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## How to Bottle Feed Kittens and Puppies

Candie Corriher, DVM, Laurie Peek, DVM, and Heidi Beyer, CVT



Photo courtesy of Humane Society Silicon Valley, Milpitas, CA

Thank you for joining us to learn how to bottle feed kittens and puppies...

## Learning Goals

- To enable foster caregivers to recognize when bottle feeding is needed in kittens and puppies
- To teach foster caregivers how to properly do each step of the bottle feeding process
- To educate foster caregivers on common bottle feeding challenges



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The learning goals of this class are...

- To enable foster caregivers to recognize when bottle feeding is needed in kittens and puppies...
- To teach foster caregivers how to properly do each step of the bottle feeding process... and...
- To educate foster caregivers on common bottle feeding challenges.

## When Bottle Feeding is Needed

- **Orphaned Kittens and Puppies (0-4 weeks)**
  - Mother has passed away or gone missing
  - Removed from a mother who rejected or was hurting them
- **Kittens and Puppies (0-4 weeks)**
  - Whose mothers do not have enough milk
  - Whose mothers do not have any milk



Photo courtesy of the Humane Society for Southwest Washington, Vancouver, WA



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Bottle feeding is needed the most in orphaned kittens and puppies who are between 0-4 weeks of age. That is, kittens and puppies this age whose mother has passed away or gone missing, or ones who were removed from a mother who rejected or was hurting them.

Bottle feeding is also indicated in kittens and puppies who are between 0-4 weeks of age, whose mothers do not have enough milk, or do not have any milk. It is best for these kittens and puppies to stay with their mothers who are caring for them, but the mothers need our help to get enough milk into their babies. Kittens and puppies who are not getting enough milk will likely be losing weight or not gaining weight, and they may also be restless and crying.

## When Bottle Feeding is Not Needed



- **Kittens and Puppies (4-5 weeks and older)**
  - Old enough to transition to solid food
  - See the Maddie's flash class: Transitioning Kittens and Puppies to Solid Food
  - Monitor for weight gain, may need some supplemental bottle feeding until fully transitioned



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[How to Bottle Feed Kittens and Puppies](#)

Before bottle feeding a kitten or puppy, it is important to make sure that they really need to be bottle fed. If they are between 4 and 5 weeks of age or older, they are old enough to be transitioned to solid food. For “How-To” instructions, see the Maddie’s flash class on Transitioning Kittens and Puppies to Solid Food. You can find a link to this class in the Resource Tab at the top right of your screen. Just be sure that your foster kitten or puppy is eating enough on his or her own, otherwise you will need to supplement with bottle feeding until he or she has completely transitioned to solid food.

## When Bottle Feeding is Not Needed

- **Kittens and Puppies (4-5 weeks and older)**
  - Kittens should be gaining 4 oz./week = 0.6/day
  - Puppies should be doubling body weight every 10-14 days and gaining 5-10% body weight/day



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Kittens who are eating enough should be gaining 4 oz. per week, which is approximately 0.6 oz. per day. Puppies who are eating enough should be doubling their body weight every 10-14 days, and should be gaining 5-10% of their body weight per day.

# Bottle Feeding

## 1. Getting Everything Ready



## 2. From Feeding to Clean-Up



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We'll cover the bottle feeding steps in two sections: Getting Everything Ready and From Feeding to Clean-Up.

## Bottle Feeding: Getting Everything Ready

### 9 Easy Steps:

- 1) Weigh your kitten or puppy
- 2) Use the Maddie's Bottle Feeding and Stomach Capacity Chart
- 3) Select the milk replacer
- 4) Select the bottle and nipple
- 5) Prepare the nipple



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There are 9 easy steps before feeding begins. We'll go over each of these steps in more detail but let's start with an overview.

The first step of getting ready to bottle feed your kitten or puppy is to weigh him or her.

The second step is to figure out the amount of milk to feed and how often using either the kitten or puppy version of the Maddie's Bottle Feeding and Stomach Capacity Chart.

The next steps are to select the milk replacer and an appropriate sized bottle and nipple, and then prepare the nipple for use.....(slide automatically advances to the next slide)

## Bottle Feeding: Getting Everything Ready

### 9 Easy Steps:

- 6) Mix the milk replacer
- 7) Measure out the milk replacer needed
- 8) Warm the milk replacer
- 9) Warm your kitten or puppy



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.....and then mix, measure out, and warm the milk replacer; and warm your kitten or puppy. Let's take a closer look at step 1.



