

Excerpts below from The Stray Cat Handbook by Tamara Kreuz

Recipe for Mom's Milk

Commercial kitten formulas such as KMR (Kitten Milk Replacement) are by far the best choice for feeding orphaned kittens. However, because more kittens are born in the spring and summer, animal hospitals and pet supply stores sometimes run out during these months. You may also find some orphaned kittens in the middle of the night when everything is closed. In an emergency, the following formula (from the Cat Owner's Home Veterinary Handbook) may have to suffice. Keep formula refrigerated.

- 1 cup whole milk (must be whole) (goat's milk can also be used)
- 2 egg yolks (no whites)
- 1 teaspoon salad oil (bland, like Canola or vegetable, not olive or flavored oil)
- 1 drop liquid pediatric vitamins

Blend well and refrigerate. Take out what you need to feed the kittens (about 1/8th cup to start), warm the formula to about 95 degrees before feeding.

Bottle Feeding

Nursing bottles are available in most pet supply stores. If you don't have one, use a plastic (not glass) eye or medicine dropper, oral syringe (without the needle), pipette, or such item that the kitten can suck the milk out or you can GENTLY squeeze the milk out into his mouth. Note: sometimes the hole in the nursing bottle nipple isn't big enough for the kitten to get much milk. If this is the case, enlarge it until the milk can be comfortably sucked out by the kitten. When feeding, try to simulate the posture he takes when nursing on Mom. If he's not getting much, hold him more upright. Wrap him in a small towel if that makes it easier to hold/position him. It's normal for him to hold and "knead" the bottle.

It's best to stop feeding when the kitten slows down his intake because overfeeding can lead to formula going sour in the kitten's digestive tract which in turn can cause diarrhea or even death.

Kittens that aren't getting enough will cry and try to "milk" more out of the bottle. Weigh the kitten periodically to make sure he's gaining weight. If he is, there is no reason for concern that he's not getting enough to drink. If the kitten fails to gain weight or continue to cry after being fed, contact your vet immediately.

Wean kittens beginning around 3-4 weeks by offering soft cooked meat, canned cat food, or moistened dry food more often as you decrease bottle feedings. (Show them the food so they know where it is!) Discontinue bottle feeding completely by eight weeks of age.

Time to Poo

Newborns have to be stimulated to eliminate. Mom gently licks their anus, but you can gently massage the anal region with a cotton ball (or other soft, disposable alternative) dipped in warm water. Do this after the kitten is fed until he begins to eliminate on his own. Older kittens, even though still nursing, may have already learned how to poo on their own. No need to stimulate them!