

Mercy Full Project Rescue Dog/Puppy Foster Program Handbook



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Mercy Full Project Rescue Services Thanks YOU

Thank you for opening your heart and home to a animal in need. Whether you foster a baby who needs some time to grow, or an adult who needs a little extra TLC, you make it possible for us to provide the very best care possible for all of our residents at Mercy Full Project. Fostering is messy, rewarding, stinky, adorable and sometimes a heartbreaking job. We certainly could not provide the level of care we do without valuable foster homes like yours.

From all our dogs and cats, thank you!



Greetings, Foster Parents!

Thank you for participating in the foster care program. We appreciate your willingness to open your heart and home to homeless animals. Your dedication allows our organization to rescue animals we would otherwise have to turn away due to limited space at our facility.

The primary goal of our animal foster care program is to give pets the individualized care and socialization they need to prepare them for adoption. Information gathered during the foster process helps us place dogs and cats in homes and with families who can best meet their needs. Specific goals of the program include:

- Providing a safe, healthy and nurturing environment for mothers to raise their babies.
- Socializing shy or timid animals.
- Giving our long-term residents time away from the shelter in a home setting.
- Allowing medically needy dogs to recover in a relaxing, uplifting environment.

This manual outlines the responsibilities and expectations of Mercy Full Project foster families. This should serve as a resource throughout your foster care experience. Before taking your assigned foster pet home, please:

- Review the overview of key responsibilities and policies.
- Complete a foster application on line or at the facility.
- Read and sign the foster care agreement.

Overview of Key Responsibilities and Policies

To ensure success in our foster program, we ask that you follow our general policy guidelines to guarantee each foster home is responsibly providing a wonderful home for these pets to grow and explore the world in. To this effect, you will want to keep in mind the following:

1. Never let the dog run loose outside; ensure the dog is leashed to guard against escapes. Please notify the rescue immediately if you have an animal escape that you cannot catch.
2. Don't leave your foster dog unattended with any resident animals. Make sure to feed separately from your resident pets and not allow them to eat from each other's bowls.
3. Notify the facility if your foster animal has stopped eating or has a new medical symptom that could signal an illness such as a fever, diarrhea, vomiting, or itchy ears or skin.
4. When fostering an animal with a contagious illness, the animal must remain segregated from your resident pets for the duration of the stay.
5. When fostering a dog or cat without any obvious medical issues, it is still important to keep them segregated from your resident pets for at least two weeks. Some diseases and illnesses take a while to present themselves and this ensures that the shelter pet along with your own pets remain safe.

Preparing and Dog-Proofing Your Home

Taking in a foster dog requires some preparation, even if you already have dogs in your home. Foster dogs often come with very little information and we rely on you to be able to assess their behavior as it relates to being in a home as opposed to the facility environment.

MFP may be able to provide some supplies depending on availability. Some things that may be helpful to your fostering experience include:

- [A baby gate](#) to keep your foster dog contained in a room or section of your home.
- [A dog bed](#) – many foster dogs come with a crate, but you may want them to have a comfortable place to lounge.
- [A dog brush](#) for dogs with frequent grooming needs.
- [Enzyme cleaners](#) – a new environment and new faces can cause accidents.
- [Bitter apple spray](#) – to discourage inappropriate chewing.
- [Dog toys](#) – [Tips to avoid resource guarding](#)
- [Training treats](#) – [Training treat guide](#)

Your home will also go through a certain level of dog-proofing. These are some ideas to think about as you walk through your home:

- Clear out small and sharp objects like paper clips, nails, staples and rubber bands from low tables and floors.
- Move curtains or drapes that can be chewed or pulled off the wall out of reach.
- Move electrical cords out of reach or cover them with PVC pipe to prevent chewing.
- Keep washer and dryer units closed and always check that they're empty before using
- Cover trash cans to keep out curious noses or purchase a dog-proof trashcan
- Install childproof latches for cabinets where toxic cleaning supplies and medications are kept
- Keep toilet lids closed – safety latches optional
- Keep all houseplants out of reach – [List of common toxic houseplants](#)

It's also vital to get down to a dog's eye-level to look for safety hazards you may have missed, including small holes, tight spaces between furniture and escape opportunities in your backyard fence. Never underestimate a dog's size versus a space; they will surprise you, and even if they don't make a great escape, they could seriously injure themselves trying.

Crate Training

Crate training, done in a positive way and can be an effective component of house-training. A crate can be a safe place for your foster dog to have “down time” and can also limit his access to the entire house until the rules are learned. A crate should never be used as a form of punishment and a dog should never be left in a crate for an extended period of time.