## Step 1: Weigh your Kitten or Puppy

- Baby Scale
- Postage Scale
- Kitchen Scale



Video courtesy of Jenny Wright



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(Fade in the text for the first 3 scales)

The first step in the bottle-feeding process is to weigh your foster kitten or puppy. You do not need to do this before every feeding, once daily is enough. For kittens and smaller puppies, this can be done with a baby scale, a postage scale, or a kitchen scale, and here is a video that shows how to do it...

## Step 1: Weigh your Kitten or Puppy



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(Play video)

## Step 1: Weigh your Kitten or Puppy

- Bathroom Scale  
(Larger puppies only)
  - Weigh yourself holding  
the puppy
  - Weigh just yourself
  - Subtract your weight  
from both
- = puppy's weight



Not accurate for pets less than 2 lbs



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For larger puppies, a bathroom scale will be needed. Weigh yourself on the bathroom scale while holding your puppy, then weigh just yourself, then subtract your weight from that of both you and your puppy. This will give you the puppy's weight. This method cannot be accurately used for foster pets weighing less than 2 lbs.

## Step 2: Use the Maddie's Bottle Feeding and Stomach Capacity Chart



- To determine:
  - How much milk per day
  - How often
  - How much milk per feeding
- Guideline to help avoid overfeeding or underfeeding, adjustments may be needed
- First day of bottle feeding: only feed half of the amount listed on the chart

**Puppy Bottle Feeding and Stomach Capacity Chart**

Puppy Weight (lb, oz)	Puppy Weight (grams)	Daily Caloric Requirement*	Amount of Formula Per Day (ml)**	Amount Per Feeding (ml)*	Approximate Number of Feedings Per Day**
2 oz	57 g	8 kcal	13 ml	2 ml	6
4 oz	113 g	23 kcal	35 ml	6 ml	6
6 oz	170 g	34 kcal	50 ml	7 ml	6
8 oz	227 g	45 kcal	60 ml	8 ml	6
10 oz	284 g	57 kcal	83 ml	8 ml	6
12 oz	340 g	68 kcal	76 ml	14 ml	5
14 oz	397 g	79 kcal	88 ml	14 ml	5
16 oz (1 lb)	454 g	90 kcal	101 ml	18 ml	5
2 lb	907 g	188 kcal	202 ml	36 ml	5
3 lb	1,361 g	272 kcal	302 ml	54 ml	5
4 lb	1,815 g	360 kcal	402 ml	72 ml	5
5 lb	2,269 g	454 kcal	504 ml	91 ml	5
6 lb	2,723 g	544 kcal	606 ml	109 ml	5
7 lb	3,177 g	635 kcal	706 ml	127 ml	5
8 lb	3,631 g	728 kcal	806 ml	146 ml	5

\* The daily caloric requirement was calculated using 50 kcal/100 g body weight and the amount per feeding using a 4/100 g body weight. The average requirement is ~35-45 kcal/100g body weight daily and the maximum comfortable stomach capacity is ~4 ml/100 g body weight.

\*\* Concentration: 2.3 kcal/ml. Most commercial puppy milk replacers in the US provide 2.3 kcal/ml, which is the same as the volume of milk required to meet caloric needs. This can be determined in terms of the number and size of feedings given versus to stomach capacity and milk needs. It is not a 1:1 ratio of formula to stomach capacity. This may also occur for why the 4oz puppy grows slower than puppies that are 4oz at 2 weeks.

\*\*\* As the puppy is developing and its milk intake is increasing, you may be able to increase the volume of milk to the number of feedings per day. Be aware that exceeding the stomach capacity, however, may not just be the puppy or kit of puppies, but the formula. The formula may be too thick and cause the puppy to vomit.

\*\*\*\* Puppies in their first 2-3 weeks of life are usually eating some solid food. Reducing the amount of milk replacer required to meet daily caloric requirements. This may result in less frequent milk feedings.

\*\*\*\*\* See: O. F. "Necessary and practical care of the puppy and whelp." *Parasitology*, vol. 70, no. 2, 2008, pp. 344-361.



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Once you have a weight on your foster kitten or puppy, look at either the kitten or puppy version of the Maddie's Bottle Feeding and Stomach Capacity Chart to figure out how much milk your foster kitten or puppy should be getting per day, how often to feed, and how much milk you should be giving per feeding. You can find a link to these charts in the Resources tab at the top right of your screen.

These charts are only meant to be used as a guideline to help avoid overfeeding or underfeeding, adjustments may be needed for your individual foster kitten or puppy based on how he or she is doing.

