

FOSTER CONTACT & EMERGENCY HOUR PROTOCOL

Foster Team Email: Foster@mdspca.org

Foster Hotline: 443-885-0729

MD SPCA Vidaah Vet: mdspca.org/vidaah and mdspca.org/registervidaah

BUSINESS HOURS

Monday–Friday: 9:00am – 7:00pm

Saturday–Sunday: 8:00am – 6:00pm

EMERGENCY HOURS

Contact Vidaah Vet

Monday–Friday: 7:00pm – 9:00am

Saturday–Sunday: 6:00pm – 8:00am

Holidays – Times vary, call hotline first if no answer
contact Vidaah Vet

It is critical that our Foster Parents understand how to get in touch with the Foster Team regarding various matters and what to do in case of an emergency. The Maryland SPCA Foster Program provides 24-hour emergency support via our Foster Hotline and our Vidaah Vet On-Call Service.

If there are ever questions as to whether something is considered an emergency, we encourage you to call the Foster Hotline or chat with a Vidaah Vet Licensed Veterinarian!

We much rather Foster Parents reach out in the case of a potential emergency, than neglect a potentially dangerous situation. The MD SPCA Foster Team is always here to support you and your foster animals in time of need!

CONTACT/COMMUNICATION PROTOCOLS

Email: Primary Contact Method (all non-urgent matters)

Text: Time Sensitive Matters (Business Hours ONLY)

Call: Emergencies & Appointment Arrival

- Call the Foster Hotline (443-885-0729) during business hours
- Contact Vidaah Vet using your account during emergency hours

**FOSTER PARENTS MUST CALL THE FOSTER HOTLINE OR
CONTACT VIDAHAH VET IF THERE IS AN EMERGENCY.**

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OVERNIGHT SUPPORTIVE CARE INSTRUCTIONS

FADING/CRASHING KITTEN

Signs of a Crashing Kitten:

- Agonal breathing (gasping, labored open-mouth breathing)– needs emergency euthanasia
- Pale gums
- Extreme lethargy
- Odd vocalizations (cries of pain)
- Muscle wasting (loss of muscle tone in the face and body, causing the kitten to look gaunt or frail. The kitten may develop a triangular looking face.)
- No interest in food
- Dehydration
- Hypothermia or hyperthermia

TAKE IMMEDIATE ACTION & GRAB YOUR EMERGENCY KIT!

You will need: 24-hour heat pack or heating disk, blanket/towels, karo syrup, Nutri Cal, KMR, A/D, syringes

- 1. Get them warm and keep them warm! (99.-102.5 degrees F) PS. Kittens who are 1 week old have a normal body temp of 97-99 F .**
 - Hold the kitten and create friction by rubbing your hands up and down.
 - Wrap the kitten up in a towel/blanket like burrito leaving only their face exposed. Their whole body should be in the towel. DO NOT TAKE THEM OUT!
 - Wrap either a heating pad on low or a 24-hour heat pack around the burrito. You can also put the burrito on a warming disc
- 2. As soon as the kitten is warmed you will need to work on raising its blood sugar – but first be sure to take the kitten's temperature. *Never try to feed a cold kitten***
 - Load a syringe with Karo syrup and apply three drops to the kitten's gums (do this only once within a 4-6-hour period)
 - It's a delicate balance of raising the blood sugar without overdoing it.
 - **Do not administer Karo if the kitten is unresponsive.**

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- **If the kitten is responding** – you can try syringe feeding them. Depending on the kitten's age, KMR or an A/D gruel; if you do not have A/D, you can use a small amount of Nutri Cal as a high calorie supplement. The kitten will need to monitor closely overnight. Contact the foster team in the morning with update.
- **If the kitten is not responding to supportive care** – Keep them warm and as comfortable as possible. Contact a Vidaah Vet for further instructions. They may instruct you to take the kitten to Pet ER for emergency euthanasia.
- If the kitten passes at home, please place the body in their refrigerator and bring to the shelter the next day.