You can prevent problems with crate training by setting your foster dog up for success. He should only associate good things with the crate, so start by putting treats and/or toys in the crate and encouraging them to go in. Some dogs warm up to the crate slowly. If they are afraid to go in, place a treat in the crate as far as they are willing to go. After they take the treat, place another treat a little farther back in the crate. Keep going until they are eating treats at the very back, then feed them his next meal in the crate with the door open, so that they can walk in and out at their own pace.



Crate training a fearful dog can take days, so be patient and encouraging. If a crate is properly introduced and used, your foster dog will happily enter and settle down. There are a lot of useful resources online to assist you in this process.

For more information please review the following links:

- www.resources.bestfriends.org/article/crate-training-benefits-you-and-your-dog
- www.resc-files-prod.s3.us-west-1.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/inline-files/Crate-Training_0.pdf?QDIkDA171VU5XOt9atiKtkqu8aXU1Re0
- www.youtube.com/watch?v=wOn8S6VO5p0

House Training

It's unlikely that your foster dog will be perfectly house-trained when you take them home. Most of the dogs in the foster program have lived in a shelter for a while, often with minimal walks or chances to relieve themselves outside. At the very least, be prepared for an adjustment period until your foster dog gets used to your schedule.

Because a dog has a better chance of being adopted if she is house-trained, please help your foster dog to perfect this skill. Take your foster dog outside to go potty multiple times per day (three to six times daily, depending on age). Initially, you may need to take them out more frequently to remind them where the door to the outside is and to reassure them that you will take them out for potty breaks. Most dogs will give cues — such as standing near the door or sniffing the ground and walking in small circles — to indicate that they need to go out. Keep the dog in a crate when you are not available to supervise them indoors.

If your foster dog has an accident inside the house, don't discipline or punish her. It will only teach them to fear and mistrust you. Clean up all accidents with an enzymatic cleaner. Nature's Miracle and Simple Solution are two products containing natural enzymes that tackle tough stains and odors and remove them permanently.

For more about house-training, read [Housetraining Your Dog](#)

Additional resources that you may find helpful:

- www.humanesociety.org/resources/how-housetrain-your-dog-or-puppy
- www.maddiesfund.org/house-training-your-foster-dog.htm

Expenses and Donations

MFP covers all medical care expenses for foster pets if performed at APPROVED veterinary clinic, or at other veterinary clinics approved in advance. MFP will not reimburse any personal expenses incurred by foster parents for unauthorized veterinary care; seeking veterinary care for your foster dog or cat at a clinic other than MFP connections, other clinics are not permitted without explicit MFP owner's approval.

Items to keep track of:

- Food
- Food/water bowls
- Toys
- Treats
- Pet beds or blankets
- Puppy pads

Expenses that you incur during your term as foster parent, whether for supplies or medical care, cannot be applied to an adoption fee. **These expenses, however, may be considered a tax-deductible donation. Keep all receipts and ask for an in-kind donation form once your litter is adopted.**

MFP will provide you with food and other basic needs if you ask. Our food is acquired through donations and rarely do we have a pet on a strict or medicated diet. If that is the case, we will provide the necessary food to go with it.

Always consult a tax professional to determine whether your foster expenses are tax-deductible.



Facebook Group

Want to Connect with other fosters, volunteers and staff?

Join the [Mercy Full Project](#) Facebook Group! This group is open to current, active volunteers, fosters, and staff members. There are several ways this page can be used:

- Take candid, cute photos and videos of shelter pets. We can use these, along with your stories and observations to construct posts for the shelter's public Facebook page. This helps find homes for more difficult-to-adopt animals.
- Have non-urgent medical or behavioral questions about a foster pet? Ask it to the group and you are likely to get immediate responses.
- Want to share a happy story or informative article with the group? Go ahead. We all love to learn and there are so many great resources out there! Consider following Mercy Full Project Instagram.
- Also, [MFP](#) offers an abundant amount of information that may be helpful for specific topic areas or just to browse around their website to gain more knowledge on your foster animal or general questions you may have.

The Facebook group is a wonderful tool and is a key part of our Volunteer and Foster program. There are two things we ask you NOT to post on the Facebook page, as they are better addressed with the management team:

- Concerns or complaints about a staff member, another volunteer, or an issue at the shelter.
- Complaints, suggestions, or concerns about shelter policies or procedures.

All group members are expected to conduct themselves with respect and compassion towards everyone else on the page. MFP reserves the right to moderate comments and posts.