On the first day of bottle feeding, it is recommended to only feed half of the amount listed on the bottle feeding chart. This will give your kitten's or puppy's digestive system time to adjust to the milk replacer, and for the stomach to adapt to the volume of milk being fed.

## Step 2: Use the Maddie's Bottle Feeding and Stomach Capacity Chart

- **Overfeeding**
  - Diarrhea
  - Vomiting
  - Inhalation (aspiration) of milk into the lungs
  - Gas build-up in the stomach and intestines
- **Underfeeding**
  - Weight loss
  - Lack of weight gain

**Kitten Bottle Feeding and Stomach Capacity Chart**

Estimated Kitten Age (weeks)	Estimated Weight (lbs, oz)	Estimated Weight (grams)	Daily Caloric Requirement	Amount of Formula Per Day (ml)**	Amount Per Feeding (ml)	Approximate Number of Feedings Per Day***
< 1 week	2 oz	57 g	11 kcal	16 ml	2 ml	7
	3 oz	85 g	18 kcal	28 ml	3 ml	7
	4 oz	113 g	25 kcal	31 ml	5 ml	7
1 week	6 oz	170 g	38 kcal	56 ml	8 ml	7
	8 oz	227 g	51 kcal	66 ml	7 ml	7
	7 oz	198 g	40 kcal	64 ml	8 ml	7
2 weeks	8 oz	227 g	51 kcal	66 ml	8 ml	7
	6 oz	170 g	38 kcal	56 ml	10 ml	7
	10 oz	283 g	67 kcal	77 ml	11 ml	7
3 weeks*	8 oz	227 g	51 kcal	66 ml	12 ml	6.2
	12 oz	340 g	80 kcal	92 ml	14 ml	6.2
	10 oz	283 g	74 kcal	90 ml	15 ml	6
4 weeks*	14 oz	396 g	118 kcal	167 ml	18 ml	6
	16 oz	453 g	136 kcal	192 ml	17 ml	6
	16 oz (1 lb)	453 g	136 kcal	192 ml	18 ml	6
5 weeks*	18 oz (1 lb, 2 oz)	510 g	154 kcal	218 ml	20 ml	4
	18 oz	510 g	154 kcal	218 ml	22 ml	4
	18 oz (1 lb, 4 oz)	567 g	172 kcal	243 ml	23 ml	4

\*The daily caloric requirement was calculated using 10 kcal/100 g body weight and the amount per feeding using 1 ml/100 body weight. The average requirement for adult cats is 100 kcal/1000 body weight daily and the maximum caloric intake is 200 kcal/1000 body weight daily.  
\*\*Caloric density of formula: 100 kcal/100 ml. The maximum daily caloric requirement for a kitten is 100 kcal/1000 body weight. The maximum volume of milk required for most adult cats is 100 ml. This can be problematic in terms of the volume and also of the weight that volume of formula carries and may lead to gas build-up in the stomach and intestines. Therefore, the amount of formula fed should be limited to 100 ml per feeding.  
\*\*\*As the kitten is subjected to the milk and the feeding volume, it may be able to tolerate the volume but to fully eat it. The number of feedings per day is the amount of formula fed divided by the amount of formula per feeding (ml) divided by the amount of formula per feeding (ml) and rounded up to the nearest whole number.  
\*Based on 100 g/kg (2.2 lb) of milk. It is recommended to use a scale to weigh the kitten and the amount of formula fed to ensure the kitten is getting the right amount of formula.  
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Overfeeding can cause diarrhea and vomiting. It can also cause inhalation, or aspiration, of the milk into the lungs, because the stomach can only hold so much milk before it starts coming back up the throat and into the mouth. This is when the milk can accidentally be inhaled. Overfeeding can also cause gas build-up in the stomach and intestines, which results in your kitten or puppy having a distended belly and an upset stomach.

Underfeeding can cause weight loss or a lack of weight gain in kittens and puppies. This is why it is so important to weigh them daily.

### Step 3: Select the Milk Replacer

- **Homemade Milk Replacer for Temporary Use Only**
  - Maddie's Orphaned Kitten Emergency Milk Replacer Recipes
  - Maddie's Orphaned Puppy Emergency Milk Replacer Recipes
- **Commercial Kitten and Puppy Milk Replacer**
  - Liquid
  - Powder (needs to be mixed with water)



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The next step is to select which milk replacer you are going to use. If you are unexpectedly caring for orphaned kittens or puppies, or if you have accidentally run out of commercial kitten and puppy milk replacer, it is acceptable to temporarily use homemade milk replacer. For “How-To” instructions, see the Maddie’s Orphaned Kitten Emergency Milk Replacer Recipes or the Maddie’s Orphaned Puppy Emergency Milk Replacer Recipes. You can find a link to these recipes in the Resources tab at the top right of your screen.

