets as a small step in preventing the spread of illness to your own pets and to foster pets.
- Adolescent-Adult foster pets should be isolated from your pets for at least *10 days*.
- Underage foster pets should be kept separate until they have at least *two vaccines*.
- Never leave the pets together unattended until you have full certainty that the pets will be safe together.

Foster Pet Ownership

Just as your pets are your legal property, Lost Our Home pets are our legal property. NEVER transfer the care of Lost Our Home pets to a third party like a pet sitter, boarding facility, daycare, vet clinic, etc.

Vacations

Bon Voyage! If you're going out of town while you are fostering pets, please notify the Foster Care Team of the following:

- The dates you will be gone and your intended return date.
- LOH foster pets should be returned to the shelter for alternative foster home placement. Any other alternative foster home placements (pet sitter, friend, and so on) will be decided on a case-by-case basis and must go through a screening process by the Foster Care Team.
- LOH foster pets are not under any circumstances to be placed in boarding facilities including veterinary clinics, pet hospitals, or doggie daycares.

Lost or Stolen Foster Pets

In the event your foster pet is lost or stolen from your property or care, the Foster Care Team should be notified immediately. You may be required to fill out a police report in the event the pet is stolen.

Children

Children should be supervised at all times when in the presence of foster pets. Children should be educated on how to properly handle the pets and have a hand washing protocol.

Safety

In the event that you are bitten, severely scratched, or otherwise physically harmed by an LOH foster pet, contact the Foster Care Team immediately after attending to the wound. Clean and disinfect the wound thoroughly. Seek out the advice of a medical provider or physician as soon as possible. Pet bites and scratches can be serious if you have allergies or if the wound is left unattended. The foster pet should be returned to the shelter immediately for an exam and possible quarantine period. You will be asked to fill out an Incident Report documenting the incident. **LOH is not liable or responsible for any injuries or damages to humans, personal pets, or personal belongings inflicted by foster pets.**

Household Hazards

Hazard proof the area your foster pets will be residing in to ensure there is nothing that could potentially cause them serious harm, such as electrical cords, plants, or flowers. Remember that you may intake a foster pet that does not feel well and is not very mobile initially, but may easily fall prey to something harmful when he or she is feeling better.

Poisoning

Pet poisonings occur in many ways; the most common are the ingestion of medications, foods, plants and toxins, and encounters with harmful wildlife/insects. Many pet poisonings can be avoided through some simple precautions. Prior to bringing your foster pet home, be sure to poison-proof their living space and any other space they may be allowed, indoors and outdoors. If you suspect your foster pet has been poisoned, call the shelter immediately or the poison control center for assistance: 1-800-222-1222.

Common Poisonous Household Plants

This is only a small list of poisonous plants that are native to Arizona. The poison control center receives the most calls about the following plants:

- Candelabras Cactus
- Carolina Jessamine
- Castor Bean
- Century Plant (Agave)
- Chinaberry Tree
- Dumbcane
- Eucalyptus
- Foxglove
- Jimson Weed
- Lantana
- Mexican Bird of Paradise
- Mistletoe
- Oleander
- Philodendron
- Pothos
- Silver Leaf
- Texas Mountain Laurel
- Tree Tobacco
- Virginia Creeper
- Yellow Oleander

If you suspect your foster pet may have ingested one of these plants or another poisonous plant not listed here, call the shelter immediately or the poison control center at 1-800-222-1222.

Common Harmful Foods

The following are some known foods that can be harmful, even fatal to pets:

- Raisins can cause vomiting, diarrhea, and kidney failure in dogs.
- Grapes can cause vomiting, diarrhea, and kidney failure in dogs.
- Chocolate – the darker the chocolate, the more harmful it is to dogs. It can cause diarrhea, muscle tremor seizures and increased heart rate.
- Sugarless gums and candies can cause a rapid drop in a dog's blood sugar. (anything with xylitol)
- Onions can cause damage to blood cells and can cause anemia in dogs. For some dogs, even in small amounts, it can be fatal.
- Macadamia nuts can cause severe weakness in a dog's hind legs, tremors, and depression.

