



Foster Care Reference Guide

2323 South Hardy Drive
Tempe, Arizona 85282
(602) 445-7387
www.lostourhome.org
fostering@lostourhome.org

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Overview

Thank you for your interest in fostering with Lost Our Home Pet Rescue! By welcoming foster pets into your home, you are helping us save more lives and we are extremely grateful.

Our Mission: Helping people and saving pets. For every foster pet-parent that opens their heart and home, that is another pet saved from further suffering

This document will guide you through the foster process, protocols, and expectations.

Support: Our foster team will be your partner every step of the way. We also have an optional application available to assist you with communication, Maddie's® Pet Assistant. Maddie's® Pet Assistant is an app for mobile phones and tablets developed by Maddie's Fund® that helps communication between foster families and caregivers. The app gives caregivers the opportunity to submit questions, photos and videos and take surveys. You can find instructions to download this resource at [Maddies Pet Assistant How to Log Into the Mobile App](#)

Community: We welcome you to connect with other foster families on our Facebook group at [Lost Our Home Foster Team Page](#)

What We Provide: Lost our Home will provide details on the history of your foster pet, food for the pet while it is in your care, medical and behavioral support, and other items like bedding or litter upon request. You will also be eligible to receive additional benefits:

- **Free Training:** Access to training classes provided by our staff (when available)
- **Exclusive Events:** Invitations to special LOH events
- **Information:** Timely updates on the latest shelter news

Your Role: *YOU* provide the love, and we ask that you regularly share insights about your foster pet's personality, behavior, challenges and interactions with different types of people and animals. All insights shared will go into the pet profile to help find their perfect forever family.

Temporary Care Program: Worried about adopting? Consider fostering pets for families in crisis, providing up to 90 days of care. These pets already have homes, so you won't have to worry about falling in love and adopting!

We look forward to having you join our foster family and experience the amazing feeling of helping homeless pets and families in crisis!

Foster Basics & Important Contact Information

Understand the basics:

Foster pets may feel scared and stressed in a new home with unfamiliar with people and household items like vacuum cleaners and TVs. Reduced appetites or diarrhea in the first few days is common.

Here's a list of items that can help ease their transition.

Safety First: The first thing a foster parent should do is pet-proof the foster pet's living space. You would be surprised how quickly cats and dogs can get into trouble! Animals new to the home 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.

- Introduce your new foster pets to others in the house slowly, typically 3-5 days for adults and after puppies or kittens have had their second round of vaccinations.
- Remove things such as electrical cords, cables, wires, and any items of dollar or sentimental value.
- **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/>

Provide Essentials: Have food, water, toys, a bed, and a litter box (for cats) ready.

Socialization: Spend time with your foster pet to help them feel comfortable and build trust.

Love & Patience: Every pet adjusts at their own pace. Be patient and provide lots of love.

Communicate: Keep in touch with the Lost Our Home Foster team by providing updates and asking for support when needed.

Important Contact Information:

Note: The Shelter is open 10:00AM – 5:30 PM Tuesday – Sunday. We are closed Mondays.

Lost Our Home Pet Rescue:

Address: 2323 S. Hardy Drive, Tempe, AZ 85282

Main line: 602-445-7387

Website: www.lostourhome.org

Foster Department: Phone: 602-445-7396 Email: fostering@lostourhome.org

Emergency (after hours): 602-445-7387, option 9

Poison Control: 1800-222-1222

Foster Care Requirements

There are a few requirements that must be met to become a foster parent with Lost Our Home.

1. All individuals living in your household must support the decision to become a foster parent
2. Personally owned pets must be current on their vaccinations
 - a. Cats/kittens must test negative for FeLV and FIV unless you would like to welcome a foster that also tests positive
 - b. Dog(s) may be required to come to the shelter to meet foster dogs or puppies to ensure the safety and happiness of all involved
3. Agreement to comply with all Lost Our Home policies, procedures, requirements and recommendations made by Lost Our Home staff members
4. Agreement to transport your foster pet to and from Lost Our Home for medical appointments, adoption meet and greets or a meeting with their owner if in our Temporary Care Program. Note: your schedule will be considered, and all appointments will take place during regular business hours
5. We strive to keep our foster pets in a stable consistent environment until they are ready

Personally Owned Pets:

As noted above, we recommend making a slow introduction between pet(s) living in your home and your new foster pet. Detail on best known methods for making safe introductions is available at the end of this document.

