 **Foster Care Handbook**

Thank you for your interest to become a Foster Volunteer and for keeping an open heart and an open mind towards our animals in need. Our goal is to work with willing foster families that can partner with us in our mission to increase the quality of life for our Shelter animals.

As an open admission Shelter, animals of all kinds end up in the Shelter for many reasons. Some come in as strays, others are surrendered by their owners, and sometimes we care for abandoned or neglected animals that come in through Animal Control.

The Shelter makes every effort to place animals in foster while they await their adoptive home. When a Shelter animal is placed in a foster home, they may or may not be up for adoption. When an animal is not yet up for adoption from foster, it is typically due to them being underage (think kittens and puppies!), medically in need of some TLC, or because we need to work on some behavior challenges they may be facing.

Animals in foster experience lower levels of stress than animals in the Shelter environment. This results in an increase in their quality of life as well as their overall medical and behavioral health. Information gathered in a foster home, no matter how short or long, is invaluable and often helps to find the best possible home for that animal. Adopters also appreciate when an animal has lived in a foster home. It provides the adopter with a baseline for how the animal behaves in a home environment and around common everyday stimuli such as strangers, dogs in the public, and car rides!

The information in this handbook will help you to care for your foster animals.

Thank you again for your commitment and for helping give SCCAS animals a temporary home until they find their forever one.

**Frequently Asked Questions:**

**How old do I need to be to foster?**You must be 21 years or older to foster for the SCCAS - the same age as a person who is adopting from the Shelter.

**How do I know when an animal needs a foster home?**

As soon as Shelter staff identify that an animal needs a foster home, they will send out a foster request to all fosters. In the request, information such as age, reason for foster, as well as any medical or behavioral concerns will be notated. If you are interested and able to take any animal listed on a foster request into your home, you can respond to the email. Please note that foster requests are sent out to hundreds of foster volunteers.

**When and where do I pick up foster animals?**

All fosters are picked up from the Shelter during business hours (10am to 6pm). Most fosters will be picked up from the Santa Cruz Shelter location - 1001 Rodriguez Street. Foster pick up times and dates will be determined once a foster home responds to a foster request via email.

**How long do I hold onto my foster animal?**

The period of fostering varies between each animal depending on the reason they are in foster as well as their progress medically and behaviorally over time. We typically ask that a foster family holds onto their foster animal until they are adopted. This could be for a few days or a few weeks.

**What if I cannot take care of my foster animal any longer?**

If you are unable to continue caring for your foster animal, that is okay! We always welcome foster animals back to the Shelter. We do ask that you give us at least a week’s notice if you are planning a trip or need to return the foster on a certain date. That allows us to proactively find an alternative foster home so your foster animal does not need to stay in the Shelter.

**How do I travel with my foster animals?**

All cats and kittens need to be contained in a secure carrier when not indoors, including the car. Dogs need to have a harness, leash and collar on them whenever they are not indoors or monitored by their foster in a securely fenced area such as a backyard. It is recommended that foster dogs travel in a secure crate or carrier in the car, especially since we do not know how they feel about car rides. In hot weather, please ensure you have a fully air-conditioned car to transport your foster in.

**Information to Keep Handy!**

**In case of emergency:**

During business hours (10am-6pm daily), call the front desk 831-454-7200 x0 and/or the Foster Coordinator 831-454-7202. In the event of an after hours emergency or if no one can be reached at the shelter during regular business hours, please call the Shelter’s emergency cell phone at 831-535-8624.

For a genuine emergency after hours, you need to first call the emergency cell phone. Once you are granted permission, you will be expected to take the animal to Pacific & Santa Cruz Veterinary Hospital (PSCVH) at 2585 Soquel Dr., Santa Cruz, 831-475-5400. Please familiarize yourself with the location of PSCVH and how to get there. PSCVH is open 24 hours a day. Continue to attempt to contact someone at the Shelter since authorization to treat is required. Do not call 911 for medical emergencies involving your foster animal. Only if there is an imminent threat to humans should 911 be called.