If you think your foster pet may have ingested one of the above foods, call the shelter immediately or call the poison control center at 1-800-222-1222.

▪ Learn about household toxins that cause seizures:

<https://www.aspca.org/pet-care/animal-poison-control/poisonous-household-products>

Harmful Arizona Wildlife

Below is some common wildlife that can be harmful to domestic pets:

- Sonoran Desert Toad
- Black Widow Spider
- Rattlesnakes
- Pinevine Swallowtail Butterfly
- Hawkmoths
- Desert Millipedes

- Pinacate and Bombardier Beetles
- Giant Mesquite Bugs
- Vinegaroon Scorpions
- Horse-Lubber Grasshopper
- Coyotes
- Bobcats

If you think your foster pet may have ingested or was bitten, attacked, or stung by one of these animals call the shelter immediately or call the poison control center: 1-800-222-1222.

Foster Basics

Foster pets are commonly scared and stressed when relocating to a new foster home. Many are dealing with a change in diet, new surroundings, and new faces. Some have had little exposure to people and day-to-day things like vacuum cleaners and TVs. Therefore; it is not uncommon for them to have reduced appetites and diarrhea the first few days in your care. It may take a few days for them to acclimate to their new surroundings and your caring face. However, if these symptoms continue, please notify the Foster Care Team immediately. The following are a few more things you need to know about your foster pet:

Emergencies

The shelter should be notified of the following conditions **immediately**:

- Blood from any orifice/opening
- Blood in vomit or vomit that is dark in color
- Blood in the urine, or if the foster pet is unable to urinate at all
- Blood in the stool, especially with diarrhea for more than 24 hours accompanied with lethargy
- Congestion, wheezing, or labored breathing
- Fever (often accompanied by lethargy)
- If an accident has occurred and the foster pet appears to be injured
- Lameness that appears severe and painful
- Pain – irritability when handled or touched, particularly if it seems out of character for that pet
- Seizures or convulsions
- Sudden trouble eating, mouth pain, or drooling
- For underage animals: diarrhea (liquid) for over 24 hours

Non-Emergency Situations

- Any change in the appearance of the eye: squinting, winking, tearing, swelling, redness, yellow, green, or crusty discharge or vision loss
- Coughing for more than 24 hours
- Diarrhea (*without* lethargy)
- Excessive drinking for more than 48 hours
- Increased appetite for more than 1 week, especially when accompanied with weight loss
- Increased scratching at any part of the body including head shaking

- Increased urination or sudden accidents in the house, difficulty urinating, and straining for more than 24 hours
- Lethargy or decline in activity level normal for your foster pet for more than 24 hours
- Nasal discharge – white, yellow, or green
- No apparent weight gain, especially with puppies and kittens during a 72-hour period
- Poor appetite for more than 48 hours
- Sneezing for more than 24 hours
- Unexplained lameness that does not improve with rest within 24 hours
- Vomiting more than three times
- Weight loss is observed over a 48 hour period, especially with kittens, puppies, or nursing mothers – when weight loss is accompanied with normal to more-than-normal food intake

Medical Emergency Situations

1. If it is between the hours of 11:00AM-4:00PM, contact (602) 445-7387.
3. If it is outside of those hours contact Shelter & Medical Director Emily Vivian at (480) 226-3228 (*TEXT BEST* - personal cell phone for foster use only).
 - 4. If you cannot reach Emily, please contact the Shelter Operations Manager Kris Shaffer at (623) 734-2259 (personal cell phone for foster use only).

PLEASE NOTE: LOH is not staffed around the clock nor do we have “on call” staff.

Please utilize the following guidelines when calling for a foster emergency:

1. When calling the LOH line, you may need to leave a voicemail. Please speak clearly, be as detailed as possible. Don't forget to leave your name and full phone number.
2. Please try to call as early in the day as possible.
4. **IMPORTANT:** If you choose to take an LOH foster pet to a non-authorized private veterinarian, pet hospital, clinic, or emergency facility, you will **NOT** be reimbursed for the visit or any medical treatments or medications provided by that facility.