GASTROINTESTINAL DISTRESS

- **How long have you had the pet?** If it has only been 1-3 days, it could be a reaction to the de-wormer, stress, or change in diet. If the pet is bright and alert, then please contact the foster team the next day to bring it in for a tech check.
- **Are they dehydrated?** (Do the skin test; check gums (tacky or wet)). If they are dehydrated and are having diarrhea but gaining weight and otherwise doing good, then contact the foster team the next day. The kitten is not in immediate danger but does need to get checked out!
- **Are there any other changes in health or behavior?** If the kitten is lethargic, is not eating and not gaining weight take the kitten's temperature (rectally) – if kitten is under 99 degrees, then put them on a heat disk, if the kitten is over 103 degrees, then put them on a cool surface. If kitten is stable then bring them in next morning, if the kitten does not appear stable or you are uncomfortable waiting then please contact Vidaah Vet!
- **Could the kitten have eaten anything they shouldn't have?** If the kitten has been fine until now and is the only one out of the litter showing symptoms and the symptoms are severe then they may have eaten something toxic to them. Try to find out what that thing could have been as that will help the vet give you better instructions. Common items for kittens to ingest are: Plants, human food, ant traps, rat/mouse poison, strings, hair ties etc. If the kitten is actively in distress, contact Vidaah Vet immediately, if the kitten is now doing fine – BARH then contact the foster team the next day.

Kitten specific/Panleuk signs: Blood in the stool. Inability to maintain a consistent temp (either temp is too high, or more commonly, temp is too low). Vomiting, lethargy, meowing/crying. If the kitten is stable enough, monitor and bring it to the shelter the next morning. If kitten begins to fade contact Vidaah Vet for further instructions.

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UPPER RESPIRATORY INFECTION / KENNEL COUGH

- **Bloody sneezes:** Warm compress nose and give saline drops 1–3 drops per nostril.
- **Coughing/Hacking/Gagging:** Rule out inverted sneezing (YouTube videos are great for this). Ask if the pet has other symptoms like fever, inappetence, lethargy. Recommend high-value food, steam bath and appointment in the next day as soon as possible.
- **Congestion:** gauge severity – suggest steam bath, high-value food, and syringe feed if necessary.
- **Fever:** temperatures over 102.2 are considered a low fever; temperatures over 103.5 are cause for concern in underage kittens; temperatures over 104 are an emergency and the pet requires intervention. Intervention should be to remove blankets and place on a cool surface i.e., a bathroom floor/shower. If the temp has not gone down within 45 min, but has not increased and the patient seems comfortable/okay, bring them to the shelter first thing next morning. Only

PS! If your foster pet is already on medication and not in distress then do not panic, it takes 3–4 days for antibiotics to kick in. Contact the foster team the next day to inform them of overnight events.

INAPPETENCE

- **How long have you had the pet?** The first 72h is the decompression period and it is normal for pets to not want to eat. This is not an overnight emergency, but we would like you to inform the foster team the next day of the pet's inappetence!
- **Are they on any medications?** Certain meds can cause inappetence, it is important that we address this, but it is not an emergency, contact the foster team the next day!
- **What have you offered the pet to eat?** What have you tried to entice the pet with? (i.e., warming up food, offering varieties/textures/flavors of pet foods and treats, using different dishes, dabbing a small amount of wet food onto the animal's nose, syringe feeding etc.)
- **How old is the pet?** Adult animals have more of a grace period when it comes to not eating, for kittens/puppies under 8 weeks old, not eating can be critical. If the animal is not in distress, then this is not an emergency, but you need to contact the foster team first thing the next day!
- **When did the pet last eat?**
 - If it's only been 24 hours –leave out a variety of food/treats and give the pet space and update the Foster Team via email in the morning.
 - If it's been 48+ hours –leave out a variety of foods/treats, attempt syringe feeding if necessary and appropriate. Update Foster Team via text in morning.