# If your foster animal is lost:

First and foremost, do prevention. Check windows, doors, gates, fences, etc. and make sure all members of the family are aware of the importance of preventing escape. If your foster animal escapes or becomes lost, contact the emergency cell phone immediately, 831-535-8624. In addition please email the Foster Coordinator, jillian.ganley@santacruzcounty.us. Try your best to find the animal by searching the house and surrounding outdoor areas. Do not rule out that the animal might still be in the home and hiding! Alert neighbors and post flyers when appropriate. Unless age, illness, or injury prevents it, please have appropriate identification on your foster animal at all times.

# Your foster’s veterinary care:

Routine veterinary care will be provided by a Shelter veterinarian (by appointment). If your foster animal becomes sick or injured (non-emergency), please contact the Foster Coordinator via email (jillian.ganley@santacruzcounty.us) so that we can arrange a time for our vet to see your foster animal. If the Foster Coordinator can’t be reached via email, call the Foster Coordinator at 831-454-7202.

In the event of a medical emergency, see the instructions at the top of this page.

Routine vaccinations and dewormings will be administered by Shelter staff. Setting up an appointment ahead of time will decrease the wait time for the foster families and allow for Shelter staff to prepare for your appointment.

# Fostering an animal during its stray hold

Sometimes animals are sent to foster while they are still on their legal stray hold.

**Animals that come in with identification** (a microchip and/or collar with tags) must be held for a minimum of seven days, not including the day of impound and days the Shelter is closed. **Animals that come in without identification** must be held for a minimum of four business days, not including the day of impound and days the Shelter is closed.

**When an animal is on its legal stray hold,** they are not considered Shelter property yet. This means that an owner can come forward with proof of ownership to reclaim a stray animal during this period. The Shelter cannot proceed with an individual animal’s next steps (transfer to rescue, adoption, euthanasia, etc) until the legal stray period is complete. The only exception to this is when an animal is suffering medically and it is in the animal’s best interest to humanely euthanize them.

Animals are sent to foster during their stray hold due to:

-The need for socialization to increase quality of life and adoptability

-Extreme stress observed in the Shelter environment that can be dramatically decreased by being in a foster home

-Underage animals that need around the clock observation and care beyond the Shelter’s typical hours

-Animals that need to recover from a surgery or medical treatment in an isolated environment

**Before any animal that is still on its stray hold leaves for foster,** they will be microchipped and, if the animal is of age, rabies vaccinated. Any foster dogs will leave the Shelter with a secure harness, collar and leash. On their collar, there will be a tag with the Shelter’s phone number on it. While the dog is in foster, they are required to wear this collar and tag at all times, even when securely contained in doors.

Fosters who are fostering animals that are still on their stray period need to be extremely vigilant about the security of their foster animal. Cats need to be kept indoors at all times. Dogs need to be kept indoors or supervised outdoors in a securely fenced in yard. If the dog is on a walk, they are required to wear a collar, leash and harness (supplied and properly fit by the Shelter) at all times. If a foster is concerned about being unable to properly contain a foster animal, staff can provide management resources like crates, exercise pens, and baby gates to help secure the foster animal. If keeping the foster secure still continues to be a problem, the foster animal should be returned to the Shelter.

**Fostering Cats & Kittens:**

Generally, cats and kittens are in foster for the following reasons:

-momma cat gave birth to kittens that are not yet weaned

-kittens are underaged (must be 8 weeks to be made available for adoption)

-cats / kittens need socialization before they are ready to be made available for adoption

-the Shelter is low on space so placing a cat or kitten in a foster home allows for space for other animals coming into the Shelter

**Supplies:**

All necessary supplies for fostering are provided by the Shelter. If you are running low on your supplies for your foster cat, please contact the Foster Coordinator via email to arrange for a time to pick up more supplies. Fosters are not responsible for purchasing any supplies for their foster animal.

Common foster supplies for cats include:
 -Litter box

 -Litter

 -Food bowls

 -Food (wet and dry as appropriate)

 -Toys

 -Crate

 -Bedding

 -Treats

 -Scratching surface

**Housing:**

Any ideal space to house your foster cat is a small room free or nooks and crannies for a cat to hide. No other pets should have access to this room. A room separate from resident animals is necessary in order to avoid the risk of spreading potentially deadly diseases. We advise keeping your foster animals separate from your resident pet(s) for a minimum of 2 weeks. In the room you are housing your foster cat(s), you should have a bed, food, water, and a litter box available. Toys and scratching opportunities are also very helpful for a cat to have out at all times. Please be sure to provide safe toy options for your foster cat. Tinsel and foil based toys can be ingested by cats and can be potentially deadly. Wand and string toys should not be left unattended with cats either.

