

# 9 Lives Cat Rescue

## Foster Carer Guidelines



### **9 Lives Cat Rescue**

[www.9livescatrescue.com.au](http://www.9livescatrescue.com.au)  
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# THANK YOU!

Thank you for becoming a 9 Lives Cat Rescue Foster Carer for abandoned, homeless and unwanted Cats & Kittens.



We hope you will find this experience very rewarding and continue to help the Cats of Perth for many years to come.

This booklet outlines most things you will encounter while being a Foster Carer, but if at ANY stage you are unsure or worried about your duties as a Foster Care or your Cat/s in care, please do not hesitate to contact 9 Lives Cat Rescue via telephone at any time.

Emergency Vet contact details are at the back of this guide. We ask you to contact one of these Vets immediately at any time there is a medical emergency or there is a problem you feel requires urgent treatment.

You do not require permission from a 9 Lives Cat Rescue Officer to seek emergency medical treatment.

Regards

*9 Lives Cat Rescue*



## *Contents*

|                                       |    |
|---------------------------------------|----|
| The Basics                            | 4  |
| Preparing for your new Foster Kittie! | 5  |
| Cat Safety                            | 7  |
| Daily Health Checks                   | 9  |
| Behavioural Issues                    | 15 |
| Personal Injury                       | 16 |
| Change of Circumstances               | 17 |
| Emergency Medical Treatment           | 18 |
| Emergency Vet Contacts                |    |
| Affiliated with 9 Lives Cat Rescue    | 19 |
| 24 Hours Emergency Care               | 20 |

# *The Basics*

Upon arrival of your foster Cat you will be asked to sign a Foster Carers Contract. Please read it carefully and ask any questions you may have before signing.

You will be supplied with all the necessary items needed to care for your foster Cat/s and these must only be used for the 9 Lives Cat Rescue Cat being placed in your care.

When you are running low on supplies, please contact your designated Foster Care Co-ordinator/Welfare Officer and they will arrange for supplies to be delivered.

All Cats going into foster care are flea/worm treated and Vet checked. We ask that you ensure your own animals, if any, also remain up to date with their flea/worm treatments.

# Preparing for your new Foster Kittie!

While 9 Lives Cat Rescue will provide you with most of the supplies needed for you while Fostering (litter, trays, bowls, food, bedding, medication etc), there are a few simple things you will need when setting up a suitable room or area for them to call their own.

Where possible, your new Cat/s should be confined to their room to begin with, especially if they are small kittens (under 12wks). They may be nervous, frightened or stressed, and being confined to one room will help them feel safe, as well as preventing any other pets or small children from harassing or bullying them.

Small kittens are very adept to getting themselves in tight hiding spots when frightened and are likely to get under people's feet, which can lead to being stepped on causing serious injury to their delicate bodies. For this reason we ask that small kittens are kept confined to a safe area at all times until their size and strength become more developed.

When preparing a room/area for your new Foster friend, ensure there are no dangerous hiding spots where they may become trapped or injure themselves. They may like to hide under the bed, behind furniture or even in a box, and this is fine, as long as there is no potential risk of hurting themselves or getting trapped.

Please check for dangerous wiring or electrical cords that the Cat/s may find appealing to play with or chewed (kittens are notorious for chewing power cords). Cords/strings that hang from window blinds can also pose a strangulation risk. These will need to be removed or adjusted so they cannot be reached or played with.

**Remember** – *Kittens are like small children – mischievous!*

You may wish to lay down some newspaper where you place their kitty litter tray. Kittens can be quite messy when first learning to use their tray and love just digging in the kitty litter, so putting some newspaper underneath may help preventing the floor from becoming soiled.

**A TIP** – if setting up on carpet, place an old shower curtain or a plastic sheet down first, then newspaper on top – this will stop any liquids soaking thru the paper and staining the carpet.

The litter tray should be left in the same spot indefinitely, as moving it around will only confuse the Cat/s and may lead to stress or problems with toileting. It should not be kept too close to the Cat/s feeding station, as most cats are very clean and may find this distasteful.

Again, a good tip is to place a plastic sheet down first then some placemats or newspaper as kittens can be messy little eaters, and some like playing in their water bowls!

Listed below are some basic tips outlining what to expect upon arrival on your new Foster Cat/s.

Remember, it can be very stressful for a cat to get accustomed to a new environment and people, especially if they have suffered previous trauma or illness. Each cat is different and will behave in their own unique way.

