



Hand rearing orphaned puppies and kittens

Hand rearing of puppies and kittens may be necessary if the mother has an inadequate supply of milk, if she is sick or the litter is orphaned.

Motherless puppies and kittens have vital requirements – they need to be kept warm in a suitable environment, and provided with proper nutrition.

The puppies/kittens need to be kept in a warm, clean environment. Hot water bottles wrapped in towels can be used as a heat supply. Alternatively microwave heat pads or plug in heat pads may be used. Care must be taken to ensure the puppies/kittens do not lie on the heat pad directly as they will easily burn. Using a thick towel wrapped around the heat source will help prevent this from happening.



After each feed the mother would stimulate urination/defaecation by licking the puppy/kitten around its bottom. This can be simulated by using a piece of damp cotton wool. This should be done until the puppies/kittens are 16-21 days old. A piece of damp cotton wool can also be used to clean around the face and mouth of the puppies/kittens face as the mother would do.

Cow and goat milk are unsuitable replacements for the mothers milk. We recommend using either Welpi or Royal Canin Baby Dog Milk for puppies, and Cimicat or Royal Canin Baby Cat Milk for kittens. These are milk powders that resemble the mothers milk more closely.

The milk can be fed using either a small syringe or a small feeding bottle, we can supply these at the most appropriate sizes for the puppies/kittens.

Dried milk should be made up fresh every day using boiled water that has cooled to 38 C. It must be fed slowly and not forced. Frequent, small feeds should be



offered throughout the day, every 2-4 hours for the first 5 days, including through the night. This can then be reduced to every 4 hours. Night feeds should continue for at least 2 weeks. The exact amount to feed is different depending on the brand used. Quantities/frequency of feeding are supplied with the milk powder or ask us for advice.

When feeding the puppies/kittens hold them on your lap, laying them on a soft towel/blanket. Lay them so that their head is higher than their body. Placing a drop of milk around their mouth is sometimes required to encourage/stimulate feeding.

When they are between 3 and 4 weeks old, a high quality puppy or kitten food can be introduced. This can be mixed with the substitute milk to soften the biscuit. We recommend Royal Canin Starter biscuits for puppies and Royal Canin Queen or Weaning for kittens.

Gradually increase the amount of biscuit feeds and decrease the amount of bottle



feeds. By the age of 6 weeks they should be completely weaned from their bottle feeds.

It is useful to weigh the puppies/kittens every day. They should be gaining weight every day, if not then extra feeds can be given. Keep a written record of each puppy/kittens weight so that it can be monitored accurately. (As a rough rule they should gain their birth weight every week whilst bottle feeding).

If you require any help or information please contact the surgery where a vet or veterinary nurse will be happy to help.

www.valeveterinarygroup.co.uk



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HAND REARING



Where your animal's health is our top priority.

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