



## Phoenix Advice

### What to do if you find a litter of kittens

#### Phoenix Association (Dordogne)

<http://www.phoenixasso.com/>

Cat/Kitten Enquiries: Sheelagh Johnson

Tel: 05 53 54 94 81

Email: [sheerik@wanadoo.fr](mailto:sheerik@wanadoo.fr)

#### **IMPORTANT – MAKE SURE THAT THE KITTENS ARE REALLY ABANDONED**

The mother may merely be out of sight when you find a litter of kittens. She is very good at remaining out of sight and just because you do not see her at the nest, it doesn't necessarily mean she is not close at hand. If possible observe the site for several hours to be sure that the kittens are truly abandoned. If you don't see any sign of her after a couple of hours then it is best to contact a professional rescue organisation.

Please go to this website to see if anyone is missing a cat/kittens:

<http://www.chat-perdu.org/>

Please search the internet for rescue organisations (e.g. Association Chat or SPA) closest to you. Here are some:

#### **Here is a list of helpful organisations:**

#### **SPAs**

##### **Spa Poitiers**

<http://www.spa-poitiers.fr/>

Tel : 05.49.88.94.57

Email: [contact@spa-poitiers.fr](mailto:contact@spa-poitiers.fr)

##### **Spa Angouleme**

<http://www.lesspadefrance.org/>

Tel: 05 45 65 76 99

##### **Spa des Saintes**

<http://www.lesspadefrance.org/>

### **Spa de Perigueux et du Departement de la Dordogne (Marsac)**

<http://spa-perigueux.org/en> (English version)

Tel: 05 53 04 16 54

### **SPA Carcassone**

<http://www.dogrescuecarcassonne.co.uk/> (English version)

Tel: 04 68 25 35 45

Email: [website@dogrescuecarcassonne.co.uk](mailto:website@dogrescuecarcassonne.co.uk)

## **Associations (Charities)**

### **SOS Chats Libres (Perigueux)**

<http://soschatslibres.fr>

### **Chats du Quercy (S.W. France)**

Website: <http://chatsduquercy.fr/en/> (English version)

Tel: 05 63 94 73 97

Email: [chatsduquercy@gmail.com](mailto:chatsduquercy@gmail.com)

### **Association Planning-Chat (La Rochelle)**

<http://planningchat17.free.fr/>

Tel: 05 46 51 89 08

Email: [planningchat@yahoo.fr](mailto:planningchat@yahoo.fr)

### **Hope Organisation**

<http://hopeassoc.org/>

### **La Protection des Chats (Charente Maritime)**

<http://www.la-protection-des-chats.com/>

### **Ecole du Chat (Poitiers)**

<http://ecoleduchat.poitiers.free.fr>

### **Discounted Sterilisation in Poitiers**

<http://ecoleduchat.poitiers.free.fr/pages/actualite.html>

### **La Sterilisation Animale**

<http://sterilisation-animale.blogspot.fr/>

## **Phoenix does not recommend that an inexperienced person take on the responsibility for hand-rearing orphaned kittens.**

If you don't know what you are doing, it can be risky or dangerous.

**However**, if you find yourself in a life or death situation where you have no choice but to try, please seek advice from Sheelagh Johnson, whose details are at the top of this form and then please make use of these guidelines below.

Fostering kitten kittens is challenging, but extremely rewarding. Animals of this age (up to 4 weeks old) are completely dependent on their "surrogate mother" for safety, warmth and food. By following the guidelines below, you will be able to witness the kittens in your care turning into playful adolescents.

### **Location**

Kittens should be kept in a quiet, confined space such as a small carrier or nesting box. Always keep their blankets or towels on a heat pad for warmth (see below).

Kittens need to be kept clean and dry. The bedding may have to be changed several times a day as a wet kitten will get cold and could die.

Bedding should be washed as needed. A small, stuffed animal may be used for the kitten to snuggle in to. Kittens should never be outside, except when being transferred to the vet.

### **Warmth**

Keeping kittens warm and free from drafts is very important because babies under 4 weeks of age are not able to regulate their body temperature and are incapable of shivering.

A heating pad may be used. These should be placed on the lowest setting and anchored so that the kitten cannot crawl underneath. Place the heating pad under half of the box or crate so that the kitten can escape the heat if needed. Cover the heat pad with vet bed or a blanket several layers thick.

Please use extreme caution when using a heating pad.

Kittens should feel warm, not hot or cold to the touch.

## Handling

You will need to handle the kitten when feeding and cleaning them while they are very small. Once this is done, return them to their nesting place. Whilst handling the kittens, old towels should be used in order to avoid being covered in urine or worse. Remember to wash your hands, especially if you have been dealing with other animals - antiseptic hand gel is recommended.

## Feeding

Do not feed kittens until they are thoroughly warmed – they cannot digest food until the body reaches normal temperature range.

When feeding kittens, always pay close attention to feeding guidelines. Dilute the formula carefully according to the directions, and NEVER give cow's milk to any animal as it can cause severe stomach trauma. If 'formula' is not available, full fat goats milk can be used.

Use good hygiene/cleanliness with all food supplies. Avoid overfeeding and make all food changes gradually. Below follows dietary advice for kittens, according to age:

### Feeding Kittens 0-2 weeks old

Feed every 2-4 hours with "Lait Maternisee" , available from your vet or pharmacy. Remember to always wash your hands before and after feeding and to clean the implements with warm soapy water.