Commercial kitten or puppy milk replacer should be obtained as soon as possible, as it more closely matches the mother’s milk nutritionally. Commercial milk replacer comes in liquid form in a can, which is more expensive, and in powder form, which needs to be mixed with water to make a liquid. Very good choices are KMR® for kitten milk replacer, and Esbilac® for puppy milk replacer.

## Step 4: Select the Bottle and Nipple

- 2 oz. kitten sized bottle and nipple for kittens
- 4 oz. puppy sized bottle and nipple for small to medium breed puppies
- Human baby bottle and nipple for large breed puppies



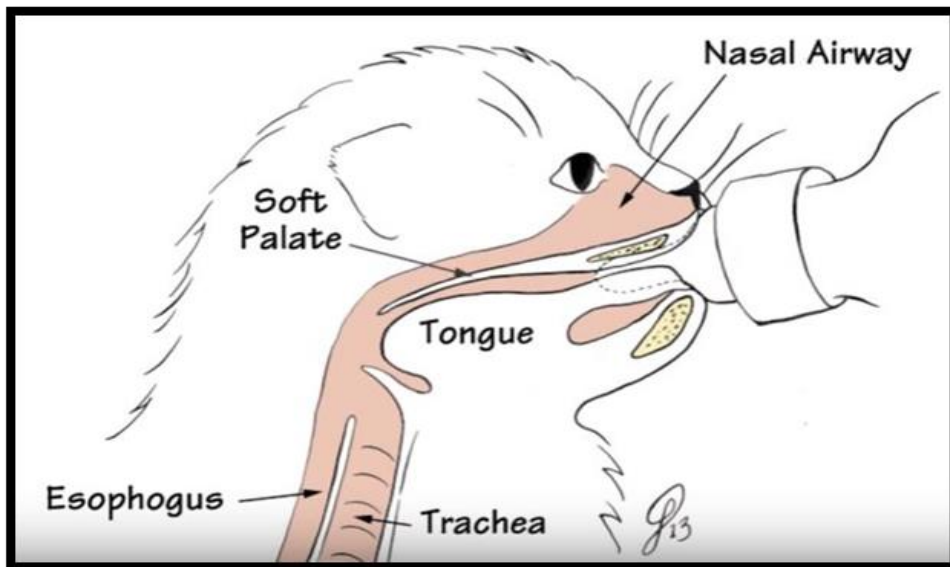
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Now it is time to find an appropriate sized bottle and nipple to use. Most pet stores and farm supply stores have pet nursing bottles that come in 2 oz. or 4 oz. sizes. You should use the 2 oz. bottle and nipple for kittens and the 4 oz. bottle and nipple for small to medium breed puppies. Human baby bottles that are angled and vented work best for large breed puppies such as Labradors, Mastiffs, and Pit Bulls.

Some bottle babies can be picky and you may need to try several different types and brands of bottles and nipples to see what they like.

#### Step 4: Select the Bottle and Nipple



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Use caution if using larger nipples for kittens and smaller puppies. If they happen to chew off part of the tip of the nipple and swallow it, larger nipples are more likely to cause an obstruction of the intestines.

The nipple's tip should not extend past the middle of your kitten's or puppy's tongue. Avoid nipples that are too long. If the tip of the nipple is too far back in the mouth, the milk may be inhaled, aka aspirated, down the trachea and into the lungs instead of going down the esophagus into the stomach.

Feeding with a syringe or dropper should be avoided, because you may accidentally put more milk into your kitten's or puppy's mouth than he or she can swallow, which could also cause aspiration of the milk.

**If the milk is aspirated, you may see coughing that lasts for more than a few minutes and/or difficult or labored breathing. This is an emergency, and you should call your foster coordinator immediately.**



## Step 5: Prepare the Nipple

- Poke a hole in the tip of the nipple with a hot sewing needle
- Cut an “X” shape in the tip of the nipple
- Hold the nursing bottle upside down
  - Milk should come out at a rate of 1-2 drops per second with a gentle squeeze of the bottle



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The nipples on human baby bottles come with holes already in the tips, but the nipples on pet nursing bottles do not. They need appropriate sized holes cut in the tips. For the 2 oz. nursing bottle nipples for kittens, you can poke a hole in the tip of the nipple with a hot sewing needle.