- It is normal for cats not to eat for a few days. Keep providing fresh food and water every day until the cat is ready to come out and eat. It is also important to put their feeding bowls in an area that doesn't have too much noise or human traffic that may scare them while they are trying to eat.
- Don't force the cat to do anything it doesn't want to do eg. Brushing, pulling them out of their hiding spot. This will only stress the cat and create mistrust.
- The cat may forget their training. Remember they are stressed and may have an accident but this usually only happens once before they learn where their kitty litter is and they feel safe enough to venture out and use it.



# Cat Safety

Cat safety is important around the home and like children, cats are curious and will get into places you wouldn't think of!

Have a look around the home and ensure nothing cat injure or endanger the Cat eg. Broken glass, boxes or items that could fall if jumped on, cords behind TV's etc.

Have a secure area for Cat that is free from torment from other animals, people, children etc. Sometimes Cat just wants some time out!

Ensuring the house is secure when not at home – don't leave any open windows or doors open that Cat could escape from.

**Under NO circumstance are our Foster Cats allowed outside, unless in a secure area like a cat run. If Cat is let outside you waive all rights to 9 Lives Cat Rescue funding, and if any injury is occurred you will be liable for all Veterinary Costs associated with the Foster Cat.**

## **Here's an idea.....**

If you have an unused area down the side of the house, why not turn it into a Cat Run. A lot of our Foster Carers have done this and it makes for a wonderful experience for Foster Cat and not only keeps your own cats and Foster Cat safe and happy, it lets them enjoy the night while not disturbing the neighbours or wandering the streets.

Some ideas are:-

- Turn an old bird aviary into a cat retreat.
- Turn a large wooden cubby house into a cat enclosure by enclosing it with chicken wire.
- Enclose patio area or unused area down the side of a house with lattice and shade cloth.
- Build a wooden box/enclosure around a window.

**Catmax** are great supporters of 9 Lives Cat Rescue and have some wonderful cat enclosure options for everyone from small to full backyards! Check them out [www.catmax.com.au](http://www.catmax.com.au)

## *Cat enclosure ideas...*



# Daily Health Checks

Like any other pets in your care, your Foster Cat/s will need to be monitored daily to ensure they remain healthy. When your foster cat arrives we will provide you with a monitoring sheet to be completed each day for the first two (2) weeks of its stay. This allows us to identify if there are any problems that the cat has, either physically or behaviourally.

Should the Cat/s require any medication whilst in your care, we will also provide you with a chart to complete so we can keep track of daily doses and treatments.

Provided are basic guidelines for monitoring the health and wellbeing of Cat/s who are in good health or may have a minor illness or injury. In the case of an animal who appears to be very unwell or seriously injured, please contact 9 Lives Cat Rescue as soon as possible. We will advise you on caring for the sick Cat/s and give you more information to assist you.

There are some common minor ailments which may affect an otherwise healthy cat/kitten, especially under stressful conditions, and many of these can be remedied fairly easily.

## **Not Eating**

It is very common for a cat to stop eating for a few days when under stress. However, if this should continue for more than four (4) or five (5) days, it will need to be addressed before it begins to cause health problems.

Make sure the cat's food bowls are in a quiet spot away from their litter tray. If they are hiding somewhere (eg. Under the bed) you can try placing their food bowl in their hiding place so that they don't have to come out to eat.

The cat will probably find wet food more tempting than dry biscuits. Contact 9 Lives Cat Rescue and we will deliver some suitable wet food to you if some hasn't already been supplied.

As a last resort, you may try some BBQ Chicken. This is irresistible to even the fussiest of moggies. However, it is very high in salt and fat content, so should be given sparingly and only for a few days at a time. You can also try some canned tuna which is also very popular with most cats.

Sometimes warming the food a little can help. Most cats don't like to eat cold food straight from the fridge. Usually a few meals of 'special' foods, such as these, will help to stimulate the cat's appetite and you will be able to go back to their normal diet within a day or two.

***Very young kittens (under 10 weeks and/or one kilogram) should NEVER be allowed to go without food for any longer than ONE DAY. Their bodies are much more susceptible to dehydration and they will weaken much faster than older kittens./cats. You may try some bland food such as boiled or steamed chicken to tempt them. DO NOT give them BBQ chicken or tuna as it may be too rich and cause diarrhoea, which will increase dehydration. Contact 9 Lives Cat Rescue as soon as possible for the best course of action.***

### **Mild Diarrhoea or Vomiting**

This can also be a result of stress. Most of the time it will resolve itself within a day or two. If the diarrhoea or vomiting becomes more severe (very watery or has an offensive odour) you may need to fast the cat for 24 hours. This means removing the cat's food for one (1) day and night. Then, re-introducing a small amount of food and observing the litter tray to make sure the diarrhoea has settled. Ensure there is a fresh supply water at all times.