Throw away stretched teats before the baby aspirates from a too-large hole in the tip or pulls the teat off the syringe and swallows it. Aspiration (bubbles of milk coming from the kittens nose) can be fairly common. If aspiration occurs, the baby can be turned upside down and gently shaken once to help the fluid drain out. If this happens with very young babies, a small bulb syringe or eyedropper can be used to suck the fluids out of the nostrils. Do not feed any more to the kitten until it has completely cleared the fluid from its lungs, usually by sneezing.

Mix the formula according to directions.

The formula should be fed at room temperature. You can mix the formula with warm previously boiled water. Reheated refrigerated formula can cause upset stomachs in some kittens. Test the milk on your wrist for the correct temperature.

Do not heat the bottle in the microwave as microwave heating causes nutrient loss in formula and hot spots can develop.

There is not usually an opening in the teat (bottles and teats come with the powdered formula), so make a small hole with a hot needle. The hole opening should be only large enough for a few drops of milk to drip out when the bottle is held upside down and squeezed gently. Milk should NOT stream out. This is important so that the kitten does not inhale formula into their lungs and develop pneumonia. Bubbles of

milk coming out from the kitten's nose indicates that the animal is aspirating. In this case a new teat will have to be used and a smaller hole made.

The best method of feeding is to use a small towel to hold the kitten. This will reduce stress on them from cold hands and tight fingers, and will give the baby something to hang onto. The baby's forelegs should be unconfined to allow it to "knead" as it would on the mother's abdomen during feeding. Lie the kitten on its belly as it would when nursing on mum. Lightly grasp the kitten around the head with one hand, then place the tip of the teat to the kitten's mouth and squeeze a little milk into the mouth with your other hand. The kitten should latch on. Do not hold the kitten too far upright or tip the kitten's head as this can cause the kitten to choke or aspirate.

The amount of formula the kitten should eat depends on its weight. Please refer to the directions on the container for the correct amounts. Some kittens will want to eat more than is listed on the can. This is okay, but be aware that this can cause diarrhoea. Check the tummy for fullness after feeding 2/3 to 3/4 of the formula to avoid overfeeding.

Do not put more than the amount for one kittens feeding in the bottle at one time. This will help you keep track of how much each kitten consumes per feeding and will keep the baby from over eating.

If an kitten refuses to eat for two consecutive feedings, seek veterinary advice.

When feeding a litter of kittens make sure you can easily identify each one and use charts to record how much has been take by which kitten and when. Kitchen scales can be used to record weight gains.

### **Feeding Kittens 3-4 weeks old**

Feed every 4-6 hours.

At this stage you can start introducing the kitten to soft food: baby food and wet puppy/kitten croquets. Mix the formula and croquets to introduce soft food. It will look like thick soup. Introducing wet food sometimes gives kittens diarrhoea.

Encourage kittens to lap from a shallow dish. Put some of the soup on your finger, put it in the kitten's mouth, then lower your finger to the food dish and encourage the kitten to lap from the dish.

Don't be alarmed if the kitten is not interested; it can take a couple of days.

Never push the kitten's face into the food.

After the kitten is eating from a dish, start reducing the amount of formula and increasing the amount of soft food. The goal is to wean the kitten off of the formula altogether. Once the kitten is weaned, dry food should also be made available, fresh water must be available at all times

## Urination and Defecation

Kittens 1-2 weeks old need to be stimulated in order to urinate and defecate before and after every feeding. Gently pat its anal area with a cotton ball or soft toilet paper that has been moistened with warm water. Gently rubbing the kitten's belly also encourages movement. Be sure to keep the anal area clean and dry by sponging with warm water and patting with a soft towel. Don't panic if it does not defecate every time. Once a day is fine although they may defecate as frequently as after every meal. Consistency of stool can vary from quite loose to toothpaste consistency and can range in colour from yellow to dark brown.

When kittens first begin to eat solids, the time has come to begin **toilet training**.

Place the litter tray in a convenient place that the kitten is familiar with.

Try to find a quiet area so that the kitten will not be stressed or too distracted. In the general area of the kitten's bedding and food is a good place.

Simply place the kitten in the litter tray and pat anal area with a moist cloth. When the kitten starts to urinate or defecate, remove the cloth and allow the kitten to use the tray.

Instinctively, the kitten should start scratching and burying waste.

Repeat these steps until the kitten goes into the litter tray on his own. It usually takes about 1-3 times although some small kittens will do this whole process naturally.

Never rub the kitten's nose in their urine or faeces when they relieve themselves in the wrong place.

## **About Phoenix**

Phoenix Association is a registered French charity that exists with the sole aim of dealing with the sad plight of the ever-increasing number of animals in need in and around the Dordogne.

We take in abused and abandoned animals, nurturing them in our voluntary network of foster homes and then placing them in loving, permanent homes. We work with maximum care and attention with a small number of animals at a time.

**Phoenix is not state-funded**, so in order for us to continue our work, **we rely upon donations** to fund our veterinary, fostering and re-homing costs. Every donation that we receive, however large or small, goes towards helping animals in desperate need.

Please visit our website to find out more about our animals available for adoption, foster caring, how to donate, how to join as a Member, and much more.

[www.phoenixasso.com](http://www.phoenixasso.com)