**Litter box:**

The Shelter utilizes unscented, non-clumping litter for kittens under 7 months. The non-clumping litter can be a pellet or a clay depending on the Shelter supplies. Litter boxes should be cleaned out at least once a day. Foster cats should have at least 1 litter box per cat for cats 7 months and older. If you are fostering a litter of kittens, it is best to have 1 litter box for every 3 kittens. Kittens will need a shallow litter box that they can easily climb in and out of. As cats get older, they can typically use a standard sized litter box. Be mindful of your foster’s litterbox usage. Any urination or defecation outside the litter box could be due to a medical or behavior issue and needs to be addressed by a staff member.

**Feeding Guidelines:**

All fostered animals must eat the food provided by the shelter unless instructed otherwise instructed by a supervisor or a Shelter veterinarian.

If you have a family, mom will be primarily in charge of feeding. Each kitten and litter of kitten varies in when they start eating canned food. Typically around four weeks, you can start introducing canned food. To begin introducing, mix a little warm water with canned kitten food and placing it in a dish with low sides. The consistency should be that of a watery milkshake. Expect them to walk through it and generally make a bit of a mess. After a few attempts, they will get the idea. The kittens will nurse from mom in addition to eating wet and dry food. They will often nurse from mom on and off until they are 8 weeks old.

Keep an eye on kittens (and mom) during feeding times. Take note of who might be getting edged out of the food bowl and therefore be at risk of not getting enough calories and nutrients.

**Typical cat & kitten feeding instructions (unless specified by the Foster Coordinator)**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **3 months and under** | **3 months to 6 months** | **6 months and older** | **Mom with kittens** |
| **Canned food** | ¼ of a 5.5oz can per kitten, twice a day | none | none | ½ of a 5.5oz can, twice a day |
| **Dry food** | ¼ cup of dry kitten food per kitten, twice a day. If eating this amount rapidly, please contact Foster Coordinator | ¼ cup of dry kitten food per kitten, twice a day. If eating this amount rapidly, please contact Foster Coordinator | ½ cup of dry adult food per cat once a day. If eating this amount rapidly, please contact Foster Coordinator. | Dry kitten food available at all times |

**Vaccinations & Treatments:**

All vaccines and dewormings will be done by Shelter staff. Rabies vaccines are often administered at time of spay/neuter, as age appropriate.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Kittens (under 6 months)** | **Cats (6 months and older)** |
| **FVRCP (feline distemper combination vaccine)** | -received at intake-repeat every 2 weeks until 6 months old | -received at intake-repeat in two weeks unless has been vaccinated within the past year as an adult |
| **Dewormer**  | -received at intake-repeat in 2 weeks, then every 4 weeks, until 6 months old | -received at intake-repeat in 2 weeks |
| **Rabies** | - received if 3 months or older | -received during surgery |
| **Flea preventative** | -received upon intake | -received upon intake |

**Foster kitten behavior goals:**

-Love humans, approach people and enjoy petting

-Play with toys, not human hands or toes

-Always use a litterbox

Please note: These are goals and not black and white rules. Staff identify that every animal is an individual and some kittens may be more fearful or some juveniles may overstimulate and play with hands.