Allergies

Pets, like people, can have allergic reactions to medications. If some sudden, adverse reaction happens after giving a new medication, such as wheezing or eyes being more inflamed, do not give any more medication and call the foster department.

Fatality

In the unfortunate event that an LOH foster pet passes away while in your care, you must notify the Foster Care Team immediately. Deceased foster pets must be returned to the shelter as soon as possible. If you are unable to bring the deceased foster pet to the shelter immediately we recommend you wrap the pet in a towel or cloth and place in a plastic bag, then store in a cold location such as a freezer or cooler with ice until you are able to bring the remains to the shelter. This will allow our Medical Team to exam the remains, if necessary.

Behavioral Issues

Behavioral or temperament issues may arise while a foster dog or kitten is in your home. Common concerns include the following:

- Scratching face and limbs
- Biting any part of the body
- Housebreaking issues
- Inappropriate litter box issue
- Separation anxiety
- General or unprovoked aggression toward people and littermates

If you notice any of these behaviors, please notify us immediately, email our Foster Care Team for advice. Some of these problems may be medically-related and need to be ruled out prior to seeking behavioral advice.

Don't forget, Maddie's Pet Assistant is a great resource for quick behavioral advice while you wait to hear back from our Foster Care Team!

Fun Fact:

- **Food is your best socialization tool, so become familiar with these simple techniques:** <https://www.aspcapro.org/resource/how-use-food-socialize-kittens>

Temporary Care

As we mentioned earlier in this guide, when life's circumstances turn the world upside down, we provide can provide up to 90 days of pet care through our Temporary Care Program while families get back on their feet. Many of the pets in our Temporary Care Program will be with us for up to 90 days (and that's a long time to be at the shelter!) and we want to make their stay stress-free as possible. As such, we would rather have the TCP pets go into foster homes. Temporary Care pets require some extra precautions. The owners of the pets in our Temporary Care Program are already facing hard times, so the last thing we want them to have to worry about is the well-being of their pet. We ask that you pay special mind to the care of these pets to assure they receive the best care possible while they wait for their families to return.

Cat and Kitten Care

Fostering Options

- **Pregnant Cats:** Fostering an expecting animal is a wonderful experience. You will be able to witness the miracle of life right before your eyes! Pregnant animals need extra care and consideration while they are preparing to give birth. Expecting Mom's need to be confined them to a room or enclosure where there is a private a space for the mom to give birth, such as a large cage along with a nesting area-part of the cage, a closet, large dog carrier, or a box on its side with a blanket draped over the front where they can be kept quiet and comfortable.
- **Mom cat with kittens:** This is actually one of the easiest fostering situations since mom does most of the work! You'll need a room or large cage along with a nesting area-part of the cage, a closet, large

dog carrier, or a box on its side with a blanket draped over the front. The mother cat will feed, clean, and socialize the kittens. You will feed mom, give her plenty of encouragement, clean her litterbox and bedding, handle the kittens, and monitor everyone's health.

- **Bottle feeders (or bottle babies):** These are kittens under four weeks old that need to be bottle-fed every 2-6 hours, depending on how old they are. Since these kittens don't have a mom, you will also have to help them go to the bathroom, keep them clean, wean them, and train them to use a litterbox. You'll need a warm, safe area in which to confine bottle babies, preferably a large carrier. Some foster parents even convert an extra bathtub into a kitten area. Because warmth is so important, kittens should have access to a towel-covered heating pad, set on low. They must have enough space to be able to crawl off the heating pad if it gets too warm. If you are fostering a single kitten, provide a stuffed animal or something fuzzy for the kitten to cuddle.
- **Self-feeding kittens.** Kittens 4-8 weeks old can already eat on their own, use the litterbox, but need TLC until they are old enough to be adopted. You'll feed them; clean them, play with them, and monitor their health.
- **Adolescent-Adult Cats:** Adult cats are the most self-sufficient of our options listed above- they are in need of a temporary place to call their own while they decompress from the shelter or await their owner's return.
- **Medical:** Kittens or cats who are ill and/or injured and in need of all of the above, plus medications/medical treatments. Foster homes are much less stressful than the shelter environment so sick/injured animals end up recovering much more quickly. A little extra TLC goes a long way!