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LIMPING/SORE LIMB

- **Which limb appears to be injured?** Can you determine where on the limb the pet is sore? Be careful when investigating not to be bitten.
- **Is the pet mobile?** BAR – Bright, Alert, Responsive?
- **Are there any signs of wounds or blood?**
- **Is the pet painful?** Crying/yowling, trembling, non-weight bearing, unable to move?
 - **If the pet does not seem extremely painful**, there are no obvious signs of injury, it is bright, alert and responsive, and can be contained comfortably for the night. Monitor the pet and update the Foster Team via text in the morning. If foster pet worsens at any point over night, contact Vidaah Vet!
 - **If the pet is actively in distress/severe pain/injured/broken/wounded/bleeding**, gather details of the incident and contact Vidaah Vet.
 - **Is this a kitten with a sudden limp** – if so, what is the kitten's rectal temperature? Is it currently on any meds? If the kitten has a fever of 103.5 or lower, very closely assess and monitor the kitten's appetite, behavior, and temperature over the next several hours. Verify if the kitten is currently eating/active/hydrated? **If the kitten is not eating**, lethargic, quiet, dull, dehydrated, contact Vidaah Vet.
- **Tips on cooling a hot kitten:**
 - Intervention is needed for kittens with fever over 103.5.
 - Place kitten on cool surface , i.e. shower/tub, remove blankets
 - Try to avoid extreme cold (this leads to vasoconstriction of vessels and traps heat instead of releasing heat). Can mist kitten with room temperature water and place in front of a fan – Should only be done for kittens 104 and above

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MALE CAT & POSSIBLE URINARY BLOCKAGE

- Is the cat straining or crying in the litterbox? How long?
- How many trips to the litterbox?
- Has the pet peed or pooped?
 - How many times?
 - If so, was there blood in the urine?
 - How much urine was in the box? (i.e., normal pee or tiny spots of pee?)
- Does the pet seem painful? (i.e., crouching, crying, crying when picked up?)
- Are they lethargic?
- Have they been eating/drinking?

If the cat is yowling in pain or dull and not responsive contact Vidaah Vet. Otherwise contact foster staff during business hours.

INGESTION OF TOXIC SUBSTANCE OR FOREIGN OBJECT

- **Did you see the pet ingest a foreign something?** If you did and you think this is toxic, contact Vidaah Vet immediately. They may direct you to pet ER to get the animals' stomach pumped or to receive fluids – **DO NOT ATTEMPT TO DO ANY MEDICAL INTERVENTION AT HOME.**
- **If the pet has ingested something over an hour ago and is BAR – Bright, Alert, Responsive – doing well, otherwise no concerns:**
 - Look out for (vomiting, diarrhea, lethargy, painful abdomen, seizures), if you notice any signs then contact Vidaah Vet.
 - Contact foster team in the morning if the pet seems to be doing fine.

If the pet has ingested something and is actively in distress, contact Vidaah Vet. If you are worried or unsure of your foster pets condition please contact Vidaah Vet regardless.

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COMMON INGESTED ITEMS:

- **Human Medications:** heart medications (blood pressure pills), antidepressants and pain medications (opioids and prescription non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs). Acetaminophen, ibuprofen, and naproxen as well as herbal and nutraceutical products
- **Insecticides/Rodenticides:** Depending on the type and quantity, ingestion can cause internal bleeding, kidney failure, seizures, and even death. Always read the label before using any insecticide on your pet, in your home or in your yard.
- **Household Products:** toys, ropes, plastic, hair ties, shoes, Brillo pads, sponges, cloth, rocks, bottle caps, springs, etc.,
- **Human Food:** onions, garlic, grapes, raisins, xylitol (sugar substitute), chocolate, alcohol, etc.
- **Poisonous/Toxic Plants:** Lilies, philodendrons, snake plants, oleander, aloe, chrysanthemums, hyacinths, jade plants, sago pal, daffodils, tulip bulbs, extreme amounts of cannabis etc.,

ONGOING / EXCESSIVE BLEEDING

- **How fast is the blood coming?** A drop vs. A stream – make a DIY bandage with household items to control the bleeding while you contact Vidaah Vet.
- **If bleeding from a spay and neuter site and just a drip,** Ice incision for 10 minutes and then recheck the bleeding. Should slow down or completely cease. If it maintains at just a drip it's okay, if the animal is bright and alert, keep them comfortable and bring in the next morning.
- **If bleeding from nose:** can place cotton ball in nostril and apply pressure. Patient can also sniff alcohol to cause vasoconstriction and help slow down bleeding. Can be seen in am if still occurring. If it has stopped, it is okay to just monitor and contact the foster team in the morning.
- **If laceration,** do an at home bandage. If it continues to bleed after pressure /bandage (10 minutes) and is a large amount like a stream, contact Vidaah Vet. If decreasing and is down to seepage and drip, bring in first thing next morning. Try not to feed past 10:00 pm since surgery may be needed.