Medical Records at MFP

When you pick up your foster pet(s), you can receive copies of their medical records upon request. Their records can also be emailed to you if you prefer. These records give you an approximate date of birth, weight at time of intake, what medical services have been done and what things your foster animal still needs to have done, such as vaccines, deworming, etc., and when these things are due. We need your help to make sure these things get done on time and that the records get updated. Its your responsibility to make sure your foster Animal is up t date on flea and heartworm prevention

MFP responsibility is to inform you on what vaccines, vet services and medical needs your foster has.

as a foster parent to help us make sure that your foster animals are vaccinated and de-wormed we ask to remember these dates when they are due. When you take a foster pet home, you should receive an email inviting you to join MFP group chat. **IT IS A REQUIREMENT TO JOIN ALL MESSANGER GROUPS** with your adoption coordinator, medical coordinator and admin Team.



Vaccines and Deworming Treatments

Vaccines:

DA2PP is the vaccine for Canine Distemper, Adenovirus Type 2, and Parainfluenza, and Parvovirus. (Adults are typically given 2 vaccinations of DA2PP with the first one done upon intake and the following booster vaccine 2-3 weeks afterwards.

- DA2PP is given at 6 weeks of age or older depending on when they went through intake.
- 2nd DA2PP is given 14-21 days after the first DA2PP. No later than 30 days after or you will need to restart the series.
- 3rd DA2PP is given 14-21 days after the second DA2PP. No later than 30 days after or you will need to restart the series.
- 4th DA2PP is given 14-21 days after the third DA2PP. No later than 30 days after or you will need to restart the series. This vaccine may not be given if the puppy was vaccinated after its 18 week date with the 3rd FVRCP.

The **Bordatella vaccine** is given to help protect against the virus that causes kennel cough. This is given once when they arrive at the shelter. A booster is recommended every 6 months.

Deworming:

Pyrantel is for Roundworms. You might see these pass in the stool after treatment - they will look like spaghetti.

- Pyrantel is given at 2 weeks of age or older depending on when they went through intake.
- 2nd Pyrantel is given 14-21 days after the first dose. This series is repeated every 2-3 weeks until the puppies have returned for adoption. If you are more than 21 days late you will need to restart the dosing series.

Panacur is for hookworms. Hookworms can cause an animal to be lethargic, refuse to eat, and lose weight.

Drontal or **Cestex** is for tapeworms. You will see rice-looking segments in their stools. Drontal or Cestex is given at surgery time if needed (noted by the foster parent). Tapeworms usually do not cause significant problems and may be treated at time of altering.

Health Concerns

The following is a list of common medical issues you may encounter as a foster parent with your dog or cat. This information is not meant to be extensive, just to give you an idea of what common ailments may look like and how they might be resolved. This is not a substitute for the expert advice of a trained medical professional.

If your foster pet displays any of these symptoms, call the shelter immediately:

- Sneezing and/or congestion with green or yellow discharge from the nose and/or eyes.
- Coughing, wheezing, or heavy breathing.
- Diarrhea or vomiting – this can be life threatening to puppies!
- Straining to urinate or defecate – this can be an emergency!
- Bleeding from any part of the body.
- Lethargy – animal seems sleepy all the time.
- Fever.
- Paralysis.
- Extreme change in attitude or behavior.
- Not eating or drinking regularly.
- Temperature too low (below 98°F) or too high (above 104°F).

Please have specifics ready to give when contacting the facility. The more information that you can share with us regarding what is going on with the pet, the easier it will be for us to determine a diagnosis for the pet. Bring a sample with you if the pet is experiencing diarrhea and it may assist us with finding the underlying cause. You can store in a zip lock bag for up to 24 hours refrigerated.

Vaccine Reactions

Vaccine reactions can include, but are not limited to:

- Limping
- Pain at the sight of injection
- Not eating or drinking the normal amounts for 1-2 days
- Unwillingness to play
- Lethargy
- Low-grade fever



If any of these symptoms do not improve by 48 hours after the injection, please contact the shelter.

A more serious reaction happens fairly instantaneously and includes; severe vomiting, diarrhea, facial swelling, and difficulty breathing. The dog/puppy will need to be seen by a vet IMMEDIATELY.

Fostering Puppies

Often puppies will come into the facility. Due to their weaker immune systems, it is best for them to be in a home environment as opposed to the facility. A home environment also increases their socialization skills and allows for closer observation as they grow.