Safety

The first thing a foster parent should do is kitty-proof the foster pet's living space. You'd be surprised how quickly cute little kittens can get into trouble!

- Kittens should not be allowed to roam the home freely. Foster pets should have a room (preferably with windows) set up specifically to meet their needs. This room could be a spare bedroom or computer room.
- Cat and kitten foster rooms should have plenty of soft places to rest, scratching posts, and different surfaces (carpet, tile, etc.) whenever possible.
- Remove things such as electrical cords, cables, wires, and any items of dollar or sentimental value.
 - **Do you want to learn more about setting up your home? Check out** "How to Prepare Your Home for a Foster Pet" at: <https://www.petfinder.com/animal-shelters-and-rescues/fostering-dogs/preparing-to-foster-a-pet/>

Kitten Fostering 101

Socialization

- Socialize your cat a *minimum* of 3 to 4 20-minute visits daily.

- Under-socialized cats, 4 to 6, 20-minute visits daily.
- Always encourage affectionate behavior.
- Your foster should meet new people a few times weekly, if possible.

Playtime

- Your foster(s) should receive one to two play sessions daily with interactive toys (or more!).
- Safe solo toys (such as balls) should be left out at all times.
- Change up the environment in small ways (add cardboard boxes or move things around in room)
- *Remember to discourage play with hands!*

Cleaning Schedule

- Litter boxes should be easily accessible and as far away from food and water bowls as possible.
- Scoop litterbox at least 2 times a day.
- Litter should be dumped and changed every other day.
- Monitor stool for abnormalities.

Grooming

Once your foster pet has had time to explore and adjust to your environment, he or she may need some grooming. This could include cleaning their ears, trimming their nails, giving them a sponge bath, or brushing their coat. Be sure you ask about what products are used and recommended by LOH.

- When trimming their nails, be careful not to cut too close to the pink veins. To be safe, simply clip off the curved tips carefully.
- Some kittens, especially the younger ones, were not with their mothers long enough to know how to groom themselves, so you will have to teach them. Simply take a washcloth and run it under warm water. Be careful not to make it too hot! A good way to test this is by placing it on your forearm. If it's too hot for you, it's too hot for them. After you have your warm washcloth, gently run it over the kitten in short, swift strokes, much like their mother would do with her tongue.
- When cleaning their ears, be careful not to go too far into the ear canal as this could be painful and cause internal damage. Only use products specifically for cleaning ears.

Feline Common Medical Conditions

Upper Respiratory Infection (URI)

- This common head cold affects many pets kept in a shelter or multiple-cat household. Symptoms include sneezing, runny eyes or nose, lethargy, loss of appetite, and occasionally, fever.
- It is vital that kittens and cats continue to eat or nurse. Cats can go into liver failure from not eating and it can be fatal. If you notice that your foster pet has stopped eating, call the shelter immediately. If a kitten or cat is too congested to smell the food, they will not eat.

- Keeping your kitten or cat's eyes and nose clean and clear will help relieve some of this congestion. To do this, simply take a washcloth or cotton ball and run it under warm water. Then, gently clean off the eyes and nose. If it does not clean off easily, squeeze a few drops of warm water to help loosen the discharge.
- Oral antibiotics and nebulization may be prescribed to treat this condition.

Vomiting

- Cats and kittens may vomit for several reasons. They may have consumed their meals too quickly, gagged on a hairball or may be ill.
- If your foster pet vomits more than three times, please contact the Foster Care Team.
- Be prepared to report the frequency, duration, consistency, and color to the Team member. Subcutaneous fluids and medications may be prescribed to treat this condition.

Diarrhea

- It is common for your foster pet to have bouts of diarrhea or loose stool when you first bring him or her to your home.
- Cats and kittens can have diarrhea due to parasitic infestation, bacterial or viral infections, eating excessive amounts of canned food, a change in diet, stressful events, or changes in routine.
- If it lasts more than 2 days, smells odd, or has blood, call the Foster Care Team as soon as possible.
- If your foster pet has diarrhea, but you notice no other changes in behavior, character, activity level, or food consumption, try cutting back or cutting off canned food. If after a day this change brings no relief, contact the Foster Care Team. Be prepared to describe the consistency and frequency of the stool.

