

LOOKING AFTER ORPHANED KITTENS AND PUPPIES? YOU MAY BE KILLING THEM WITHOUT KNOWING IT!



Orphaned kittens and puppies need very special care if they are to survive. Separated from their mothers, their immature systems are vulnerable to infection and disease. No matter how well you look after them they may die. And if you do not look after them properly, they will surely die.

If you find abandoned babies in a box next to the garbage or in a bag by the sea, you are in a position to help them and we urge you to do so. Do not leave them there to die slowly of dehydration and starvation. Pick them up. Having picked them up, however, you must then decide what to do with them. This brochure explains in detail what the options are.

9 WAYS YOU CAN HELP A KITTEN OR PUPPY

1 Your first option to consider is bringing them to a vet to be put down, especially if they are newborn with closed eyes. This may seem heartless but many of us have tried to raise orphans and have watched them slowly fade away and die despite our best efforts; and this is really heart-breaking.

2 Your second option is to consider raising them yourself. If, despite what we have said above, you chose to take on this responsibility, take note; it's a 24 hour a day job for some weeks. Raising kittens and puppies is a lot of work and if they survive, once they've grown up, you must consider what you are going to do with them. If you intend to keep them, that's fine but if you think you will find homes for them, think again. And if you go to all the trouble of raising them and then abandon them in the streets, you are signing their death warrants.

3 If after considering points 1 and 2, you're determined to raise them, do it properly. They need food, a warm place to sleep, a place to play as they grow up, proper hygiene and medical care. As soon as they can walk, kittens can be introduced to a kitty litter box (put some feces in the clean litter, put the kitten in and help it scratch around - it will quickly get the idea). Naughty kittens can ruin your furniture; use a water sprayer to discourage such behavior.

Puppies require diligent training to learn acceptable elimination habits. Try using newspaper; each time they mess on the floor, pick them up and put them on the newspaper; eventually they'll get the idea but you must be prepared to clean up a lot of mess before they do.

4 Proper feeding of orphaned kittens and puppies is necessary. Their own mother's milk is the best food for them and lacking this, you must give them a substitute that mimics as closely as possible the natural constituents of her milk.

You can buy commercial products in pet shops, powdered milk mixed with water. You can also mix your own; cow's milk can be the base but the protein content must be boosted. Be aware that cow's milk sometimes causes diarrhea.

5 Kitten Formula:

2 cups whole milk

2 egg yolks

1/3 tsp bonemeal or 1/8 tsp powdered eggshells or 200-300 mgr calcium

1 or 2 days of crushed cat vitamins

100 mgr taurine supplement if not in cat vitamins

Mix ingredients well; keep in refrigerator; warm to body temperature before feeding.

6 How to feed:

Use a pet nursing bottle, doll's bottle or syringe (minus needle). Give each kitten just enough to enlarge abdomen slightly without distending it. Schedule: up to 2 weeks of age, every 2 hours, 2 to 4 tbsp; 3 weeks of age, every 3 hours, 4 to 6 tbsp; 4 to 5 weeks of age, every 4 hours, 6 to 10 tbsp; 6 weeks of age, 3 times per day, 8 to 12 tbsp. This schedule, as you can see, is a demanding one, but necessary for the kittens. When they are 3 to 4 weeks old, introduce solids by mixing a powdered cereal (for human babies) to make gruel and wean from bottle.

7 The following is the most important point of this brochure: *after each feeding, you must gently massage the kitten's belly and swab the genital and anal area with a cotton ball moistened slightly with warm water. Mother cats lick these areas to stimulate urination and defecation.*

If you do not mimic this behavior, the baby cannot eliminate, the toxins will build up and poison the system and the kitten's tummy will become horribly distended and it will DIE IN AGONY.

8 Puppy formula:

1 cup half and half milk and cream

2 large eggs

1 tbsp protein powder

3/4 tsp bonemeal or 500 mgr calcium

1-2 days worth of dog vitamins, powdered or crushed.

*Mix ingredients well; keep in refrigerator;
warm to body temperature before feeding.*

Feeding method and schedule same as for kittens.

Clean each puppy after feeding as described for kittens. When puppies are 3 to 4 weeks old, introduce solids by mixing a powdered cereal (for human babies) with milk to make gruel and wean from the bottle.

9 Worming and Vaccinations:

All puppies and kittens should be wormed and vaccinated at an early age; check with your vet.

IMPORANT POINTS TO REMEMBER:

- * Eyes of kittens and puppies begin to open at eight to 14 days.
- * The first two weeks of life present the greatest risk to newborn animals, especially if they are not with their mothers. A kitten or puppy that does not eat frequently is likely to become chilled and chilling is the greatest single danger to the newborn, but trauma, environmental stress, infectious diseases and congenital defects can also be fatal.
- * When babies grow up without their mothers' milk, no matter how well a human feeds them, they sometimes grow up to be sickly animals
- * **A female cat and her offspring, in 7 years, can be responsible for the birth of 420,000 cats.**
- * **A female dog and her offspring, in 6 years, can be responsible for the birth of 67,000 dogs.**

There is nothing more beautiful than watching a dog or cat looking after her newborn babies; but with the present over-population of animals in Greece, this is a luxury that we cannot afford to enjoy. There is no place for these animals when they grow up, if they grow up. That's why spay/neuter programs are necessary and that is why we urge you to neuter your pet. Neuter early - from 4 months on.

This brochure was written by Elizabeth Koubena for SPAZ; portions may be freely quoted as long as SPAZ is mentioned as the source.