If the cat was infected with intestinal worms before being wormed, you may see some dead worms in their stools. This can be a cause of mild diarrhoea and is a sign that the wormer has worked so you should not be overly concerned.

If you have tried a 24 hour fast and the severe diarrhoea persists, please contact 9 Lives Cat Rescue immediately. It could be the cat has an underlying infection or the food supplied does not agree with them.

***NEVER fast kittens who are under 10 weeks and/or one kilogram. Contact 9 Lives Cat Rescue for advice in the case of kittens with intestinal upset.***

### **Constipation**

If you notice that your foster cat has not passed a stool for three (3) days or more, this is a problem that needs to be addressed. It is not usually a serious problem but may require a special mild laxative that your 9 Lives Cat Rescue Welfare officer can supply you with.

Contact 9 Lives Cat Rescue immediately if there is any abnormal pain or swelling associated with the constipation. This may be something more serious and needs to be checked by a Vet. Likewise, if the cat is straining to pass urine or the urine looks blood tinged (particularly in Male cats), this can indicate a life threatening problem and needs urgent medical attention.

## Appetite and Weight

When you get your foster cat their appetite can depend on what has happened to them previously. Some will be ravenous and want food all the time because they may have been a stray off the street who never knew when they were going to get their next meal. This can lead to 'gutsing' of food and vomiting.

If this is happening please don't give in to their demands as we will only end up with an **overweight** cat that will develop other medical issues as a result. Continue to feed them as we have instructed on their **Health Care Chart** and should they eat too fast then break their meal up into 3 parts. Let them eat the first third of their food then wait a few minutes before putting down the next third and so on. This can minimise them eating too fast and throwing it all up again.

Should your foster cat begin to start looking a little 'round' to what is normal for a healthy cat then please let us know so we can advise you on what to do with their diet.

**Weight loss** is also very concerning. If you suspect that your foster cat is losing weight, then please let us know **immediately** as this can indicate some serious medical conditions.

A **lack of appetite** or willingness to eat can be for any number of reasons that can also indicate serious health issues so if your foster cat **declines to eat more than one meal** please let us know straight away so we can get the cat health checked.

Watching how much your foster cat drinks is also very important. It will take a week or so for you to observe what is normal for your foster kitty to drink but on average a healthy cat's consumption is 60-80ml of water per Kilogram of body weight (240ml for an average 4kg cat). Obviously if it's a very hot day or they are being very active then this amount can vary.

**Excessive drinking** however can indicate a number of health issues such as Diabetes , urinary problems, poisoning and renal issues, so it is very important to note if you foster cat is drinking more than they normally would on a normal day. This will also result in **excessive urination** due to the amount of water being consumed so anything of this kind that occurs needs to be addressed **immediately** so please let us know.

## Sneezing/Watery Eyes/Nasal Discharge

This is usually a symptom of 'Cat Flu'.

Cat Flu is a relatively mild illness characterised by upper respiratory symptoms, such as sneezing, watery discharge from the eyes and/or nose and sometimes a mild cough.

It is a contagious virus similar to the human influenza virus. Cat Flu is NOT contagious to humans, but can be spread very easily between cats who are in close contact with each other.

If you suspect your Foster Cat/s has Cat Flu, you should inform 9 Lives Cat Rescue as soon as possible. We will then ask you to observe the cat carefully over the next week or two (2).

If the watery discharge from the eyes/nose:

- Becomes thicker
- Develops a green or yellow colour
- Appears to be causing the Cat discomfort

please get the Cat checked by a Vet.

If the cat develops breathing difficulties such as:

- Severe coughing
- Wheezing or
- Crackly breathing sounds

This could indicate a secondary infection and needs to be treated by a Vet.

Please contact 9 Lives Cat Rescue if you notice any of these symptoms or have any concerns regarding the Cats health.

### **Fleas**

All cats who have been taken in by 9 Lives Cat Rescue have been treated with a product to destroy fleas. However, if the cat had a heavy flea infestation before being treated you may still see a flea or two crawling on them or their bedding.

These leftover fleas will die on their own in due time, but you may wish to pick them off and squash them with a tissue.

Cats DO NOT require 'flea bath's unless the flea burden they are carrying is severe, in which case 9 Lives Cat Rescue has already informed you of this.

If you caring for small kittens and you notice a large amount of fleas, you need to advise 9 Lives Cat Rescue as soon as possible. A large amount of fleas on a small kitten can potentially cause serious anaemia and needs to be promptly treated. Some kittens are too small to receive the standard flea treatment and may require bathing. Your 9 Lives Cat Rescue Welfare Officer will advise you if this is the case.