ANIMAL BITES

- **If an animal is bit and has a large stream of blood and is in severe pain, please contact Vidaah Vet immediately.**
- If the animal has small puncture wounds or lacerated and just small drips of blood and mostly comfortable, contact foster team in the morning
 - You can use hydrogen peroxide or antiseptic to just dab and clean the wound minimally. Please do not feed past 8:00 pm if possible due to possibility of surgery (10:00 pm latest).
- **PS! No matter how small or big the bite nor whether it is done by your foster dog or the other dog we will still need to a bite report, for that we need the following information :**
 - Owners name, phone number and address
 - Animals name, breed, age, and vaccine history
- **Please share your foster pets medical history with the owner. You can provide the owner with the Maryland SPCA main phone number or foster hotline number.**

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LOST FOSTER PET:

In the home:

- Close all doors and place wet food in each room—check each room after several hours to see if the food is eaten. Narrow down which room the pet is in.
- Can use flour sprinkled on the floor around wet food to track paw prints

Unsure of whether pet is in the home or got out:

- Look around for any obvious signs the pet may have gotten out: open window, A/C unit, broken screen, roommate let them out, etc.
- If no obvious sign of escape—pet is MOST LIKELY in the home. Check cabinets, closets, behind the water heater, rafters, behind or in appliances, under furniture, IN box springs, etc.

Lost outside:

- Begin looking outside if it is safe (daytime). If it is nighttime and you feel safe looking around, please do so.
- Post a recent clear photo of the pet on the following sites:
 - lost.petcolove.org
 - Facebook sites: “Lost and found pets Baltimore City,” Lost and Found pets Baltimore County, etc.
 - If you are part of a neighborhood group, make sure to look and post on the site.
- Contact Baltimore City or County Animal control to report the pet as lost. Be sure to tell them it is a MD SPCA foster pet and give the microchip number (you can find that on the medical records), description, and foster hotline number.
 - Baltimore City Animal Control: 410-396-4689
 - Baltimore County Animal Control: 410-887-7297

Tips for drawing pets back home:

- Open a window so the cat can get back in
- Place a piece of laundry outside that smell like you (pillowcase, workout shirt, pajama top)
- During the day, walking around and calling a dog or asking neighbors if they have seen the pet is the best course of action.
- **Notify Foster Team immediately by texting/emailing or calling first thing in the morning!**

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PET +ER PROTOCOL

If Vidaah Vet tells you to take your foster animal to an emergency hospital, then follow these steps:

1. You must call the Pet ER closest to you (Hunt Valley or Columbia) to make arrangements for the pet's care:
 - State your name and that you are an MD SPCA Foster Parent
 - Give the foster pet's name and species.
 - Describe details of the situation:
 - If this is a crashing kitten for euthanasia, inform them it is an emergency euthanasia service.
 - If you are able, send medical records to records@pet-er.net –first confirm this is still the active email address.
2. Bring your foster pet's most recent printed medical history with you or have it ready on your phone to show the front desk/email it.
3. Once arrangements are confirmed with Pet ER, head straight there and check-in as a MD SPCA Foster Parent, state your name and the pet's name.
4. You are good to leave, please do not contact Pet ER for any updates. Send a text to the foster hotline letting us know you took your foster pet to the ER, and we will get back to you in the morning with updates.

HUNT VALLEY: PET+ER

10626 York Road, Hunt Valley MD 21030

(410) 252-8387

COLUMBIA: PET+ER

10000 Old Columbia Rd, Columbia

(410) 441-3304

Important Notes: Foster Parents are NOT permitted to take their foster animal to Pet ER, or any other veterinary hospital/clinic, without the direct permission from a Foster Coordinator, the Operations Director, or MD SPCA veterinarian. If you do, then you are responsible for all costs related to the visit.

Additionally, Foster Parents are NOT permitted to administer any medical treatments (e.g., medications, supplements, LRS fluids, etc.,) without the direct permission of a Foster Coordinator, MD SPCA veterinary

technician, or MD SPCA veterinarian. Foster Parents MUST abide by all medical treatments that are prescribed to foster animals by MD SPCA veterinary technicians/veterinarians.

Foster Parents that administer medical treatments not prescribed by the MD SPCA, or that cease MD SPCA prescribed veterinary treatments, without the direct approval of a Foster Coordinator, MD SPCA veterinary technician, or MD SPCA veterinarian, may be terminated from the Maryland SPCA Foster Program.