For either the 2 oz. or 4 oz. nipples, you can cut an “X” shape in the tip of the nipple. Small scissors such as embroidery scissors or cuticle scissors work well, especially for the smaller nipples. Avoid cutting too far down on the tip of the nipple, this can make the hole too big.

After you have made a hole in the nipple, you need to check that it is not too big or too small.

Hold the nursing bottle upside down. The hole in the nipple should be large enough to allow a drop of milk to slowly form. The milk should drip out at a rate of 1-2 drops per second with a gentle squeeze of the bottle.

## Step 5: Prepare the Nipple

- Even if the hole in the nipple was previously cut, check it before each use
- Nipple hole too big
  - Milk flowing out too fast
  - Can cause your kitten or puppy to aspirate milk
- Nipple hole too small
  - Very difficult for your kitten or puppy to suckle milk out of the bottle
  - Milk will not come out of the bottle unless firmly squeezed (which should be avoided)



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Even if you have previously cut a hole in the tip of the nipple, you should still check it before each use. Sometimes the rubber will stick after cleaning, so make sure to unstick the rubber openings when preparing the bottle by dripping a few drops of milk out before feeding. It is also possible for the rubber to tear with vigorous suckling or during the cleaning process, which could enlarge the hole in the nipple. If the hole is too big, the milk will flow out too fast, potentially causing your kitten or puppy to aspirate the milk.

If the hole is too small, it will be very difficult for your kitten or puppy to suckle milk out of the bottle. Milk will not come out of the bottle unless it is firmly squeezed, which should be avoided. The milk can accidentally come out too fast and cause your kitten or puppy to aspirate the milk.

## Step 5: Prepare the Nipple



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Here is a quick video that shows an “X” shape being cut in the tip of a nipple...

## Step 6: Mix the Milk Replacer

- Powdered milk replacer
  - 1 part powder to 2 parts water
  - Can use Pedialyte® instead of water and add a pinch of Fortiflora® for the first few feedings



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Most powdered kitten and puppy milk replacers are mixed up by adding 1 part powder to 2 parts water. Be sure to read the mixing directions on the label of the powdered milk replacer that you are using. You can mix the milk replacer with Pedialyte® instead of water and add in a pinch of the probiotic powder FortiFlora® for the first few feedings to help your kitten's or puppy's digestive system adjust to the milk replacer.

## Step 6: Mix the Milk Replacer



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Here is a short video showing powdered milk replacer being mixed.

## Step 6: Mix the Milk Replacer

- **Powdered milk replacer**
  - 1 part powder to 2 parts water
  - Can use Pedialyte® instead of water and add a pinch of Fortiflora® for the first few feedings
- **Temporary 50:50 dilution**
  - Add equal part milk replacer to equal part water or Pedialyte®



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A temporary 50:50 dilution of milk replacer is sometimes needed. We will be talking about this more in the Maddie's flash class on Common Kitten and Puppy Bottle Feeding Problems and Solutions. You can find a link to this class in the Resources tab at the top right of your screen.

To make a 50:50 dilution of milk replacer, you either take the liquid milk replacer that comes in a can or the powdered milk replacer that you have already mixed up, and you add an equal part of that milk replacer to an equal part of water or Pedialyte®.

## Step 6: Mix the Milk Replacer

- Milk replacer too concentrated
  - Diarrhea
  - Vomiting
  - Constipation
  - Gas formation in stomach and intestines
- Milk replacer too dilute
  - Weight loss
  - Lack of weight gain



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If milk replacer is too concentrated, it can cause diarrhea, vomiting, and constipation. It can also cause gas formation in the stomach and intestines, which leads to a distended belly and an upset stomach.

If milk replacer is too dilute, it can cause weight loss or lack of weight gain, because your kitten or puppy is not getting enough nutrition.

## Step 7: Measure Out the Milk Replacer Needed

- Measuring out the milk replacer helps reduce wasted product
- Discard milk that has been previously warmed up or that's in a bottle that has touched a kitten's or puppy's mouth
- A clean syringe is a good choice for measuring out the milk replacer



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Carefully measuring out the milk replacer needed for one feeding helps reduce wasted milk replacer. Milk that has already been warmed up or in a bottle that has touched a kitten's or puppy's mouth must be discarded. Warm milk or milk that has been contaminated with bacteria from saliva is a good breeding ground for unwanted bacteria.

