

Kitten Care Guide

Congratulations on participating in the Kitten Shelter Diversion Program and thank you for being a hero for cats! Your service to the community caring for and adopting out these kittens is incredibly impactful to our very crowded rescues and shelters, and especially to the little ones that you're saving! We want to support you getting these kittens off to their new homes on the right foot, so use this guide to keep up with your kittens' veterinary needs while it is in your care!

The following groups are partners in providing support for kittens found in the community. **The Kitten Shelter Diversion Program is overseen by Operation Catnip**, but we rely on partnerships with the Alachua County Humane Society and Alachua County Animal Services to provide more well-rounded care. Together, we can provide veterinary services at no cost to you while you foster these kittens and find homes for them through your social network. **We welcome any and all donations to Operation Catnip**, as this program is funded by caregivers like yourself who believe in our mission. Operation Catnip pays our partner organizations for their services.

For Wellness Care (vaccines, deworming, or minor illness or injury)	For spay-neuter surgery	For emergencies (trouble breathing, uncontrollable bleeding, seizures)
<p align="center">Alachua County Humane Society 352-373-5855 info@alachuahumane.org</p>	<p align="center">Operation Catnip 352-380-0940 info@ocgainesville.org</p>	<p align="center">Alachua County Animal Services 352-264-6870</p>
<p align="center">Clinic Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 10am to 4pm (walk-in) Wednesdays 10am to 12pm (appointments), 1pm to 4pm (walk-in)</p>	<p align="center">Trap Loan and Return: Saturdays 9am to 1pm Spay-Neuter Surgery by appointment only (Weekday and weekend options available)</p>	<p align="center">Shelter hours: Tuesday- Saturday 10:30am to 5pm APES is open 24 hours</p>

We appreciate your initiative as you foster and care for these kittens. Please use the above resources at your convenience in accordance with the Kitten Care Guide as follows.

Kittens under 4 weeks of age:

- If the mother cat is around, the kittens have the best chance by staying with her. Provide a safe place for her to shelter and nurse her kittens, indoors if possible, especially if she is friendly. If the mother cat is feral (not socialized to humans), disturbing her too much can cause her to move the kittens away. In such a case, it is better to keep your distance but provide her with food and shelter where you've found her.

Orphan kittens may be dirty, thin, have discharge from the eyes and nose, and will cry because they are hungry. Quiet, clean, healthy kittens have a mama, and it is normal for the mother cat to leave them alone. Removing kittens from their mother puts their survival at risk, and they should not be removed from the area unless you are absolutely sure the mother cat is no longer around.

- If you have established that the mother cat is not around, you must take action to care for the kittens. You may need to bottle feed them, which typically involves feedings every 2-4 hours depending on the age of the kitten. This is an in-depth topic that should be discussed in person.

Kittens over 4 weeks of age:

- Around 4 weeks of age, kittens can be weaned off milk and onto wet, pate style food.
- They should begin receiving FVRCP vaccinations, to be repeated every two weeks until they are 12 weeks old.
- They should receive deworming treatment, to be repeated two weeks after the initial treatment.
- Around 5 weeks of age, hard kibble (kitten diet) can be introduced in addition to wet food.

At 8 weeks of age:

- Once they reach 2 pounds (around 8 weeks of age), they can be spayed-neutered. If you have not already done so, set up an appointment with Operation Catnip by emailing info@ocgainesville.org. Kittens in the Kitten Shelter Diversion Program can come to their surgery appointments in a standard cat carrier, and will not be ear-tipped provided they will be going to indoor homes.

Post-Spay-Neuter Surgery:

- Now that they're spayed-neutered, they are ready to go to their forever homes! But they're not finished with their kitten veterinary care! They should continue to receive FVRCP vaccines every 2 weeks until they are 12 weeks old.
- At 12 weeks of age, they should receive a Rabies vaccine. This vaccine is required by law and is not valid until the kitten is at least 12 weeks old.
- Please provide the kittens' adopters with information about their additional vaccination needs if you place kittens in homes before they are 12 weeks old and fully vaccinated.

Additional Services Recommended:

- There are a few other important veterinary services that are recommended for indoor pet cats. OC does NOT provide these services, but does strongly recommend them. Caregivers and adopters can purchase these services from the Wellness Clinic or a private veterinarian:

FelV/FIV test: Cats testing positive for Feline Leukemia have special needs- a vet can address these with you if cat does indeed test positive. Cats testing positive for FIV can live normal healthy lives and cohabitate with FIV-negative cats with no issues.

Microchip: A microchip is the most accurate way of being reunited with your pet should it ever get lost. Be sure to register the microchip after it is implanted and keep your information updated as it changes so that the cat can always be traced back to you if found and scanned.

KITTEN GROWTH PROGRESSION



4 WEEKS OLD

6-8 WEEKS OLD

12 WEEKS OLD