

FOSTER FAQs

What is foster care?

The MD SPCA Foster Care Program serves as a lifeline for animals who come to our shelter underage, sick, injured, or in need of extra socialization and/or training. Foster Parents are volunteers who provide temporary care for kittens, puppies, dogs, and cat. A quiet, stress-free, and loving environment allows every pet that is fostered through the MD SPCA program to have a better chance at a happier, healthier life with a forever family. By offering your time, energy, and home to an animal in need, you help to prepare that animal for adoption as well as to prevent overcrowding in our center. The MD SPCA is always looking for Foster Parents to help save more animals lives.

Do I get to choose what types of pets I foster?

Yes & No. As this is not a foster to adopt program, not all animals in our shelter are available for fostering. We have a separate list of animals who are looking for foster homes and you are welcome to choose any animal from that list. If you begin your fostering journey with dogs, you can switch to cats (and vice versa) in the future.

How long am I expected to have an animal in my home?

The short answer is: it is up to you. The long answer is that it really depends on the animal and why they need foster. It is not uncommon to take a dog home for a foster break that only lasts a few days. With cats, that short of a break may do more harm than good, as they generally do not do well with change. We also take in cats and dogs who need placement for up to four months, so if you are interested in a longer-term foster, that is also an option!

What if the foster in my home is not fitting into my lifestyle and/or not getting along with my pets?

We do our best to make a good match from the beginning by providing Foster Parents with all the information we know about a pet before they take them home. Making a commitment to your foster pet is important, but we understand that sometimes it is just not a good fit. You will not be forced to keep any animal in your home - simply contact the Foster Team and they will schedule a time for you to bring the animal back.

What if I unexpectedly leave town while I have a foster pet in my home?

We understand that things come up. If you unexpectedly need to leave town, you will be expected to inform the Foster Team and return your foster animal to our shelter. We cannot allow foster animals to be taken more than 1 hour away from the Baltimore area or out of state.

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How often does a foster animal need to be brought in for check-ups?

Foster parents need to transport animals to the MD SPCA on a regular basis for vaccinations, vet checks, weight checks, and spay/neuter surgeries. Some animals will require more visits to the MD SPCA than others. If you're ever concerned about the number of visits a given foster pet may need, just talk to a Foster Coordinator before you pick up the pet.

Will a foster animal have accidents or cause damage to my house?

Preparing your home for your foster pets stay can help prevent most accidents, but not all of them. Because we do not always have history on our animals, we cannot predict what they may do in your home environment. Animals can be unpredictable, even in the best of cases, so there is always a chance they will have accidents or cause damage to your home. The MD SPCA is not liable for any damage caused to your person or property by a foster pet.

Do I need to keep foster animals separate from my pets?

When you first bring your foster pet home, they should have their own designated area to decompress. After the decompression stage, whether they need to remain separated will depend on various factors such as behavior/medical history.

If you are fostering an animal who is in quarantine due to being sick or being underage, then they must remain separate from your resident pets.

If you are fostering adult animals who are healthy and good with other animals, then keeping them separate from your pets is not necessary. You will need to introduce the animals slowly and take proper precautions, such as supervision, when the animals are together.

There is always a risk when bringing in another animal that they may become sick or may simply not get along with the resident animal. Whether you want to keep your animals separate from fosters will ultimately come down to your own preference and what is best for the individual pets.

Will the Maryland SPCA treat my personal pet if he is injured or sick because of a foster animal?

No. If your pet is injured or becomes sick, you will need to take them to your veterinarian. We can only provide veterinary care for MD SPCA animals as this is not a private veterinary practice and by law, we are not allowed to treat animals who are not "ours."

What if a friend of family member wants to adopt my foster animal?

Friends and family members often get to see how wonderful foster pets are. If a friend or family member is interested in adopting your foster pet, please contact the foster department at foster@mdspca.org and refer to the Foster Animal Adoption Protocol.

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What if I want to adopt the animal I'm fostering?

Foster parents can fall in love with the animals. If you wish to adopt your foster animal, please email foster@mdspca.org so we can begin the adoption process. Having available foster homes is crucial for saving lives, so we ask foster parents to consider how adopting a foster animal may affect their ability to continue fostering other animals in the future.

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