A clean syringe is a good choice for measuring out the milk replacer.



## Step 8: Warm the Milk Replacer

- Avoid warming the milk in the microwave
- Warm the milk in a warm water bath until it reaches 95-100°F, gently swirl the milk in the container to warm it all the way through
- Can put the nipple in the warm water bath to soften it



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Avoid warming the milk up in the microwave, this can lead to overheating or uneven heating.

Instead, warm the milk by placing it in a warm water bath. You can warm the water bath in the microwave, then soak the milk in the water bath for a few minutes, or however long it takes to warm the milk up to about 95-100° F. Gently swirl the milk in the container every few minutes to warm it all the way through, otherwise the center may still be cold. Avoid shaking the milk in the container, this causes bubbles to form, and you do not want your kitten or puppy to swallow air while nursing.

The nipples can be stiff on some bottles. You can also put the nipple in the warm water bath to soften it.

## Step 8: Warm the Milk Replacer

- **Milk too hot:**
  - Can burn your kitten's or puppy's mouth and throat
- **Milk too cold:**
  - Chilling of your kitten or puppy, which causes heart rate and digestion to slow down
  - Vomiting
  - Inhalation (aspiration) of milk
  - Gas formation in stomach and intestines



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Make sure that the milk is neither too hot nor too cold by testing a few drops on the inside of your wrist before feeding.

Milk that is too hot can burn your kitten's or puppy's mouth and throat.

Milk that is too cold can cause chilling of your kitten or puppy, which causes the heart rate and digestion to slow down. The digestion slowing down can cause vomiting, and inhalation, aka aspiration, of milk into the lungs. It can also cause gas formation in the stomach and intestines, which leads to a distended belly and an upset stomach.

## Step 9: Warm your Kitten or Puppy

- **Chilled kittens and puppies**
  - Digestion slowed down
  - Less responsive and not interested in nursing
  - Crying continuously
- **To slowly warm your kitten or puppy**
  - Use a Snuggle Safe® disc, hot water bottles, or rice packs.
  - Be sure to wrap the heat source in a towel so that it does not burn the kitten or puppy.



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As we already explained, a kitten or puppy who is chilled can have digestion that is slowed down, which can cause vomiting, aspiration of milk into the lungs, and gas formation in the stomach and intestines. Kittens and puppies who are chilled also tend to be less responsive and not interested in nursing. You may notice that they are crying continuously.

Kittens and puppies who are chilled must be warmed up slowly, so that they do not go into shock. To warm your kitten or puppy, use a Snuggle Safe® disc, hot water bottles, or warmed rice packs.

Be sure to wrap the heat source in a towel or blanket to slow down warming, and so that your kitten or puppy does not get burned. If your kitten or puppy is very cold with a body temperature less than 95° F, the warming process should happen slowly over a 30 minute to 2 hour time period, with a body temperature increase of approximately 2° F per hour.

## Bottle Feeding: From Feeding to Clean-Up

### 6 Easy Steps:

- 1) Properly position your kitten or puppy
- 2) Feed your kitten or puppy
- 3) Burp your kitten or puppy
- 4) Stimulate your kitten or puppy to pee and poop



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We have finished covering all the steps in the Getting Everything Ready section. Now we are going to talk about bottle feeding steps from Feeding to Clean-Up. First of all, you will need to properly position your kitten or puppy, then you can start doing the fun stuff—feeding the baby. After that is burping your kitten or puppy and stimulating him or her to pee and poop.

## Bottle Feeding: From Feeding to Clean-Up

### 6 Easy Steps:

- 5) Refrigerate leftover milk replacer
- 6) Clean and sterilize the bottle and nipple



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.....The last steps are to refrigerate leftover milk and to clean and sterilize the bottle and nipple. Let's go over each of these steps in detail...

## Step 1: Properly Position your Kitten or Puppy

- Do not position your kitten or puppy on his/her back like a human baby!
- Proper position
  - Kitten or puppy held with his or her feet facing down to the ground (sternal position)
  - The head and neck should be stretched upward and forward
- Improper positioning
  - Inhalation (aspiration) of milk
  - Swallowing of air which causes gas build-up in the stomach and intestines



Photo courtesy of Humane Society Silicon Valley, Milpitas, CA



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Kittens and puppies who are being bottle fed should not be positioned on their backs like human babies who are being bottle fed, despite the numerous photos and videos on the internet that show that!

