



## BARC Feeding and Weaning Kittens

ANIMAL SHELTER

& ADOPTIONS

### Bottle Feeding

Please be aware that overfeeding kittens can be as dangerous as underfeeding! Keep an eye on the kittens at feeding time and monitor how much each one is eating visually and by weighing each kitten at the same time each day.

#### **Never give a kitten cow's milk.**

Bottle babies should be fed kitten milk replacement formula. BARC will provide milk replacement formula and a bottle if available when you pick up your bottle babies. Please contact the foster coordinator if you require more.

Feed the appropriate amount of food per day for the size of kitten. Read the package information on the formula you are using to determine the correct amount of formula per day. Below is the chart for recommended feeding amounts of KMR:

Age in Weeks	Average Weight	CC of KMR per Day	Feedings Per Day
1	4 ounces	32 ml	6
2	7 ounces	56 ml	4
3	10 ounces	80 ml	3
4	13 ounces	104 ml	3
5	1 Pound	128 ml	3

## Please make sure to refrigerate any kitten milk upon receiving it!

#### How to Bottle Feed:

- Make a hole in the nipple. This hole should be large enough to allow the milk to drop slowly from the nipple when it is inverted.
- Make the formula based on the instructions on the container and make sure the formula is well mixed.
- Warm the formula to approximately 100 degrees F. The formula should feel warm on your wrist at this temperature.
- Never squeeze the bottle to force the formula out. This can cause the kitten to inhale the formula into his lungs.

**Always stimulate the kitten to urinate/defecate before and after each feeding** (until 3-4 weeks of age). To stimulate the kitten, take a warm damp cloth and gently rub the anus/genital area. This action simulates how the mother cat would lick her babies. Your kitten(s) will probably not have a bowel movement every feeding and may sometimes even skip a day. This should be fine as long as the kitten is growing, eating, not showing any signs of distress, and continues to urinate.





## BARC How to Wean

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Generally, it is best to start weaning kittens at 3 to 5 weeks of age. Weaning should be a gradual process. If you are lucky enough to have the mother cat with her kittens, she will take care of the weaning process herself. You will want to be sure you are supplying enough food for the nursing mother cat as well as the weaning kittens.

Begin introducing 3- to 5-week-old kittens to semi-solid gruel, made from 1-part canned food to 3 parts hot water or kitten milk replacement formula. Be sure to serve the food at body temperature, (98°F to 100°F). Offer this mixture 3 to 4 times daily. Remove the gruel after about 30 minutes and discard (it can grow bacteria quite quickly if left out).

### Introducing Food

Dip your finger into the gruel and let the kitten lick at it or smear a small amount on the kitten's lips. Be careful not to get any of the gruel in the kitten's nose. You may also touch a finger into the gruel and then place the finger into the kitten's mouth.

At around 5 weeks of age, the kittens should be reducing their intake of mother's milk. Once they are consistently eating the gruel, gradually decrease the amount of water used. Always provide plenty of fresh water in clean bowls.

All changes in amounts and consistency of food should be made gradually to promote good digestion.

**Some kittens take longer to wean than others.** It is important to always watch the litter to ensure that everyone is eating healthy amounts of food. Check tummies for fullness after each meal.