## **Pulling Fur or Over-Grooming**

Some cats are very sensitive and are affected by stress more than others. Sometimes this manifests itself in the form of 'over-grooming'.

These cats may excessively lick or pull at their fur until bald patches start to appear or sore spots develop on the skin. If you notice your foster cat is grooming itself obsessively or biting and pulling chunks of fur out, it may be a symptom of this stress induced condition.

Another possibility is an allergic reaction.

Please contact 9 Lives Cat Rescue as soon as possible if the problem persists.

A synthetic pheromone diffuser is available to help treat extreme stress in cats and usually proves very effective.

## **RINGWORM**

*Ringworm is a relatively harmless fungal skin condition, similar to Tinea.*

*However, it is very CONTAGIOUS and can easily spread between humans, cats, dogs and other mammals.*

*Ringworm can release spores that are capable of lying dormant for up to 18 months. These spores can only be killed by certain chemicals or disinfectant products and will be killed by standard soaps or mild cleaners.*

*Even though the symptoms can be treated, the spores may remain in the environment and may cause repeat infections in later months.*

### **Symptoms of Ringworm**

*Ringworm is usually characterised by bald patches in the cat's fur (usually round in shape), which will be pink/red and flaky looking. The most common areas for the lesions to appear are around the animal's face and ears, under the tummy, or near the base of the tail. The lesions are generally quite itchy. If the lesion is left untreated it will gradually get bigger and may develop a bright red 'ring' around it (hence the name).*

*Ringworm is self-limiting, meaning it will eventually resolve itself. In the meantime you have the problem of spores being deposited throughout the environment. Cats suffering from Ringworm need to be treated as soon as possible with a special anti-fungal shampoo and sometimes medication as well.*

*Any bedding or items that cannot be disinfected should be thrown away. The only cleaning products that will destroy the Ringworm spores are Bleach, Betadine and certain other specialised anti-fungal products.*

*If you suspect your Foster Cat has a Ringworm lesion, contact 9 Lives Cat Rescue IMMEDIATELY. You will need to keep them separate from any other pets or children in the house, and be very vigilant about washing hands/clothing after coming into contact with the infected animal.*

## Foster Carer Guidelines

*If you think you may have come into contact with Ringworm, DON'T PANIC! It is perfectly harmless and most people will not contact it unless their immune system is already low due to another illness.*

*Children may be more susceptible but will recover quickly. The treatment for Ringworm in humans is usually just an anti-fungal cream, such as Canesten, which is readily available from any Pharmacy.*



## *Behavioural Issues*

In the case of cats who have come from a caring home, 9 Lives Cat Rescue will usually have some idea of their personality type and their likes/dislikes.

When cats are strays or have been abandoned by an unknown person, we may not necessarily know much about their temperament. In this case we will provide you with a personality assessment sheet to complete as you get to know your Foster kitty. This will then assist us in advertising the cat for adoption and ensuring it finds a suitable forever home.

Your Foster cat may be a perfectly well behaved house guest, but as their history is sometimes not known, some behaviour issues may come up. These can include:

- Scratching of furniture
- Toileting inappropriately
- Spraying/marking
- Jumping on bench tops
- Biting or scratching in fear of aggression (different to play behaviour)

If any of these problems or others persists, please notify us so we can advise you on how best to deal with the situation. If we don't know about it then we can't do anything to help!

Please don't allow any behaviour problems continue to a point where you no longer want to care for the cat, thus leaving us with nowhere to place them.

## *Personal Injury*

When fostering cats, it is a wise idea to ensure your tetanus vaccinations are up to date. This is a precautionary measure as cats often scratch, even unintentionally during playtime.

If scratched or bitten by the cat in your care, you should allow the wound to bleed freely for a small amount of time. This way the bleeding will flush out any bacteria that may have entered the wound via the cats claws or teeth. You should then scrub the wound vigorously with warm soapy water using antibacterial soap if available. If the wound is not too deep and the bleeding subsides quickly, simply use an antiseptic cream or Betadine ointment twice daily to prevent infection.

Infection from cat bites and scratches is common and will present itself as redness, swelling, heat and inflammation. If left untreated this may then progress to being very painful and perhaps weeping a yellow discharge. You will need to see a Doctor as soon as possible if you suspect infection.

If the wound is bleeding profusely, has injured a vein or involves your face or eyes, seek medical attention immediately.

If you are injured by a 9 Lives Cat Rescue cat in your care, please make a report on the forms which were provided when they arrived. This is essential for insurance purposes. If the injury is not reported promptly then any further medical treatment required will not be covered by our insurance policy.