The following are some terms to help describe what you see:

- | | |
|--|----------------------------|
| • Diarrhea – liquid, watery, puddle | • Loose – soft but formed |
| • Cow patty – think “mud cakes”, soft, no form | • Normal – firm and formed |

You may be asked to bring in a fresh stool sample whenever possible for microscopic examination. Stool should be no more than 6 hours old (can be kept in the fridge for 12 hours) and free from litter and foreign materials if possible. Oral anti-diarrhea medication and subcutaneous fluids may be prescribed to treat this condition.

Fleas, Ticks, and Ear Mites

Foster pets are often taken into a foster home the same day they arrived at the shelter. LOH does not knowingly send foster pets into foster homes with these parasites, but it can happen. If you notice any fleas or ticks running around on your foster pet, or see evidence of ear mites, notify the shelter. A dose of flea and tick preventative may be administered to treat this condition.

Ringworm

Ringworm is a fungal infection that affects the hair follicles. Signs of this infection are hair loss and rough or scaly skin or lesions. Kittens or cats with poor grooming habits, compromised immune systems, and compromised skin issues (trauma, allergies, and matted fur) are predisposed to ringworm; however, it can affect even the healthiest of pets. If you suspect your foster pet may have some of these symptoms, please notify LOH immediately. The foster pet will need to be returned to the shelter for examination and testing. Oral antifungal medication, topical treatment, and Lyme dips or Ogena Shampoo may be prescribed to treat this condition.

Fading Kitten Syndrome

It is not known for sure why some kittens thrive while others do not. Sudden death, also known as Fading Kitten Syndrome, generally occurs in kittens under 6 weeks of age. While it is not known for certain, it is suspected that some kittens are internally under-developed, making it impossible for them to sustain themselves.

Feline Viral Diseases

There are several viral infections that can wreak havoc on your poor foster(s) immune system. Some viruses, such as Calicivirus or Panleukopenia, can even be fatal if not immediately treated.

Viruses are transmitted through contact with infected cats/kittens, feces or environmental contamination. Kittens or cats may exhibit some or all of these symptoms:

- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Dehydration
- Failure to grow
- Neurological symptoms
- Extreme lethargy
- Fever
- Sudden death
- Respiratory Distress
- Green or yellow ocular discharge
- Green or yellow nasal discharge
- Ulcers in the mouth

Taking small steps like hand washing, sterilizing environments and simple observations can help catch these ailments before they can spread or escalate to dangerous levels. **Never use any over-the-counter drugs, medications, or herbal remedies to treat your foster pets. Use only what has been prescribed or recommended by LOH staff.**

- **Resource on infection control in the home:**

<https://www.aspcapro.org/sites/default/files/aspcainfectioncontrol.pdf>

Adverse Vaccine Reactions

Some pets may experience a reaction to their vaccines after administration. Here are some things to look for immediately after and up to several days following a vaccination visit:

Mild symptoms:

- Local inflammation, swelling, or hair loss (the most common reactions)

- Sneezing
- Lethargy
- Fever

- Collapse
- Rapid pulse
- Difficulty breathing or wheezing
- Nausea or vomiting
- Swelling
- Itchy
- Pale gums

Anaphylactic shock (severe and immediate reaction) symptoms include:

If you see any of these symptoms after a vaccination visit, call the Foster Care Team immediately.

▪ **Want to become kitten foster pro? Check out the Kitten Fostering 101 at:**
<http://www.kittenlady.org/fostering/>