[Dog to Dog Introductions:](#)

[Dog to Cat Introductions:](#)

Whenever new pets are added to the home there is a chance that pets will get sick or not get along. Our Foster staff is well educated in ways you can keep your personal pets safe and healthy while fostering.

A few of the top things you can do is to follow the introduction tips linked above; wash or sanitize your hands before and after handling your foster pets; and never leave pets together unattended until you are sure they do well together.

Please share any signs of illness with the Lost Our Home Foster team as soon as possible.

[A list of symptoms](#) to watch out for is included on page 8. Please note, Lost Our Home is not responsible or liable for any injuries or medical care to personally owned pets or humans.

Fostering Options

- **Pregnant Cats/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 moms need to be confined to a room or enclosure where there is a private 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 for dogs. We have pop-up crates for the mom cats.
- **Mom cat/dog with babies:** One of the easiest fostering situations since mom does most of the work! You'll need a room or large cage with a nesting area, such as a closet or a box with a blanket. The mother will feed, clean, and socialize with her babies. You'll need to provide food for the mom, clean her space e.g., (bedding, litterbox), encourage mom, handle the babies, and monitor everyone's health.
- **Bottle Babies:** Kittens and puppies under four weeks old will need to be bottle-fed every 2-6 hours, depending on how old they are. Without a mom to guide them, you will also have to help them go to the bathroom, keep them clean, and wean them. They will need a warm, safe area such as a cage or large carrier; some foster parents convert an extra bathtub into a kitten or puppy area. Because warmth is so important, babies 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 or puppy, provide a stuffed animal or something fuzzy for the little one to cuddle.
- **Self-feeding kittens/puppies:** Kittens and 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 kittens and puppies during this period!

Note: *Puppies should never touch the ground outside your home- they can very easily pick-up life-threatening diseases. **Kittens should never be taken or kept outside your home, unless you are making a trip to visit LOH for checkups.

- **Adolescent-Adult cats/dogs:** Adolescent to adult cats and dogs are generally the most self-sufficient of our animals, typically just needing a temporary place to call their own while they decompress from the shelter, await their owner's return or meet their forever family.
- **Medical:** Ill or injured animals need extra care and medications. Foster homes are less stressful than shelters, aiding quicker recovery. A little extra TLC goes a long way!

Foster Family Responsibilities

Legal Ownership: Lost Our Home pets are our legal property. **NEVER** transfer their care to a third party (pet sitter, boarding facility, day care, vet clinic, etc.).

Vacations: Going out of town? Share your departure and expected return dates with the Lost Our Home Foster team and plan to return your foster pet(s) to the shelter for alternative placement.

Lost or Stolen Pets: If your foster pet is lost or stolen, immediately inform the Lost Our Home Foster team. If stolen, you may need to file a police report.

Children: Always supervise kids around foster pets. Teach them proper hand washing and pet handling. Remind them not to pet or grab animals while they're eating to prevent accidents.

Safety: Pet bites and scratches can be serious. If harmed, clean and disinfect the wound, and contact the Lost Our Home Foster team. The pet might need an exam and quarantine, and you may need to fill out an incident report.

Household Hazards: Make your foster pet's area safe by removing harmful items like electrical cords, plants, and flowers. Check the tables for common poisonous plants and harmful foods.