**Kitten development and behaviors\*:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **AGE** | **DEVELOPMENT** | **SOCIALIZATION** |
| **1 day old** | born blind, deaf, and unable to regulate body temperature. Will huddle with mom and siblings for warmth. | let mom take the lead for now |
| **5 day old** | Ears will open, but they are still deaf. Eyes may begin to open at inner corners. Huddling for warmth, not interact yet. Should be about twice their birth weight.  | If mom cat allows, between nursing sessions begin gently holding the kittens for no more than a minute at a time.  |
| **10 day old** | Able to orient to sound but do not recognize it. Eyes will be fully open between 9 and 14 days. Not interacting much yet - mostly nursing and staying warm. | Kittens’ eyes can not dilate yet so make sure to protect them from bright lights. Continue to handle them for a few minutes at a time several times a day.  |
| **2 weeks old** | Still cannot recognize sound, ear canals open in about a week. Sense of smell becoming more developed. Beginnings of uncoordinated walking and interaction with siblings.  | Beginning of true socialization period. Make sure to handle kittens gently and frequently from now on.  |
| **3 weeks old** | Kittens’ ear canals have opened and they can recognize sound. Now able to control elimination on their own. May begin purring to communicate with mother and siblings.  | Beware of little explorers escaping the nesting box. Begin to introduce to low level normal household sounds.  |
| **4 weeks old** | Depth perception is developing. Sense of smell is fully functional. Walking with less stumbling. Growth of baby teeth (deciduous) begins resulting in kittens soon being weaned from mom. Beginning to learn social play with siblings. | Being fed wet food wet food or kibble softened with water. Continue to let them nurse. The kittens will start to utilize the litter box! |
| **6 weeks old** | Balance is improving. Kittens’ eyes will settle into permanent color. Baby teeth are fully grown and the kittens can regulate their own body temperature. Social play is typically entertaining and very rambunctious. They are almost fully weaned although may occasionally still nurse.  | Begin training kittens to play with toys, not hands. Gently socializing with new people and handling regularly.  |
| **8 weeks old** | Kittens will begin to understand and display cat body language - learned through playing with their siblings and mom. Kittens are a bit more agile although still accident prone.  | Kitten proof your home. Acclimating kittens to brushes and nail trims is key during this period.  |

\*Source: Raisinghappykittens.com

**Socialization:**

Socializing a kitten is a lot of fun and an important aspect of foster care. A well-socialized kitten finds a home faster than one that hides in the back of his or her kennel. Any and all interactions with kittens should be positive and as a stress free as possible. Do not use corrections (verbal, physical or with a deterrent) on your kitten.

Please supervise any interactions and handling by children.

If you feel concerned about anything, please do not hesitate to the contact the Foster Coordinator (or Animal Care staff if the Foster Coordinator is unavailable).

**Common Cat Ailments**

**Diarrhea is Shelter cats and kittens can occur due to a variety of reasons.** The most common causes of diarrhea in Shelter kitties include changing food, stress and infectious diseases. Even with good preventative practices in place, sometimes kitties just get diarrhea. If your foster has diarrhea, please email the Foster Coordinator as soon as you first observe diarrhea so we can work towards resolving it as soon as possible.

**Upper Respiratory Infection (URI) is fairly common in animal shelters.**

-These air-borne viruses are contagious and can spread very quickly. URI is typically caused by one of two virus’s: Herpes and Calici.

-Your foster kitten may appear healthy here, but may become symptomatic in your home.

-Common symptoms are:

* + Sneezing and yellow or green discharge from eyes or nose
	+ Congested breathing
	+ Loss of appetite
	+ Lethargy

-It is important to contact us as soon as your foster animal shows any signs of URI. Underage kittens are extremely fragile and can crash very quickly.

 **NOTE**: Cats, just like people, often get colds and / or have Herpes virus outbreaks when they are stressed out. This is a species specific strain of the virus so neither herpes or calici are contagious to humans. Both Herpes and Calici virus’s are contagious to your cats so, just in case, keep them separate from your fosters and always wash hands and arms before and after handling the fosters. In fact, your cat might already have Herpes and can pass that on to the fosters.

**If you are fostering a kitten that is known to have a cold**, make sure to talk with the vet staff regarding your kitten’s special care and to set up follow up appointments.”

**Other diseases a foster cat can harbor:**

* **Panleukopenia (Feline Parvovirus):** Watchfor vomiting, diarrhea, bloody stool, lethargy, dehydration, lack of appetite.
* **Ringworm**: Watch for patchy areas of hair loss. Caused by a fungus, not a worm. Highly contagious to other pets and humans.

 **The Fading Kitten Syndrome:**

Also known as “Failure to thrive” syndrome, usually happens within the first two weeks of life. It can come from environmental factors, such as maternal neglect, or it can be physical, such as congenital birth defects, low birth weight, anemia. Various infections also can play a role. Affected kittens will begin to lose weight, stop nursing, eating and will stop growing.Kittens fade very quickly. If you notice your kitten fading, please contact the emergency number: 831-535-8624. You may be directed to take the animal to Santa Cruz Veterinary Hospital: 2585 Soquel Drive, Santa Cruz, CA 95065. (831) 475-5400. You will need to be granted permission to bring an animal to SCVH when calling the emergency number.