Dog and Puppy Care

General Care

Fostering Options

- **Pregnant Dogs:** Fostering an expecting animal is a wonderful experience. You will be able to witness the miracle of life right before your eyes! Pregnant animals need extra care and consideration while they are preparing to give birth. Expecting Mom's need to be confined them to a room or enclosure where there is a private a space for the mom to give birth, such as a large cage along with a nesting area-part of the cage, a closet, or a large dog carrier. Many foster's use baby pools as whelping nests.
- **Mom dog with puppies:** This is actually one of the easiest fostering situations since mom does most of the work! You'll need a room or large cage along with a nesting area-part of the cage, a closet, large dog carrier, or a box on its side with a blanket draped over the front. The mother dog will feed, clean, and socialize the puppies. You will feed mom, give her plenty of encouragement, clean her enclosure/room and bedding, handle the puppies, and monitor everyone's health.
- **Bottle feeders (or bottle babies):** These are puppies under four weeks old who need to be bottle-fed every 2-6 hours, depending on how old they are. Since these puppies don't have a mom, you will also have to help them go to the bathroom, keep them clean, and wean them. You'll need a warm, safe area in which to confine bottle babies, preferably a cage or large carrier. Some foster parents even convert an extra bathtub into a puppy area. Because warmth is so important, puppies should have access to a towel-covered heating pad, set on low. They must have enough space to be able to crawl off the heating pad if it gets too warm. If you are fostering a single puppy, provide a stuffed animal or something fuzzy for the puppy to cuddle.
- **Self-feeding puppies:** Puppies 4-8 weeks old can already eat and potty on their own, but need TLC until they are old enough to be adopted. You'll feed them; clean them, play with them, and monitor their health. Socialization is critical for puppies during this period!
- **Adolescent-Adult Dogs:** Adolescent-adult dogs are generally the most self-sufficient of our options listed above- they are in need of a temporary place to call their own while they decompress from the shelter or await their owner's return.
- **Medical:** Puppies or dogs who are ill and/or injured and in need of all of the above, plus medications/medical treatments. Foster homes are much less stressful than the shelter environment so sick/injured animals end up recovering much more quickly. A little extra TLC goes a long way!

Safety

The first thing a foster parent should do is doggy-proof the foster pet's living space. You'd be surprised how quickly cute little pups can get into trouble!

- Your new foster dog or puppy will need a few days to adjust to your home. Remember, puppies and most adult dogs like to chew. Be sure to have chew toys handy.
- Dogs should not be allowed to roam the home freely. Foster pets should have a room (preferably with windows) set up specifically to meet their needs. This room could be a spare bedroom or computer room.
- Remove things such as electrical cords, cables, wires, and any items of dollar or sentimental value.
 - **Do you want to learn more about setting up your home? Check out “How to Prepare Your Home for a Foster Pet” at: <https://www.petfinder.com/animal-shelters-and-rescues/fostering-dogs/preparing-to-foster-a-pet/>**

Please note: LOH Foster dogs and puppies are not permitted to go to dog parks, grooming facilities, kenneling facilities, or doggie daycares. They are permitted to go outdoors when on a leash or in a secure, fenced yard and always while under adult supervision.

Don't forget— dogs must be leashed at *all times* when outdoors on walks! It's a law in Arizona. This law is in place to protect other members of the public and your pet from injury, not to mention that the use of a leash will benefit you, your neighborhood, and your foster pet.

Puppy Fostering 101

Socialization & Handling

- Between the ages of 3–12 weeks, puppies are forming bonds with people, dogs and other animals which will last them a lifetime. Puppies who are not exposed to and/or do not have good experiences with people, dogs or other animals during this period can end up with fear and aggression problems later on. As much as possible (and keeping the puppies' safety in mind), get the puppies around all kinds of people— including children, big, uniformed men, etc. and make sure they have good experiences (play, petting and treats).
- Puppies are cataloguing other things in their environment besides people and animals. Make sure they see and hear common household things like vacuum cleaners, TV's, etc.
- It's important to handle your foster pup(s) whenever you can! Pick them up, play with their feet, look in their ears, brush them, etc.
- It's important to praise and treat the puppies every time they come into contact with something new or while they are being handled so they have positive associations with these experiences.

Housetraining

- Put the puppies on the pee pads as soon as they wake up, right after eating and at last once an hour to start. Reward them with enthusiastic praise EVERYTIME he urinates or defecates on the pad. Change the pads frequently and encourage them to use it.
- *Ask the Foster Care Team when it is safe to begin outdoor potty training.*

Adult Dog Fostering 101

Socialization & Playtime

- Lots of human contact is important for recovering, sick, injured or neglected dogs.
- Attention and playtime is a reward for your foster dog. Be sure to give your foster dog several minutes of playtime periodically throughout the day.

