

**What If My Foster Animal Becomes Ill or Injured?**

As a foster parent we ask that you carefully monitor the health of your foster animals. If you notice any changes in the health or behavior of your foster animals, please notify the Foster Department right away. Catching an illness or injury early could save your foster animal’s life. The most common ailments that occur with foster animals are Kennel Cough, Feline Upper Respiratory Infection, and diarrhea.

**Use the following guide to determine the severity of your foster animal’s symptom(s) and what measures should be taken.**

**COMMON SYMPTOMS:**

If you observe any of the following symptoms, or any other concerning health issues, in your foster animal(s) but they appear stable please notify the Foster Department at **Foster@sspca.org**. Your foster animal may or may not be scheduled for a vet exam depending on symptom.

The best way to notify the Foster Department of a health concern is via email. Email allows multiple staff members to easily track your foster animal’s history. Please attach photos or videos if possible, as they can be very helpful in determining what type of medical issue your foster animal is having. You can call the office phone line at (916)504-2808.

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| * External parasites such as fleas or ticks * Internal parasites (worms in feces) * Redness, swelling, flaky, or excessively itchy skin * Reoccurring loose stool * Onset of liquid or watery diarrhea * Noticeable change in color of stool (grey, yellow, green) or presence of light-colored blood * Minor injury such as a superficial scrape, minor limping * Discharge from the eyes or nose * Squinting or swelling eye(s) * Frequent coughing (often sounds like hacking or gagging) * Frequent sneezing * Has not had a bowel movement in 24 hours (kittens/puppies) – 48 hours (cats/dogs) * Has not eaten in 6-8 hours (kittens/puppies) –24 hours (cats/dogs) * Noticeable decrease in energy level * Weight loss * Excessive scratching at, swelling, redness, discharge, or foul odor from ears * Onset of vomiting (not caused by car ride) * Ingested a substance other than the food provided that is not poisonous, but could potentially be harmful to a dog/cat |

**Fostering underage kittens?**

Kittens should be weighed on a baby scale or kitchen scale every 1-2 days to ensure they are gaining weight. Weight loss or lack of weight gain could indicate insufficient nutrition, internal parasites, illness, or a more serious medical concern.

**EMERGENCY SYMPTOMS:**

If you note any of the following symptoms or feel as though your foster animal needs immediate veterinary assistance, please follow the emergency protocol.

***If your foster animal is showing more than one of the following symptoms, it is likely a serious medical emergency and needs to be seen by a veterinarian as soon as possible.***

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| * Trouble breathing (choking, labored, open mouth breathing or gasping for air) * Sudden swelling of the face or neck * Dark colored blood in stool * Liquid diarrhea with no control of bowels (animal is defecating without seeming to realize it is doing so) * Vomiting repeatedly * Very lethargic or not responding to normal stimuli * Kitten/puppy has not eaten or drank water in 12 hours * Unable to walk * Severe, traumatic injury such as a broken bone or deep wound that may require stitches * Ingested an non-edible object or toxic substance * Male cat is straining to urinate (getting in and out of litter box frequently with little to no urine present) |

**If you have an emergency between the hours of 7am –7pm:**

First, email [Foster@sspca.org](mailto:Foster@sspca.org) or call the office line to notify SSPCA staff of the emergency. Then, bring the foster animal to the Sacramento SPCA to be examined right away. If none of the front desks are currently open, please knock on any door or enter the side gate to access the back of the shelter to locate a staff member.

**If you have an emergency between the hours of 7pm –7am:**

If your foster animal is having a life-or-death medical emergency that cannot wait until 7am when SSPCA staff arrive at the shelter, please follow our after-hours emergency protocol:

If it is after-hours (after 7pm) and your foster animal needs immediate medical attention, select VCA hospitals in the Sacramento area are contracted to provide basic ER care to stabilize your foster animal until it can be transferred to the SSPCA or to perform humane euthanasia if needed. VCA hospitals are not able to provide bloodwork, surgeries, x-rays, or other extensive procedures.

Participating VCA hospitals are as follows:

**VCA Bradshaw Animal Hospital**, 9609 Bradshaw Rd, Elk Grove, 916-685-2494 (Open 24 hr)

**VCA Mueller Pet Medical Center**, 7625 Freeport Blvd, Sac, 916-428-9202 (Open 24 hr)

**VCA Sacramento Veterinary Referral Center**, 9801 Old Winery Place, Sac, 916-362-3111 (Open 24 hr)

**VCA Sacramento Animal Medical Group**, 4990 Manzanita Ave, Carmichael, 916-331-7430 (Open until 8pm)

**VCA Sunset Animal Medical Group**, 7751 Sunset Ave, Fair Oaks, 916-967-7768 (Open until 10pm)

***In the event that you visit a VCA for an after-hours emergency, please bring your foster animal’s paperwork and notify the Foster Department of the emergency via email ASAP so we can contact the veterinary hospital first thing in the morning.***