Common Poisonous Household Plants

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

Common Harmful Foods

Raisins & Grapes: can cause vomiting, diarrhea & kidney failure in dogs
Chocolate: can cause diarrhea, muscle tremor seizures & increased heart rate
Onions: may damage blood cells and cause anemia. Can be fatal in small amounts for some.
Macadamia nuts: can cause severe weakness in a dog's hind legs, tremors and depression
Sugarless gum/candy: (anything with Xylitol) can cause a rapid drop in a dog's blood sugar

Harmful Arizona Wildlife

Sonoran Desert Toad	Rattlesnakes	Pinevine Swallowtail Butterfly
Black Widow Spider	Hawkmoths	Desert Millipedes
Giant Mesquite Bugs	Vinegaroon Scorpions	Pinacate & Bombardier Beetles
Coyotes	Bobcats	

Common Medical Conditions

Vomiting

- Animals may vomit for several reasons. They may have consumed their meals too quickly, gagged, 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

- Foster pets may have diarrhea or loose stools initially.
- Common causes: infections, excessive canned food, routine and/or dietary changes or stress
- [Call the foster team](#) as soon as possible if it lasts more than 2 days, smells odd, or is bloody
- If behavior, activity and food intake are normal, reduce canned food and [contact the foster team](#) if there is no relief after one day.

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

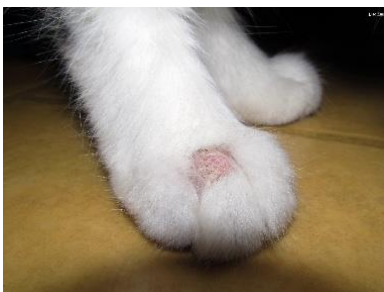
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Diarrhea – liquid, watery, puddle• Cow patty – think “mud cakes”, soft, no form	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Loose – soft but formed• Normal – firm and formed
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You may need to bring a stool sample for examination. It should be no more than 6 hours old (can be refrigerated for 1 day) and free of foreign materials. Oral anti-diarrhea medications and subcutaneous fluids might be prescribed.

Ringworm

Ringworm is a fungal infection affecting the hair follicles causing hair loss, rough scaly skin or lesions. Animals with poor grooming habits, compromised immune systems or 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 has symptoms, please notify the [foster team](#) immediately. The foster pet will need to return to the shelter for examination and testing. Oral antifungal medication, topical treatment, and medicated baths may be prescribed.

Ringworm in a cat



Ringworm in a dog



Fleas, Ticks, and Ear Mites

Foster pets are often taken into a foster home the same day they arrive at the shelter. We do not knowingly send pets to foster homes with these parasites, but it can happen. If you notice any fleas or ticks 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. Ear mites can be treated with cleaning and topical medication.

Viral Diseases

Several viral infections such as Calicivirus or Panleukopenia in cats, and Parvovirus or Distemper in dogs can wreak havoc on your poor foster(s) immune system. Viruses are transmitted through contact with feces or environmental contamination. Some can be fatal if not treated. Infected animals may exhibit some or all of these symptoms:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Vomiting• Diarrhea• Dehydration• Failure to grow• Neurological symptoms• Extreme lethargy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fever• Sudden death• Respiratory Distress• Green or yellow ocular discharge• Green or yellow nasal discharge• Ulcers in the mouth
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Frequent hand washing, sterilizing environments and observation can help catch issues before they spread dangerous levels. **Note: 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 Lost Our Home staff.**

Adverse Vaccine Reactions

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

Mild symptoms:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sneezing• Lethargy• Fever	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Local inflammation, swelling, or hair loss (the most common reactions)
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Anaphylactic shock (severe and immediate reaction) symptoms include:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collapse• Rapid pulse• Difficulty breathing or wheezing• Nausea or vomiting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Swelling• Itchy• Pale gums
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If you see any of these symptoms after a vaccination visit, call the Foster Care Team immediately.

