



Surface Creek Animal Shelter PUPPY FOSTER CARE MANUAL

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This puppy foster manual has information on preparing for, bringing home, and caring for foster puppies to prepare them for a forever home. Do not hesitate to call the Foster Coordinator if you need any help or assistance with fostering your puppies. We are always here for you, ready to answer any questions that you may have.

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Thank you so much for your interest in fostering dogs/puppies for the Surface Creek Animal Shelter! By opening up your home to foster pets, you're not only helping to save lives, you're providing the individual attention and care these dogs/puppies desperately need.

Foster Puppy Timeline

0-4 Weeks of Age

Puppies that have a mom will drink only her milk until about 3-4 weeks of age. Orphaned puppies will need to be bottle/syringe fed formula every 2 hours then potty'd after each feeding. The babies should be vigorously eating and gaining weight. We supply scales for our foster parents to measure out weight gain. Daily weights are required before a feeding and after a feeding takes place. Eyes will begin to open around 2 weeks of age. Death in this stage is not uncommon with orphaned babies and a death is heartbreaking but not a failure.

4-5 Weeks of Age

Solid foods can start to be introduced. Kibble can be moistened; canned food can be mixed with formula to create a gruel. Babies should be running and playing often. New textures can be introduced, toys, flooring, blankets. Eyes will be open and blue. Canines and premolars should be developed and sharp.

6 Weeks of Age

Puppies that have a mom will start to wean at this time. Moms will not be able to have Spay surgery until her milk is dried up. Separating mom from babies helps with drying. Everyone including mom will need to come in to see the doctor for vaccinations scheduled by the Foster Coordinator. The babies should be eating kibble and canned food. They should be drinking water regularly. Eye color will begin to change to the adult color. Molars will be coming in and will be very sharp.

7-8 Weeks of Age

At week 7 if babies are not weaned yet it is time. Puppies should be weaned by 8 weeks of age. Once your foster puppy is weaned, we can begin looking for permanent homes through our Foster to Adopt program. Puppies have to be at least 4-6 months old to qualify for spay/neuter surgery. If you still have your foster puppy at this time, the foster coordinator will schedule all the appointments.

Preparing for Your Foster Dog/Puppy

Prepare a special area for the foster dog to help ease their adjustment into a new home environment. This area should be large enough for the dog and should allow the dog access to their food and water dishes. We ask that all foster dogs be housed indoors only. If you have other pets at home, it is especially important to give your foster dog a space of her own where they can stay while getting used to all the new sounds and smells.

Dog-Proofing your Home

Before bringing home a new foster dog, you'll want to remove anything that would be unsafe or undesirable for the dog to chew on. Latch securely any cupboards and doors that the foster dog could get into. People food and chemicals can be very harmful if consumed by dogs, so please store them in a place that the foster dog cannot access. Never underestimate your foster dogs' abilities. Here are some additional tips for dog-proofing your home....

- Make sure all trash cans are covered or latched and keep them inside a closet (Don't forget the bathroom trash bins)
- Keep the toilet lids closed
- Keep both people and pet food out of reach and off all counter tops
- Move house plants and secure them Some dogs like to play with them and may knock them over
- Make sure aquariums or cages that house small animals, like hamsters or fish, are securely out of reach of your foster dog
- Remove medications and recreational drugs and have them locked away in a safe place where the animals won't be able to reach
- Move and secure all electrical and phone wires out of reach. Dogs may chew or get tangled in them
- Pick up any clothing items that have buttons or strings, which can be harmful to your foster dog if consumed
- Relocate knickknacks or valuables that your foster dog could knock down

Dog Introductions

If you have personal pets who are dogs, you'll want to introduce them to your foster dog one at a time and supervise their interactions at first. It's a good idea to introduce them outside in a large yard or on a walk and make sure to allow them enough space to get adjusted to one another. Never feed your dogs in the same room as the foster dog; always separate them at feeding time. If you need additional assistance with this, please contact the foster coordinator immediately.

Dog and Cat Introductions

If you have a personal pet who are cats, you'll need to make the introduction to the foster dog carefully and safely. You will need to have your foster dog under control and know which behaviors are appropriate when interacting with a cat. Allow your foster dog to settle down and get to know it's surrounds first. If you need additional assistance with this, please contact the foster coordinator immediately.

Caring for Your Foster Dog

Watch the behavior of your foster dog closely and monitor their health daily. If you have any questions of course don't hesitate to contact the foster coordinator.

Injured Dogs

This type of foster situation may require you to care for a dog that has specific needs. As with all foster dogs, watch for signs of illness, since injured foster dogs are under additional stress and are more prone to illness. Lots of human contact is important for healing injured dogs. Active play should be limited but cuddling, petting, talking, brushing and massaging are all good social activities for a recovering animal.