**If an animal in your care should pass away, please contact us immediately. It is imperative that Shelter staff have the opportunity to examine the animal.**

**Fostering Dogs & Puppies:**

Generally, dogs and puppies are in foster for the following reasons:

-momma dog gave birth to puppies that are not yet weaned

-puppies are underaged (must be 8 weeks to be made available for adoption)

-dogs / puppies need socialization before they are ready to be made available for adoption

-dogs are experiencing kennel stress that is negatively impacting their quality of life

**Supplies:**

All necessary supplies for fostering are provided by the Shelter. If you are running low on your supplies for your foster cat, please contact the Foster Coordinator via email to arrange for a time to pick up more supplies. Fosters are not responsible for purchasing any supplies for their foster animal.

Common foster supplies for dogs include:

 -Collar

 -Harness

 -Leash

 -Food bowls

 -Food (wet and dry as appropriate)

 -Toys

 -Crate

 -Bedding

 -Treats

 -Poop bags

 -An “Adopt Me” vest

**Housing:**

It is important that a foster animal has a place in which they are safe and feel secure. Choose one room in your house to be the “safe room” where your dog or puppies will be primarily housed. This room will need to be dog and puppy proofed. No other pets should have access to this room.

**Puppy proofing:**

Remember to block escape routes and remove anything that is sharp, toxic or may present a choking or electrocution hazard.

**Inside the foster’s room:**

-Create distinct areas for sleeping and eating. If you are fostering a puppy, please place puppy pads for toileting as far away as possible from their food and bedding.

-Water should be accessible to your foster dog at all times.

-Puppies should each have one bowl so they do not have to fight and compete for food.

-Establish a sleeping area for your foster. You will need to make sure the carrier cage/crate is available as a bed for them. You can either leave the crate door open for your foster to sleep in or close it for their safety.

**Feeding Guidelines:**

All fostered animals must eat the food provided by the shelter unless instructed otherwise instructed by a supervisor or a Shelter veterinarian.

If you have a family, mom will be primarily in charge of feeding. Each puppy and litter of puppies varies in when they start eating canned food. Typically around four weeks, you can start introducing canned food. To begin introducing, mix a little warm water with canned puppy food and placing it in a dish with low sides. The consistency should be that of a watery milkshake. Expect them to walk through it and generally make a bit of a mess. After a few attempts, they will get the idea. The puppies will nurse from mom in addition to eating wet and dry food. They will often nurse from mom on and off until they are 8 weeks old.

Keep an eye on puppies (and mom) during feeding times. Take note of who might be getting edged out of the food bowl and therefore be at risk of not getting enough calories and nutrients.

**Typical dog & puppy feeding instructions**

**Puppies (0-6 months):** Feed the listed amount twice per day per dog unless specified by a Shelter Staff member

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Target Weight** | **Dry food** | **Wet food** |
| **0-10 lbs** | ¼ c | ¼ c |
| **10-20 lbs** | 3/4c | 1/2c  |
| **20-40 lbs** | 1 c | 1 cup |

**Adult dogs (7 months or older):** Feed the listed amount twice per day per dog unless specified by a Shelter Staff member

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Target Weight** | **Dry food** | **Wet food** |
| **1-15 lbs** | ¼ c | N/A |
| **15-25 lbs** | ½ c | N/A |
| **25-45 lbs** | 1 c | N/A |
| **45-65 lbs** | 1.5 c | N/A |
| **65-85 lbs** | 2c | N/A |
| **85-105lbs** | 2.5c | N/A |
| **105-125lbs** | 3c | N/A |

## Vaccinations & Treatments:

All vaccines and dewormings will be done by Animal Care. Rabies vaccines will be given by the shelter veterinarian, often at time of spay/neuter, as age appropriate.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Puppies (under 6 months)** | **Dogs (6 months and older)** |
| **DA2PP (distemper/parvovirus combination vaccine)** | -received at intake-repeat every 2 weeks until 6 months old | -received at intake-repeat in two weeks unless has been vaccinated within the past year as an adult |
| **Bordetella (kennel cough vaccine)** | -received at intake | -received at intake |
| **Dewormer**  | -received at intake-repeat in 2 weeks, then every 4 weeks, until 6 months old | -received at intake-repeat in 2 weeks |
| **Rabies** | -received if 3 months or older | -received during surgery |
| **Flea preventative** | -received upon intake | -received upon intake |