A kitten or puppy being bottle fed should be held with his or her feet facing down to the ground. This is called a sternal position. The head and neck should be stretched upward and forward, like the position your kitten or puppy would naturally be in while nursing from his or her mother. Do not allow the kitten or puppy to extend his or her neck too far back. It is fine for the kitten or puppy to place his or her front paws on the bottle or on your hands.

Improper positioning of your kitten or puppy during bottle feeding can result in aspiration of the milk. It can also cause your kitten or puppy to swallow air while nursing from the bottle, which can cause gas build-up in the stomach and intestines, leading to a distended belly and an upset stomach.

## Step 2: Feed your Kitten or Puppy

- Allow a drop of milk to drip onto your kitten's or puppy's tongue
- Do not squeeze the bottle and stream milk into your kitten's or puppy's mouth
- Go slowly
- Check for swallowing by watching and/or gently feeling the throat
  - Should take place every 2-3 times the kitten or puppy sucks on the nipple



Video courtesy of Humane Society Silicon Valley, Milipitas, CA



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How to Bottle Feed Kittens and Puppies

Allow a drop of milk to drip onto your kitten's or puppy's tongue. He or she should latch on quickly, but it may take a few attempts before he or she figures it out.

Do not squeeze the bottle and stream milk into your kitten's or puppy's mouth, this may cause him or her to aspirate the milk.

Go slowly, allowing your kitten or puppy time to breathe and swallow. It may take up to 30 minutes for him or her to nurse. Swallowing should take place every 2-3 times your kitten or puppy sucks on the nipple. Check for swallowing by watching and/or gently feeling the throat for movement. If your kitten or puppy is not swallowing, he or she is at risk of aspirating the milk and you should stop to give him or her time to swallow. If your kitten or puppy is swallowing too fast and/or has milk coming out of his or her nose, the hole in the nipple is probably too big and the milk is coming out of the nipple too fast.

Here is a video of a puppy taking a bottle. Watch the puppy's throat closely, this is what a good rate of swallowing looks like.

## Step 2: Feed your Kitten or Puppy



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How to Bottle Feed Kittens and Puppies

Here is a video of a puppy taking a bottle. Watch the puppy's throat closely, this is what a good rate of swallowing looks like.



## Step 2: Feed your Kitten or Puppy

- Care should be taken to ensure that your kitten or puppy does not swallow air
- Be sure that your kitten or puppy does not chew the nipple off
- Hold your kitten or puppy gently and move with him or her



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Care should be taken to ensure that your kitten or puppy does not swallow air. This can happen when he or she is suckling too fast, is in an improper feeding position, or when air bubbles get into the nipple.

When your kitten or puppy has a strong suckle, be sure that he or she does not chew the nipple off while nursing. If swallowed, a piece of nipple can obstruct the intestines.

Many kittens and puppies will get very vigorous with their front legs and accidentally knock the bottle out of their mouths. The key is to hold your kitten or puppy gently and move with him or her as necessary. Don't hold your kitten or puppy too tightly.

## Step 2: Feed your Kitten or Puppy



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How to Bottle Feed Kittens and Puppies

Here is a video of a kitten being bottle fed....

(Play video)

## Step 2: Feed your Kitten or Puppy



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How to Bottle Feed Kittens and Puppies

Here is a video of a puppy being bottle fed.

### Step 3: Burp your Kitten or Puppy

- Hold your kitten or puppy with his or her tummy against your shoulder or the palm of your hand
- Gently pat or rub his or her back
- If he or she does not burp, move on to the next step then try again



Photo courtesy of the Humane Society for Southwest Washington, Vancouver, WA



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How to Bottle Feed Kittens and Puppies

Just like human babies, kittens and puppies need to be burped after bottle feeding. Hold your kitten or puppy with his or her tummy against your shoulder or the palm of your hand, and then gently pat or rub his or her back. For very young kittens and puppies, who are more delicate, softly rubbing the back is recommended over patting. If your kitten or puppy does not burp, move on to the next step, and try again later.

## Step 4: Stimulate your Kitten or Puppy to Pee and Poop

- Kittens and puppies cannot pee and poop by themselves until they are 3-4 weeks old
- See the Maddie's flash class on [How to Stimulate an Orphaned Kitten or Puppy to Pee and Poop](#)



Photo courtesy of the Humane Society for Southwest Washington, Vancouver, WA



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[How to Bottle Feed Kittens and Puppies](#)

Kittens and puppies cannot pee and poop by themselves until they are about 3-4 weeks old. Those who have a mother will be stimulated to pee and poop when she is grooming them and licking their rear ends. So, with kittens and puppies who do not have a mother, we must stimulate them to pee and poop by rubbing a warm wet cotton square on their bottoms.