Exercise

- Foster dogs should be exercised every day, rain or shine. The old adage, “A tired dog is a happy dog,” holds true for foster dogs. Most foster dogs will need at least two 15+ minute walks a day to release excess energy. The exception to this, of course, is if your foster dog is recovering from an illness or injury, then they may need rest.
- If your foster dog is an adolescent, you may need to step up the activity level to include regular runs/hikes/or brisk walks. A dog that is exercised regularly will tend to sleep when you are not at home - and a sleeping dog cannot do undesirable things, such as bark, chew, etc.

Housetraining & Schedule

- Be patient with your foster dog. Even housetrained adult dogs will make mistakes, especially if they've been at the shelter for a long time and have been eliminating in their kennel. It's important to establish a routine for potty breaks to cut down on potential accidents.
- *The best method is:* let him out when he wakes up, after he eats or drinks, after a play session, or at least every 2 hours. Stand with him for 5 minutes. If he eliminates, reward him (with treats, praise, a favorite game and your own special happy dance). If he doesn't go in 5 minutes, take him back inside and try every 15 minutes until he goes. Every time he goes, make sure you reward him!
- *Accidents happen:* If there are smells in your house from another dog or cat, some foster dogs may “mark” out their territory. This action should be re-directed immediately with a calm “Ah-Ah” and escort him outside where he can finish. You will then want to use some odor neutralizer on the areas where the foster dog “marked” to ensure he will not smell and mark that area again.
- If he goes in the house while you're not paying attention, don't correct him - it's not his fault. Clean it up and go back to your schedule. **Never** put the dog's face in his mess, or yell at him, he won't understand you, and you will only be teaching him to fear you.

Grooming

- Once your foster pet has had time to explore and adjust to your environment, he or she may need some grooming. This could include cleaning their ears, trimming their nails, giving them a doggie bath, or brushing their coat. Be sure you ask about what products are used and recommended by LOH.
- When trimming their nails, be careful not to cut too close to the pink veins. To be safe, simply clip off the curved tips carefully.

- When cleaning their ears, be careful not to go too far into the ear canal as this could be painful and cause internal damage. Only use products specifically for cleaning ears.

Canine Common Medical Conditions

Upper Respiratory Infection (URI) aka Kennel Cough

Kennel cough is caused by a virus and is often seen in kennel and shelter environments. Symptoms include a dry, hacking cough, sneezing, and green, yellow, or creamy colored nasal and eye discharge. Be sure to keep your puppy or dog's eyes and nose clean and clear, especially if congested, as doing so will help relieve some of that congestion. To do this, simply take a washcloth or cotton ball and run it under warm water. Then, gently clean off the eyes and nose. If it does not clean off easily, squeeze a few drops of warm water to help loosen the discharge. Oral antibiotics and cough suppressants may be prescribed to treat this condition.

Vomiting

- Dogs and puppies may vomit for several reasons. They may have consumed their meals too quickly, gagged or ingested a foreign object, or may be ill.
If your foster pet vomits more than three times, contact the Foster Care Team.
- Be prepared to report the frequency, duration, consistency, and color to the staff member.
Subcutaneous fluids and medications may be prescribed to treat this condition.

Diarrhea

- It is common for your foster pet to have bouts of diarrhea or loose stool when you first bring him or her to your home.
- Dogs and puppies can have diarrhea due to parasitic infestation, bacterial or viral infections, eating excessive amounts of canned food, a change in diet, stressful events, or changes in routine.
- If it lasts more than 2 days, smells odd, or has blood, call the Foster Care Team as soon as possible.
- If your foster pet has diarrhea, but you notice no other changes in behavior, character, activity level, or food consumption, try cutting back or cutting off canned food. If after a day this change brings no relief, contact the Foster Care Team. Be prepared to describe the consistency and frequency of the stool.

