

## Foster Care Program Frequently Asked Questions

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- **Can I join the Foster Caregiver program if I have other pets or children at home?**
  - Yes! We are always looking for a variety of foster homes so that we can make the best foster matches possible. Some animals may benefit from being placed in the care of a foster volunteer who has other animals. In other cases, being in a home with children may build additional socialization skills.
  - Keep in mind that there is always a health risk to expose your animal to other animals whether it's walking at parks, veterinary waiting rooms, or other common animal congregating areas. The health risk is minimal if your animals are current on their vaccinations, maintain a healthy diet and lifestyle, and are not elderly or very young.
  - If you or someone in your household is immune-compromised, consult your doctor before fostering since working or living with animals exposes humans to a group of diseases called zoonoses. A zoonotic disease is defined as a disease transmitted from animals to humans and also from humans to animals. To find out more about zoonoses, talk to your doctor and/or veterinarian. Proper hygiene, husbandry practices, and an understanding of these illnesses can reduce the risk of disease.
- **Can I let my foster pets and my own pets sleep, eat, and/or play together?**
  - It is always recommended to keep foster pets and resident pets separate from each other. This can help to reduce the occurrence of injury and illness for both parties.
- **What am I expected to provide for my foster pet?**
  - AHNM supplies all food, toys, crates, playpens, formula, litter and litter pans, towels, blankets, and bottles. Foster Caregivers supply a loving home, feeding, medicating, bathing, playing, and socialization for the pets in their care.
- **What are the most common reasons that Foster Care is indicated?**
  - Infant pets commonly need temporary foster homes until they are old enough for spay/neuter and adoption. Surgical recovery and Medical Recovery Foster homes give adult pets a place to heal and recover until they are cleared medically and ready for adoption.
- **Am I responsible for finding my foster pet a forever home?**
  - You are NOT responsible for adopting out the pets you foster; however, many times a foster parent will find a perfect match through their own network of friends, family, and colleagues. AHNM greatly welcomes these referrals! If you think you have found a perfect forever home for your foster pet, remember adopters must still go through the application process and be approved by AHNM adoptions staff before the animal is officially placed in their care, or announced as their pet. Please refer potential adopters to our Adoption team @ 505.255.5523 for official processing.
- **Am I allowed to adopt my foster pet?**
  - Yes. If you make the decision to adopt your foster pet, please notify our Foster Care staff immediately so we can take the appropriate steps. Our Adoption team will then schedule a day and time for you to come in and process the final adoption contract. Once you've adopted a foster pet, you are still welcome to continue on in the Foster Caregiver program if you choose.
- **Who can I contact if my foster pet has behavior issues?**
  - Our Behavior Department specialists are available each day of the week. You can call 505.938.7900 or email [behaviorhelpline@animalhumanenm.org](mailto:behaviorhelpline@animalhumanenm.org). Please mention that you are calling/writing about a foster pet and include the animal identification number (found on your foster agreement contract). The service is free and open to everyone regardless if you adopted your pet from AHNM or not.