**Puppy development and behaviors:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **AGE** | **DEVELOPMENT** | **SOCIALIZATION** |
| **0-2 weeks****Neonatal Development** | Completely dependent on mother | Gentle, daily handling by humans.  |
| **2-4 weeks Exploration with litter** | Eyes and ears are open but still developing senses. Puppy begins to move around | Expose puppy to safe, novel objects such as dog safe toys. |
| **3-16 weeks****Critical socialization period** | Puppies will be most influenced by things that they are or aren’t exposed to int his period of their life. Puppies should be allowed to stay with their mother until 6-8 weeks and should be allowed to socialize with littermates no less than 8 to 10 weeks. During this time puppies will begin learning important communication skills including appropriate play and bite inhibition.  | Provide a complex, stimulating environment - will help puppy develop perceptual & learning abilities. One on one daily contact with humans. Very short periods (5 to 10 minutes) of isolation away from humans and littermates - ensure experience is positive, can use this time to begin crate training. Provide exposure to a variety of noises and different floor surfaces. Create predictable schedules for sleep, eating, play and potty.  |
| **4-6 months** | Puppies will being teething/chewing. Your puppy may  | Provide puppy with lots of toys and appropriate chews. Redirect any inappropriate chewing to appropriate chew items. Fear period: your puppy may experience a time where they are very impressionable and can become fearful of things that he/she was formerly not fearful of. Puppies begin to enter their adolescent period which will increase their curiosity. Work with a certified behavior consultant on life skills and manners to set your puppy up for success in their adulthood. |
| **6-18 months** | Puppies continue adolescence into 18 months, sometimes up to 24 months.  | Dog may experience another fear period during this period. Behaviors and habits that your dog learns are rewarding in this period of time will likely carry over into adulthood. |

**\*Source: www.spca.org**

Please view the American Veterinary Science of Animal Behavior’s Position Statement on Puppy Socialization here: <https://www.spca.org/file/pet-university/ASVAB-Puppy-Socialization-Position-Statment.pdf>

**Socialization:**

Socializing a puppy is a lot of fun and an important aspect of foster care. A well-socialized puppy finds a home faster than one that hides in the back of his or her kennel. Any and all interactions with puppies should be positive and as a stress free as possible. Do not use corrections (verbal, physical or with a deterrent) on your puppy.

Please supervise any interactions and handling by children.

If you feel concerned about anything, please do not hesitate to the contact the Foster Coordinator (or Animal Care staff if the Foster Coordinator is unavailable).

**Common Dog Ailments**

**Diarrhea is Shelter dogs and puppies can occur due to a variety of reasons.** The most common causes of diarrhea in Shelter dogs include changing food, stress and infectious diseases. Even with good preventative practices in place, sometimes pups just get diarrhea. If your foster has diarrhea, please email the Foster Coordinator as soon as you first observe diarrhea so we can work towards resolving it as soon as possible.

**Kennel cough** is a contagious, upper-respiratory disease that is transmitted by an airborne virus. It occurs most commonly in puppies and young adult dogs but is often transmitted at Shelters or kennels where dogs are exposed to many other dogs. Common symptoms of kennel cough include a dry, hacking cough or bouts of deep, harsh coughing often followed by gagging motions.

**Parvovirus** is a highly contagious virus that is a significant disease concern in Shelters. Any unvaccinated dog of any age is able to contract parvo. Puppie are more susceptible to severe disease. Parvo spreads through feces, vomit and other bodily excretions. Common symptoms are vomiting, diarrhea (often bloody), inappetance, dehydration and lethargy. Symptoms usually develop 5-7 days after exposure.

**Gastrointestinal blockage** (also known as a bowel obstruction) is a common canine problem as dogs are naturally curious. This leads many to have a desire to eat or chew almost anything. All dogs are at risk but young dogs are especially vulnerable. A blockage can be complete or partial in the stomach or intestines and prevents solids or liquids from passing through the gastrointestinal tract. Symptoms of bowel obstruction include vomiting, weakness, diarrhea, loss of appetite, dehydration, bloating, abdominal pain and hunching / whining! The most common objects that dogs eat and create foreign bodies include toys, rocks, bones and more.