## Change in Circumstances

Please be aware that finding homes for cats can take time.

Sometimes you may need to foster a cat for months. Sometimes it may only be for a week. We ask that Foster Carers commit to caring for a cat until it is permanently rehomed, no matter how long it takes!

We understand that sometimes circumstances do change without warning, which may affect your ability to care for the cat you have taken on. We ask that if time permits, you give us **ONE (1) MONTHS WRITTEN notice** if you think you are no longer able to foster the cat. In case of emergency situations, please contact 9 Lives Cat Rescue immediately so we can place the cat in emergency care.

Should you be planning to go on holiday whilst you still have a foster cat in your care, please provide at least **ONE (1) MONTH notice** to allow us to arrange another Foster Carer. Failure to do so will result in the animal having to be placed in emergency boarding until another Carer is found, and you will be responsible for these boarding fees (this does not apply to emergency situations).

**Should the cat in your care need to be transported anywhere, for any reason, please do so in a suitable carry cage. Under no circumstances may a cat be moved without being in a carry cage. If you do not have one please let us know and we will provide one.**



# Emergency Medical Treatment

If at any time in your Foster Caring, you feel one of your Cats is seriously ill or injured, please contact 9 Lives Cat Rescue immediately and we will arrange for you to take the cat to the nearest vet. If you cannot contact a 9 Lives Cat Rescue Welfare Officer or if you feel that the situation is urgent/life threatening, please use your own judgement and transport the cat to your nearest Vet Clinic.

We would prefer you over –react unnecessarily rather than allow a serious problem to deteriorate and end badly.

## **Examples of Medical Emergencies**

Urgent Medical situations that require immediate veterinary treatment may include, but are not limited to:

- Breathing difficulties of any kind;
- Straining to urinate in Male cats (may or may not include abdominal pain or swelling);
- Serious physical injury, such as car accident or suspected broken bone;
- Any type of injury in which bleeding is severe and cannot be stemmed;
- Any serious injury involving the eyes;
- Extreme lethargy (tiredness) or reluctance to move;
- Any paralysis or weakness in the hind legs;
- Any bleeding from the eyes, ears, rectum or vulva.

# Emergency Vet Contacts

## Affiliated with 9 Lives Cat Rescue

### Duncraig Veterinary Hospital – (08) 9447 4807

**Address:**

55 Marri Rd, Duncraig

**Opening Hours:**

|                 |           |
|-----------------|-----------|
| Monday – Friday | 8am – 7pm |
| Saturday        | 8am – 1pm |
| Sunday          | Closed    |

### Warton Road Animals Hospital – (08) 9490 2266

**Address:**

Lot 7 Warton Rd, Huntingdale

**Opening Hours:**

|                 |           |
|-----------------|-----------|
| Monday – Friday | 8am – 7pm |
| Saturday        | 8am – 1pm |
| Sunday          | Closed    |

### Ocean Keys Veterinary Hospital – (08) 9408 6999

**Address:**

Unit 8A Key Largo Drive, Clarkson

**Opening Hours:**

|                 |              |
|-----------------|--------------|
| Monday – Friday | 9am – 6.30pm |
| Saturday        | 9am – 1pm    |
| Sunday          | Closed       |

### Warnbro Veterinary Hospital – (08) 9593 1797

**Address:**

655 Safety Bay Road, Warnbro

**Opening Hours:**

|                 |           |
|-----------------|-----------|
| Monday – Friday | 9am – 5pm |
| Saturday        | 9am – 5pm |
| Sunday          | 9am – 5pm |

### Swan Veterinary Hospital – (08) 9274 1845

**Address:**

14 Runyon Road, Midvale

**Opening Hours:**

|                 |                 |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| Monday – Friday | 9am – 5pm       |
| Saturday        | 9am – 12pm      |
| Sunday          | Check for times |

# Emergency Vet Contacts

## 24 Hour Emergency Care

To be used if the previous listed Vets are unavailable.

### Balcatta Veterinary Hospital – (08) 9345 4644

**Address:**

59 Erindale Rd, Balcatta

**Opening Hours:**

24 Hours / 7 days a week

### Perth Vet Emergency – (08) 9204 0400

**Address:**

305 Shelby St North, Osborne Park

**Opening Hours:**

24 Hours / 7 days a week

### Murdoch Veterinary Hospital – (08) 9360 6454

**Address:**

Behind Murdoch University, Nyarrie Dr, Murdoch  
(entry of Murdoch Dr)

**Opening Hours:**

24 Hours / 7 days a week