Poisoning and Emergency Situations

Poisoning: Pets are most commonly poisoned from ingesting medications, foods, plants, toxins or encounters with harmful insects or wildlife. If you suspect your foster pet has been poisoned, call the shelter or poison control for assistance immediately (1-800-222-1222)

Medical Emergency Situations

Call the shelter immediately if your foster pet experiences any of the following conditions

Blood from any orifice	Wheezing or labored breathing
Blood or vomit that is dark in color	Lameness that is severe or painful
Blood in stool for more than 24 hours accompanied by lethargy	Pain/irritability when handled or touched that is out of character
Straining to urinate	Seizures or convulsions
Fever (often accompanied by lethargy)	Sudden trouble eating, mouth pain or drooling
For underaged animals: diarrhea (liquid) for more than 24 hours	

Non-Emergency Situations:

Eye changes (squinting, redness, tearing...)	Lethargy (more than 24 hours)
Coughing (more than 24 hours)	Nasal discharge (white, yellow or green)
Diarrhea (without lethargy)	No weight gain in puppies or kittens
Blood in urine	Poor appetite (more than 24 hours)
Excessive drinking (more than 48 hours)	Sneezing (more than 24 hours)
Increased appetite with weight loss	Unexplained lameness not improved w/ rest
Increased scratching or head shaking	Vomiting more than 3 times
Increased urination or sudden accidents	Weight loss with normal food intake
Allergic reaction to medication, e.g. wheezing. Stop the medication and call the shelter	

Medical Emergency Guidelines

Call the shelter immediately if your foster pet experiences a medical emergency. Our **emergency line** is available after normal business hours.

Please note: Lost Our Home is not staffed around the clock. Please call as early in the day as possible. If you need to leave a message, speak clearly and include:

- Your name
- Your phone number
- The pet's name and a detail on the emergency

Note: Your cost is tax deductible if you choose to go to a non-authorized private veterinarian or pet hospital, but you will not be reimbursed

Understanding & Addressing Behavior Problems and Fatalities

Behavior Issues:

Behavior or temperament challenges may occur while you are fostering. Common concerns include:

- Scratching
- Biting
- Housebreaking issues
- Inappropriate litter box usage
- Separation anxiety
- General, unprovoked aggression toward people or littermates

Please contact the Lost Our Home Foster team if you notice any of these behaviors.

Fatalities:

In the unfortunate event that a Lost Our Home foster pet passes away while in your care, you must notify the foster team immediately. Deceased foster pets must be returned to the shelter as soon as possible for medical evaluation.

Fading Kitten/Puppy Syndrome or Failure to Thrive

It is not known for sure why some babies 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 underdeveloped making it impossible for them to sustain themselves.

Supplemental Information

Helpful Tips

Check out this resource to help keep your home free of infection:

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

Become 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

- How to Be the Best Dog Foster Parent

<https://www.petfinder.com/animal-shelters-and-rescues/fostering-dogs/best-dog-foster-care/>

Introduction: Dog to Dog

When you're introducing two dogs to each other, first impressions matter. How the dogs interact in their first few encounters can set the tone for their entire relationship, so follow these steps to set their relationship up for success.

Here's what you'll need to get started:

- One person per dog
- Use 4–6-foot nylon or leather leashes will give you the most control (avoid retractable leashes)
- A spacious, neutral area (preferably outdoors) for the introduction to take place to avoid territorial behaviors and allow plenty of distance between the dogs
- Use high value treats like cheese or hot dogs cut into small pieces

Do	Don't
Use a happy, calm voice	Punish the dog for getting too excited, barking, or whining at the new dog.
Keep the leash as loose as possible while still maintaining control	The goal is to encourage your dog and build a positive relationship with the new dog Start with walking outdoors

Start with walking outdoors

1. Start on neutral territory where you have plenty of space, like a park, open field, or quiet street. Start on opposite sides of your space walking the same direction. When one dog looks at the other one, they get a treat. Keep walking until they are no longer focused on each other.
2. Repeat your walk and reward method moving about 3-5 feet closer. As long as the dogs continue to pay more attention to you and less attention to the other dog, continue walking. If the dogs become too focused on each other, add more distance until they can successfully walk, take treats, and ignore each other.
3. Slowly decrease the distance (this might take a few walks) until the two humans can walk next to each other with the dogs to the far right and left of them and can move forward without obsessing over the other dog.
4. Once you're consistently walking well, allow the dogs to circle and sniff each other for a few seconds then lead them away. Repeat this several times. Any time the dogs' bodies go still, lead them away and take a break.
5. Once you have several meetings where the dogs' bodies appear relaxed (loose, wiggly bodies) the next step is to try the two dogs loose in a fenced area so they can move around as they wish.