**Giardia** is an intestinal infection caused by a microscopic protozoan parasite. Giardia can be transmitted by eating or sniffing cyst stage parasites from contaminated water or drinking contaminated water. The microscopic parasites attach themselves to the intestinal wall and the damage causes an acute, sudden onset of foul smelling diarrhea. Symptoms include soft stool often containing blood.

**Housetraining your foster dog**

To begin with you will require the following:

a) a crate only large enough for the puppy to stand up and turn around comfortably in

b) a schedule for going outside

1. treats for whenever you go outside with the dog
2. good observation skills to prevent accidents
3. patience and a sense of humor!

### A) Crate The puppy must be safely contained whenever you're away or can't actively supervise, i.e. when you're busy around the house, sleeping etc. A crate can be your best friend when it comes to house training. If you find the puppy is soiling his crate, the likelihood is that the crate is too large or the puppy needs to go out more often or with more strategic timing. Speak to us if your foster puppy is a chronic crate-soiler.

### B) Schedule

You must provide the puppy with a set schedule for eating and for going outside. If you are away for longer than 4 hours, have someone come to the house to take the puppy out. Optimally, there is always someone at home during the housetraining period. A typical puppy elimination schedule looks like this:

1. First thing in the morning
2. A few minutes after each meal. This is often when puppies will have a bowel movement. You will discover your foster puppy's rhythm.
3. Every hour on the hour. Take the puppy outside on leash for five minutes in a small area. Always return to the same spot so he begins to associate the area with its purpose. Don't interact with the puppy. Have a play period once he is finished. If nothing happens after five minutes, bring him back into the house and crate him for another thirty minutes, then try again. If he does eliminate, he may have a free period in the kitchen or confinement area, or a play session in your fenced yard. This acts as an added bonus for performing.
4. During the night. A very young pup (6-7 weeks) may need to go out once during the night.

### C) Treats

Every time the puppy eliminates outside, lavish him with enthusiastic praise during the act and follow with an extra special treat (a small piece of cheese, hot dog, liver). If you find that the praise makes him stop in the middle of eliminating, save it until just after he finishes.

### D) Good Observation Skills

Your puppy will give off signals that he needs to eliminate. It’s essential that you learn what these are so you can prevent mistakes. Common behaviors include circling, restlessness and sniffing. Whenever you see these, take the puppy out!

### E) Patience

Don't lose your cool. Most puppies will have accidents, especially in the beginning of training. Since your puppy will be supervised at all times when loose in the house, you will be able to provide the proper feedback as the dog begins to eliminate or, even better, take him out before he even starts (see "good observation skills..." above).

Ifthe puppy has an accident in the house or in the crate and you did not see it happen, it is futile and even detrimental to punish him after the fact. Simply clean up the spot and then apply a commercial odor neutralizer or 50% vinegar to water. This will help prevent a certain location from smelling like an "indoor toilet". Most importantly after any accident, vow to supervise more closely in future and/or add another outing to your schedule.

 **Bringing a foster animal back to the shelter for spay/neuter:**

* The Foster Coordinator will contact you about scheduling your foster’s spay and neuter.
* Foster animals can eat and drink normally prior to spay/neuter.

# Potential adopters for your foster:

If you have found a person who is interested in adopting one or more of your foster animals, please have them complete an adoption application, which can be done in person at the Shelter or downloaded from the Shelter’s website and emailed into the Foster Coordinator. Please also contact the Foster Coordinator at jillian.ganley@santacruzcounty.us with the name and contact information of the prospective adopter so notes can be made on the animal’s record.

**\* We love when foster homes advocate on behalf of their foster animals but please make no promises to interested parties. There is an established process that all adopters must go through. Under no circumstances should your foster animal be placed in a home other than yours prior to adoption.**

Most often, adopters are found through direct contact with the Shelter. Rest assured that Shelter staff has your foster animals’ best interests in mind at all times.

**Important Contact Information**

Jill Ganley, Foster & Volunteer Coordinator: jillian.ganley@santacruzcounty.us

Sarah Goldberg, Animal Care Supervisor: sarah.goldberg@santacruzcounty.us

In the event of an after hours emergency, please call the emergency line at 831-535-8624. You must receive authorization through the emergency line before bringing your foster to SCVH.