KITTENS

Newborn Kitten Care: Warmth, Feeding and Bottle Feeding

Found newborn kittens? Warmth, feeding and care for the first weeks: keeping them warm, a bottle-feeding chart by age, and the signs that need a vet today.

By Catt County Cat Nippers • Reviewed October 24, 2026 • 4 min read • 11 cited sources

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First: is the mother nearby?

Mothers often leave kittens to hunt. Unless the kittens are in danger, watch from a distance for a few hours before taking them. A mother's care is their best chance. If you do take them, call a vet or us for help. Not sure yet? Start with **found kittens: what to do first**.

Neonatal kittens cannot keep themselves warm or go to the bathroom alone. Without their mother they need four things from you: warmth, the right formula on a schedule, help going to the bathroom, and a daily weigh-in. Not sure how old they are? The **kitten age chart** helps.

AT A GLANCE

- Bottle-feed kitten milk replacer (KMR) from a pet store or vet. Never cow's milk.
- Feed with the kitten on its belly, never on its back, and let it suckle.
- Newborns eat every 2–3 hours around the clock, spreading out as they grow.
- Until about 3 to 4 weeks old, kittens must be stimulated to urinate and defecate.

Warm before you feed

Kittens cannot regulate their own body temperature until about 3 to 4 weeks old. A chilled kitten must be warmed gradually before any food: use a covered heating pad on low under half of a box (so they can move off it) or a wrapped warm water bottle. Never feed a cold kitten.

The National Kitten Coalition, citing Maddie's Fund, gives these nest temperatures:

- Birth to 1 week: 85–90°F
- 2 to 3 weeks: 79–84°F
- 4 weeks: about 74–79°F

Bottle-feeding chart by age

HOW MUCH FORMULA, AND HOW OFTEN

Age	Weight	Formula per feeding	Feedings a day
Under 1 week	57–113 g (2–4 oz)	2–5 mL	7
1 week	142–227 g (5–8 oz)	6–9 mL	7
2 weeks	255–312 g (9–11 oz)	10–12 mL	6–7
3 weeks	340–425 g (12–15 oz)	14–17 mL	5–7
4 weeks	454–539 g (1 lb–1 lb 3 oz)	18–22 mL	4–5
5 weeks	about 567 g (1¼ lb)	about 23 mL	4, while weaning

From the Maddie's Fund bottle-feeding chart. Amounts are per feeding: about 4 mL for every 100 g of body weight, the most a kitten's stomach holds comfortably. Kitten Lady feeds more often: newborns every 2 hours, day and night, spreading to every 4–5 hours by 3–4 weeks. A sick or premature kitten needs a vet's feeding plan.

This quick sheet is the start of the guide. Still to read: How to bottle-feed, Can kittens drink cow's milk?, Helping them go to the bathroom and 4 more sections, plus the Foster Kitten Care Log: Feeding Chart & Weight Tracker. Read it all free when you join our pet health emails at cattcountycatnippers.org/articles/caring-for-orphaned-neonatal-kittens-guide

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