The following are some terms to help describe what you see:

- Diarrhea – liquid, watery, puddle
- Loose – soft but formed
- Cow patty – think “mud cakes”, soft, no form
- Normal – firm and formed

You may be asked to bring in a stool sample whenever possible for microscopic examination. Stool should be no more than more than 6 hours old (can be kept in the fridge for 1 day) and free from foreign

materials if possible. Oral anti-diarrhea medications and subcutaneous fluids may be prescribed to treat this condition.

Ringworm

Ringworm is a fungal infection that affects the hair follicles. Signs of this infection are hair loss and rough or scaly skin or lesions. Dogs and puppies with poor grooming habits, compromised immune systems, and compromised skin issues (trauma, allergies, and matted fur) are predisposed to ringworm; however, it can affect even the healthiest of pets. If you suspect your foster pet may have some of these symptoms, please notify LOH immediately. The foster pet will need to be returned to the shelter for examination and testing. Oral antifungal medication, topical treatment, and Lyme dips may be prescribed to treat this condition.

Fleas and Ticks

Foster pets are often taken into a foster home the same day they arrived at the shelter. LOH does not knowingly send foster pets into foster homes with these parasites, but it can happen. If you notice any fleas or ticks running around on your foster pet, or see evidence of ear mites, notify the shelter. A dose of flea and tick preventative may be administered to treat this condition

Fading Puppy Syndrome

It is not known for sure why some puppies thrive while others do not. Sudden death, also known as Fading Puppy Syndrome, generally occurs in puppies under 6 weeks of age. While it is not known for certain, it is suspected that some puppies are internally under-developed making it impossible for them to sustain themselves.

Canine Viral Diseases

There are several viral infections that can wreak havoc on your poor foster(s) immune system. Some viruses, such as Parvovirus or Distemper, can even be fatal if not immediately treated.

Viruses are transmitted through contact with infected dogs/puppies, feces or environmental contamination. Dogs or puppies may exhibit some or all of these symptoms:

- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Dehydration
- Failure to grow
- Neurological symptoms
- Extreme lethargy
- Fever
- Sudden death
- Respiratory Distress
- Green or yellow ocular discharge
- Green or yellow nasal discharge

Taking small steps like hand washing, sterilizing environments and simple observations can help catch these ailments before they can spread or escalate to dangerous levels. **Never use any over-the-counter drugs, medications, or herbal remedies to treat your foster pets. Use only what has been prescribed or recommended by LOH staff.**

- Check out these helpful tips on how you can help keep your home free of infection at:

<https://www.aspcapro.org/sites/default/files/aspca-infection-control.pdf>

Adverse Vaccine Reactions

Some pets may experience a reaction to their vaccines after administration. Here are some things to look for immediately after and up to several days following a vaccination visit:

Mild symptoms:

- Local inflammation, swelling, or hair loss (the most common reactions)
- Sneezing
- Lethargy
- Fever

Anaphylactic shock (severe and immediate reaction) symptoms include:

- Collapse
- Rapid pulse
- Difficulty breathing or wheezing
- Nausea or vomiting
- Swelling
- Itchy
- Pale gums

If you see any of these symptoms after a vaccination visit, call the Foster Care Team immediately.

Want to be a dog foster pro? Check out these additional resources:

- **Chill Out! Decompression Tips for New Foster Dogs**

https://www.huffingtonpost.com/steffen-baldwin/chill-out-decompression-t_b_8331986.html

Adoptions

“Foster failure” happens! If you wish to adopt a foster animal, please email adoptions@lostourhome.org to start the adoption conversation as soon as you have made the decision.

If you know someone who is interested in adopting one of your fosters have them go to our website and apply online at <https://www.lostourhome.org/adopt-a-pet> **PLEASE NOTE: Applying does not automatically guarantee an adoption. Our Adoptions Team will review all applicable applications and choose the best match possible!**

Acknowledgement

I am acknowledging that I have carefully read and agree to comply with the guidelines and requirements covered by Lost Our Home Pet Rescue in this manual. I further acknowledge that failing to comply with these guidelines and requirements may be cause for dismissal as a foster parent.

Please, print and sign this page and turn it into the foster department.

Signature: _____

Team Signature: _____