For “How-To” instructions, see the Maddie's flash class on [How to Stimulate an Orphaned Kitten or Puppy to Pee and Poop](#). You can find a link to this class in the Resources tab at the top right of your screen.

## Step 5: Refrigerate Leftover Milk Replacer

- Milk replacer must be refrigerated between uses
- Milk replacer should be stored in a clean container with a cover in the refrigerator for no longer than 24 hours
- Throw out any milk replacer that
  - Has been left out at room temperature for longer than 1 hour
  - Has been previously warmed up
  - Has been contaminated with saliva
- Sour milk can cause diarrhea, vomiting, and infection



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How to Bottle Feed Kittens and Puppies

Milk replacer must be refrigerated between uses.

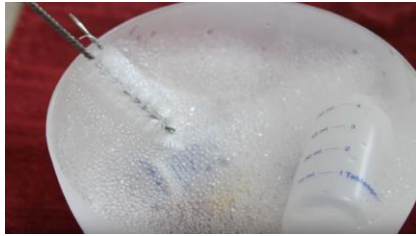
Milk replacer should be stored in a clean container with a cover in the refrigerator for no longer than 24 hours. This includes opened cans of liquid milk replacer that do not require mixing powder with water.

Throw out any milk replacer that is left out at room temperature for longer than 1 hour, has been previously warmed up, or has been contaminated with saliva from your kitten or puppy.

Milk replacer is an excellent breeding ground for unwanted bacteria. Sour milk can cause diarrhea, vomiting, and infection.

## Step 6: Clean and Sterilize the Bottle and Nipple

- Wash the bottle and nipple with dish soap and warm water
- Sterilize the bottle and nipple by boiling them in water for 10 minutes
- Set the bottle and nipple on a clean towel to dry
- Unclean equipment can cause diarrhea, vomiting, and infection



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How to Bottle Feed Kittens and Puppies

The next step is to clean and sterilize the bottle and nipple for the next use.

Wash the bottle and nipple with dish soap and warm water.

Then sterilize the bottle and nipple by boiling them in water for 10 minutes. This should be done before the first use and in between litters, but this does not have to be done between every feeding within the same litter. Once every 24-48 hours should be sufficient in that case.

After they are sterilized, set the bottle and nipple on a clean towel to dry. Be sure to tap out the water droplets from the inside of the nipple and bottle.

The cleaning and disinfecting step is important because unclean equipment is a source of bacterial growth and can cause diarrhea, vomiting, and infection.

## Conclusion

- Kittens and puppies who are between 0-4 weeks of age need bottle feeding if they are orphans or if they have mothers who do not have enough milk or do not have any milk.
- The bottle feeding process should be easier for foster caregivers who have a good understanding of how to properly do each step and of what common bottle feeding challenges are.

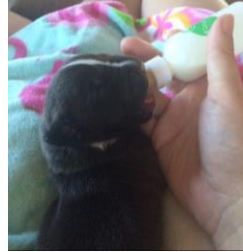


Photo courtesy of the Humane Society for Southwest Washington, Vancouver, WA



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How to Bottle Feed Kittens and Puppies

Kittens and puppies who are between 0-4 weeks of age need bottle feeding if they are orphans or if they have mothers who do not have enough milk or do not have any milk. Mothers who need our help getting more milk into their babies should still be allowed to stay with their kittens and puppies and take care of them, provided they are not rejecting them or hurting them.

Bottle feeding kittens and puppies can be fun and rewarding, however it can be frustrating at times. The bottle feeding process should be easier for foster caregivers who have a good understanding of how to properly do each step and of what common bottle feeding challenges are. To learn even more about these challenges and how to troubleshoot kitten and puppy bottle feeding problems, please see the Maddie's flash class on Common Kitten and Puppy Bottle Feeding Problems and Solutions. You can find a link to this class in the Resources tab at the top right of your screen.



## Thank you for fostering!!!

And special thanks to Dr. Susan Krebsbach for her review



Photo courtesy of Humane Society Silicon Valley, Milpitas, CA



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How to Bottle Feed Kittens and Puppies

Thank you for watching, and thank you for your time and patience with fostering bottle babies!! You are making a huge difference in the lives of foster kittens and puppies. We wish you and your foster kittens and puppies all the best!