Tips for home introductions:

The steps outlined above provide an optimal opportunity for dogs to meet one another. If that's not possible, however, use these tips for an introduction at home:

- Do outdoor introductions before bringing the dogs into the house together
- Leave the leashes on so you can control both dogs if needed
- Be sure to remove any bones, toys, and food bowls that your resident dog might feel the need to protect from the new dog
- Keep the dogs separated while you are gone until they are comfortable with each other under a variety of circumstances
- When you are home, supervise their interactions and give them breaks from each other by crating one at a time or taking them for separate walks
- If an altercation occurs, separate the dogs for a few days to give them a break from each other. Stress hormones can take this long to return to normal, and if you try to continue the introduction too soon, the altercations could get worse. After a few days, you can return to the previous step to continue building a positive relationship.

Keep in mind: Some posturing and mild aggression can be normal as dogs become more comfortable, even after a successful first few days or weeks. Don't panic!

If you're concerned it's escalating or there is an injury, separate them as soon as safely possible and contact our free Behavior Helpline for support. Our friendly staff can help you assess the situation and advise on next steps.

Introduction: Dog to Cat

Whether you already have a dog and are considering getting a cat, or vice versa, it is very important to think about their first introduction. By letting a loose cat and an off-leash dog meet each other in an open room for the first time, you are probably setting up both animals to fail. Instead, plan ahead and take your time.

MATCHING CATS AND DOGS

If you're thinking of getting a cat for your dog or a dog for your cat, it's important to consider both animals' personalities. It may be helpful to look for a companion that has already been exposed to the other species in the past.

If a dog attempts to aggressively chase, pin, pick up or otherwise "manhandle" any cat, it is best to not even consider getting a cat — or at least to proceed with caution. Additionally, a dog who growls, lunges at or obsessively barks at a cat would probably do best in a cat-free environment. Likewise, a cat who growls, swats at, runs from or hides from dogs would probably prefer to not live with a dog.

If a dog loves chasing things, then a fearful, shy cat who runs away probably wouldn't be the best choice, as it could trigger the dog to chase. Similarly, an energetic cat who runs and pounces would fall into this same category. A better match here would be a calm, confident cat who will not run (in fear or play).

If a dog plays roughly, it is best to avoid kittens or elderly cats who can easily be hurt. Instead, stick to playful adults who are interested in play, but are also confident enough to take care of themselves. If a cat is rambunctious or playful, a dog that is playful, but gentle, could be a great option.

If a dog or cat is elderly, laid back, quiet or anxious, then a calm counterpart would be best. Avoid rambunctious companions who may annoy, frighten or otherwise bother the other pet. Introducing Dogs to Cats

THE INTRODUCTION PROCESS

Regardless of whether you are getting a new cat or a new dog, the first introduction between your current pet and your new pet is a very important part of the process. Here are four steps that can help you ensure a successful meeting:

STEP 1: CHOOSE THE PROPER LOCATION FOR THE FIRST MEETING

Resident cat to new dog: If you are adopting a dog, you should not take your cat to meet him at a shelter, or other establishment which houses a number of animals for health and safety reasons. Instead, the introduction should take place at home.

Resident dog to new cat:

If you are adopting a cat, do not take your dog into a shelter and expose him to the cats, as this can be highly stressful or traumatic for all of the cats. Also, it is not necessarily a good indicator of how the dog will react at home. Instead, ask the shelter's adoption counselors whether they have any dog-savvy, confident cats they will allow to meet your dog under controlled conditions.

If this is not possible, an alternative would be to have your dog meet a dog-savvy cat who belongs to a friend or relative. As a last resort, you can bring your new kitty home and do an introduction at home.