- **What if my foster pet and I don't "click"?**
  - Making successful foster matches is paramount for our Foster Care program to thrive. For this reason, we urge our Foster Caregivers to contact our Foster Care staff if a foster pet you bring home is not adjusting, or is simply not a good fit for your family. Each foster pet is a unique individual and has a history we may not completely know. When sending them into Foster Care, we prepare Foster Caregivers (and the foster pet) as best we can – but situations and behaviors sometimes arise that may make the foster pet unsuitable for continued care in your household. If you should need to bring a foster pet back sooner than the original return appointment, please do not consider it a defeat. The information you discovered, even if you only had the foster pet for a short period of time, will be invaluable to our staff.
- **My foster pet has diarrhea- what should I do?**
  - Please ensure that you are not OVERFEEDING your foster pet- this is the #1 cause for diarrhea in neonates. If the feeding amount is appropriate and diarrhea persists for 3 or more instances, your foster pet may be developing an illness. Alert your Foster Department staff about symptoms **promptly**. (Keep in mind that a fecal sample may be needed for laboratory testing.) Make sure to completely clean surfaces and keep the affected pet away from all others until a treatment plan is prescribed and you have instructions for medication and care.
- **My foster pet has bloody diarrhea- what should I do?**
  - Your foster pet may be developing an illness. Alert your Foster Care staff about symptoms **immediately**. (Keep in mind that a fecal sample may be needed for laboratory testing.) Make sure to completely clean surfaces and keep the affected pet away from all others until a treatment plan is prescribed and you have instructions for medication and care.
- **My foster pet is vomiting- what should I do?**
  - Your foster pet may be developing an illness. Alert your Foster Care staff about symptoms **promptly**. Make sure to completely clean surfaces and keep the affected pet away from all others until a treatment plan is prescribed and you have instructions for medication and care.
- **My bottle baby won't eat- what should I do?**
  - Consult your bottle baby packet resources. If you are still experiencing difficulty, please contact your Foster Care staff.
- **Why does my foster kitten/puppy have wet, runny, or streaming eyes?**
  - Your foster kitten/puppy may be breaking with an upper respiratory infection (URI). You may also note coughing, sneezing, or nasal discharge. Alert your Foster Care staff and follow their instructions for medication and care.
- **Why do I have to keep my foster animal confined to a crate? Can't I let him/her loose if I'm watching him/her?**
  - If your Foster Care staff instructed you to keep your foster pet confined to crate rest, then it is *incredibly* important to follow those instructions. If a foster pet is confined to crate rest, it is likely due to injury or recovery from surgery, and he/she must be kept confined for a period of time to heal appropriately and quickly.
- **Can I take my animal's e-collar off when I am at home?**
  - No. If the foster pet is wearing an e-collar, towel wrap, or inflatable donut collar, it is for a medical reason and it is your responsibility to keep it on your foster pet at all times for as long as his/her home care plan specifies. Special permissions to remove an e-collar during careful, constant monitoring may be given on a case-by-case basis.

- **What signs and symptoms should I be concerned about if I see them in my foster pet?**
  - Common signs of problems that should prompt veterinary attention include: failure to eat and/or drink normally, vomiting, diarrhea, coughing, sneezing, nasal and/or ocular discharge, lumps/bumps, spots of hair loss, limping, trouble walking, and injuries or wounds. Please notify Foster Care staff if you see any of these signs and symptoms.
- **Can I take my foster puppy/dog out for walks?**
  - Not if the puppy is under 5 months old and/or has not had all proper DA2PP and rabies vaccinations. Pets with incomplete vaccination lack full immunity and thus are more prone to disease and illness. Only healthy adult dogs who are fully vaccinated may go outside for walks.
- **Can my foster dog stay out in the backyard?**
  - Foster pets should NOT remain outside unsupervised for any length of time. If you are leaving your home, please take your foster dog back inside.
- **I have a family emergency and have to go out of town- what do I do with my foster pet?**
  - If emergency arises and you are not able to provide care for your foster pet, please contact your Foster Care staff and bring your foster pet back to AHNM. We will work with you on placing them into another temporary foster home. At no time should a Foster Caregiver place a foster pet in a private boarding facility or in someone else's care.
- **What should I do in an emergency and/or life threatening situation?**
  - Please call 505.938.7897 between 8 am and 10 pm
  - Between the hours of 10 pm and 8 am, please call VCA Montgomery @ 505.292.5353
- **How do I sign up to foster pets?**
  - Please submit the Foster Caregiver application at [AnimalHumaneNM.org](http://AnimalHumaneNM.org), under the "Get Involved" tab.
- **I have not fostered an animal for AHNM in the last 12 months or more- can I still foster pets?**
  - Foster Caregivers who have not been active for a period of 12 months or longer may need to schedule a refresher training session or orientation to ensure they are up to date on all current protocols and procedures at AHNM.
- **Does fostering a pet count toward my volunteer status?**
  - Yes, you will be given access to our Volgistics online program for volunteer hour logging and scheduling.
- **Do I really need to log my volunteer hours? My total hours are not of interest to me.**
  - Yes, it is very important for you to log all of the hours you so generously donate to us. *Certain grants we apply for are dependent upon recorded volunteering hours.* If you need help logging your hours in Volgistics, please do not hesitate to contact our Volunteer Department @ 505.938.7884.
- **How do I contact the Foster Care staff at AHNM?**
  - Please call 505.938.7897 or email [fostercare@animalhumanenm.org](mailto:fostercare@animalhumanenm.org)