Behavior Support

One of your goals as a foster parent is to help prepare your foster dog for living successfully in a home. We ask that you help your foster dog to develop good habits and skills through the use of positive reinforcement training, which builds a bond of trust between you and your foster pet. The basic idea is to reward desirable behaviors and ignore unwanted behaviors. If the dog is doing something undesirable, distract him or her so that the behavior doesn't continue. If you feel unable to manage any behavior that your foster dog is exhibiting, please contact the foster coordinator.

Daily Care

SCAS will provide the food that is needed while you care for your foster animal. Feed your foster dog twice daily and make sure your dog has access to fresh clean water. You can give your foster dog treats which will help you and the foster dog bond with each other. Make sure your foster dog gets exercise as well daily.

Daily Routine

When you first take your foster dog home, take care not to overwhelm them with too many new experiences all at once. Sometimes too much stimulation can cause a dog to behave unexpectedly toward a person or animal. Keep introductions to a minimum during the first couple weeks after you bring them home. It is also important to establish a daily routine of regularly scheduled feedings, potty breaks, and walk times. Dogs take comfort in having a routine they can count on. On a daily basis, take notice of your foster dog's appetite and energy level. If the foster dog isn't eating well or is acting lethargic please contact the foster coordinator immediately.

Mental Stimulation and Exercise

Depending on your foster dog's age and energy level they should get at least two 30-minute play session or walks with you per day. Try a variety of toys to see which ones your foster dogs prefer. Remember to discourage the dog from playing with your hands since mouthing won't be a desirable behavior to adopters. This is especially important for teething puppies. You can also offer your foster dog a food dispensing toy for mental stimulation. You hide treats in the toy and the dog has to figure out how to get the treats out.

Safety Requirements

Foster dogs must live indoors, not outside. Please do not leave your foster dog outside unsupervised, even if you have a fenced yard. We ask that you supervise your foster dog when they are outside at all times to ensure that they don't escape or have any negative interactions with other people or animals. Your foster dog is only allowed to be off-leash in an enclosed backyard that is completely fenced in. When walking or hiking with your foster dog, please keep them on a leash at all times. Please don't take your foster dog to an off-leash dog park. We don't know how the foster dog will react in these situations and we don't know if the other dogs are vaccinated appropriately. So it is best to keep your foster dog on a leash at all times.

Signs of Illness and What to do Next

Dogs generally do a good job of masking when they don't feel well, so determining if your foster dog is under the weather will require diligent observation of the dog's daily activity and appetite levels.

- **Eye Discharge:** It is normal for dogs to have some discharge from their eyes when they wake up and some may have more than others, depending on the breed. If your foster dog has yellow or green discharge, swelling around the

eyes, or notice that they are struggling to open their eye please contact the foster coordinator immediately.

- Coughing and nasal discharge: Coughing can be common if your foster dog is pulling on leash. If the coughing becomes more frequent, watch for discharge coming from the nose. Contact the foster coordinator if you have any questions or concerns.
- Loss of appetite: Your foster dog may be stressed after arriving in your home, and stress can cause lack of appetite. But if the dog hasn't eaten after 24 hours, please notify the foster coordinator. Please don't change the dog's diet without contacting the foster coordinator. An abrupt change in diet can cause diarrhea, which can lead to dehydration.
- Lethargy: The activity level of your foster dog will vary depending on age and personality. If your foster dog cannot be roused or seems weak and unable to stand, contact the foster coordinator immediately.
- Dehydration: Dehydration is usually associated with diarrhea, vomiting and/or loss of appetite. If you are concerned about dehydration, please contact the foster coordinator immediately.
- Vomiting: Sometimes dogs will eat too quickly and will immediately throw up their food. Occasional vomiting isn't cause for alarm but if your foster dog has thrown up two or more times in one day, please notify the foster coordinator.
- Pain or strain while urinating: When a dog first goes into a foster home, he or she may not urinate due to stress. If the dog hasn't urinated in more than 24 hours please contact the foster coordinator. If you notice the dog straining to urinate with little to no results or crying out when urinating, please contact the foster coordinator immediately.
- Diarrhea: It is important to monitor your foster dog's pooping habits daily. Soft stool is normal for the first two or three days after taking a dog home, most likely caused by stress and a change in food. If your dog has diarrhea please notify the foster coordinator. Keep in mind that diarrhea will dehydrate the dog so provide plenty of fresh water and be proactive about contacting the foster coordinator.
- Frequent ear scratching: If you notice your foster dog scratching their ears or shaken their head frequently, please contact the foster coordinator. Swollen, irritated ears: If your foster dog has irritated, swollen or red or pink ears that smell like yeast please contact the foster coordinator.
- Hair loss: Please contact the foster coordinator if you notice any hair loss on your foster dog. It is normal for dogs to have thin fur around the lip's, eyelids and in front of the ears, but clumpy patches of hair loss or thinning hair need to be reported to the foster coordinator