STEP 2: SEPARATE THE ANIMALS

Across a few days, rotate which animal has freedom and which is confined to allow each animal plenty of time to investigate the other one's scent. Sometimes the dog should be confined to a crate or another room (or taken to another location if he can't be left alone) to allow the cat time to roam free and investigate the smell of the dog.

If the dog obsessively digs at the separation barrier or barks at the cat for more than a day or two, the interaction likely won't work without proper training. You may need the help of a professional.

When no one is home, the dog or cat must always be securely confined so unsupervised interactions are not possible. Once the dog is calm (or at least not obsessed with the cat) and the cat is calm, eating and using the litter box normally, you can proceed to the next step.

STEP 3: MAKE LEASHED INTRODUCTIONS

Allow both animals to be in the same room at the same time but keep the dog securely leashed. Securing the cat in a harness with a leash for the introduction is also a good idea if the cat is comfortable wearing a harness.

Continue with this type of introduction until the dog is calm and ignores the cat, and the cat is calm, eating and using the litter box normally. If there is any fear or aggression displayed on either animal's part, stay at step 2 longer.

Introducing Dogs to Cats Continue indefinitely until both the dog and cat seem happy and relaxed around each other. When no one is home, the dog or cat should be securely confined to separate areas so unsupervised interactions are not possible.

STEP 4: ALLOW UNSUPERVISED INTERACTIONS

Unsupervised time together can occur after the cat and dog have been supervised around each other for a significant period of time (a month or so) and you are positive they will not hurt each other.

TRAINING TIP:

If the dog stares at the cat or the door separating the cat, try to distract him and get him to look away with treats, a happy voice or by gently guiding the dog away on a leash. Once the dog is away from the cat, try offering a treat. If he takes it, repeat this process until he is no longer focused on the cat or door.

WARNING SIGNS

If the dog remains overly focused, does not take his eyes off the cat or the door, completely ignores you or lunges suddenly as soon as the cat moves, this is probably a dangerous match.

If you are looking for a dog for your resident cat, try another dog. If this is your dog, you should probably not get him a cat. If at any time the dog lunges toward, growls, snaps at or shows any aggression toward a calm, quiet, still cat, this match will probably not work out. The same holds true if a cat attacks a calm, quiet dog.

If you are committed to make the relationship work, you will probably need a professional at this point. If you are looking for a cat for your dog, and your dog displays questionable behavior around a cat who is growling, hissing and swatting, try again with another, calmer cat. If he continues to display questionable behavior around multiple cats, it is likely he should not live with cats.

If it is your cat who is growling, hissing or swatting, give the cat a break and try again on another day. You might also need to try a different dog. A cat who continually hisses and growls at all types of dogs will likely not want to live with dogs. Your cat may tolerate a dog, but she probably won't be happy — which is an unfair situation for her.

If the cat stops eating, drinking, using the litter box, visiting with family members, or constantly stays hidden in another room, she is not happy. You might want to consider finding a better match or contacting a professional animal behaviorist for advice

Cat and Kitten Care

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

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/>

Cat & Kitten Fostering 101

Socialization & Playtime

- Socialize with your cat a *minimum* of 3 to 4 20-minute visits daily.
- 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 the environment in small ways (add cardboard boxes or move things around in room)
- *Remember to discourage play with hands!*

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!

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

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:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Diarrhea – liquid, watery, puddle• Cow patty – think “mud cakes”, soft, no form	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Loose – soft but formed• Normal – firm and formed
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You may be asked to bring in a fresh stool sample whenever possible for microscopic examination. The 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 arrive 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.

Foster Reference Guide Acknowledgment Form

Foster's Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Animal's Name: _____

Acknowledgment:

I, _____ (Foster's Name), acknowledge that I have received, read, and understood the Foster Reference Guide provided by Lost Our home Pet Rescue. I agree to adhere to the guidelines and procedures outlined in the guide to ensure the well-being and safety of the foster animal in my care.

Signature: _____

Date: _____