Raising puppies from birth through four weeks

While raising puppies is fun and incredibly rewarding it also requires some hard work and close monitoring. Puppies at this age are very delicate and require around the clock feeding and care, much like a human baby. Puppies at this age are susceptible to what we refer to as fading puppy syndrome (hypothermia and hypoglycemia) and even the slightest illness can cause death. Being hyper vigilant is important. Even the slightest sign of illness can quickly become life-threatening.

Supply list for neonatal care:

- Esbilac or GNC formula (preferred brands)
- Heating pad, no auto-shut off
- Baby wipes
- Puppy pads
- Towels/ blankets
- Gram scale
- Human baby bottles, slow-flow
- Stuffed animal for cuddling

Newborn to two-week care

Puppies are kept on a heating source at all times (heating pad on low).

Puppies are fed at least every 3 hours, even if sleeping when the 3-hour time period comes up. Formula should be made at a 1:3 ratio regardless of the recommendation. Formula should be warm but not hot. An average puppy at this age eats 0.5 oz to 2 oz per feeding or 1 cc per ounce of weight, depending on breed and size of puppies.

Puppies this young and up until their eyes open do require stimulation to go potty after each feeding. A warm cotton ball or baby wipe is used to rub their privates and cause them to urinate and defecate.

Weigh puppies once daily and chart to accurately assess growth. If losing weight, contact the shelter. Avoid bathing. Baby wipes can also be used to clean the puppies as needed.

The following should be considered emergencies:

- White or grey gums
- Cold to the touch
- Very watery or explosive diarrhea
- Not eating, even missing one meal
- Lethargic or unresponsive
- Struggling to breathe

Two to four-week care

Eyes are opening now and puppies are beginning to try to stand up and move around some. Heat should be provided but they should be able to move away if needed. Puppies continue to eat at least every 3 hours, but at 3-4 weeks old can go to every 4 hours and by 4 weeks old can make it 4-6 hours overnight without a bottle. An average puppy at this age eats 2-4 oz. per feeding or 1cc per ounce of weight.

At this age the pups can urinate and defecate on their own.

Weigh once daily and chart to assess growth.

Puppies this age may appear to be thriving and growing but without measuring food and output there is no way to know for sure how your puppies are doing. Because puppies will go downhill very quickly, often within 24hrs, it is best to weigh each puppy daily, regardless of outward, visible health.

For all puppies in this age group:

- Avoid too many guests. Minimizing exposure will help keep the puppies healthy.
- Puppies for the most part should be kept indoors. Starting at 3 weeks if you have a trusted outdoor area (like your yard) they may have some supervised outdoor time but only for short periods.
- Avoid bathing, especially at 0-2 weeks. Once puppies are 3 weeks, they can be bathed to be kept clean but should be blow dried and fed immediately after.

Four to eight-week care

Puppies 4-6 weeks may appear to be thriving and growing but without measuring food and output there is no way to know for sure how your puppies are doing. Because puppies will go downhill very quickly, often within 24hrs, it is best to weigh each puppy daily, regardless of outward, visible health.

Puppies should be weighed using a baby scale or a human scale if the scale can read fractions of a pound. Puppies should be steadily gaining weight. Any puppy that loses 0.5lb in a 24hr period should be brought to the shelter's attention by calling the main number at 813-836-0711.

Supply list:

- Baby or human scale
- Heating pad
- Thermometer
- Puppy food, pate style wet, kibble, formula if able

The following should be considered red flags:

- Decrease in appetite
- Diarrhea that is not improving in 72hrs
- Very watery or explosive diarrhea, even once
- Losing interest in playing with littermates
- Suddenly being “bullied” by littermates

The following should be considered emergencies:

- White or grey gums
- Cold to the touch
- Hot to the touch
- Very watery or explosive diarrhea
- Not eating, even missing one meal
- Lethargic or unresponsive

Feeding

At 4 weeks of age puppies begin the weaning process and start to eat gruel. Gruel is watered down canned food, pate style not chunky, which is blended and made into a thin paste. If your puppies are eating the gruel well and seem hungry, they can be started on canned puppy food. Ideally gruel is diluted with puppy milk replacer. If you would like to purchase milk replacer to use MFP recommends Esbilac. Royal Canine Puppy Mousse is an excellent food to use as gruel for the early weaning process because it already has formula in it and is the perfect consistency. Both of these can be found at most all pet stores.

Expected daily care:

- Puppies should be weighed and weights documented on the provided chart
- Puppies should be allowed to free feed and have easy access to fresh food and water.

Dehydration

Puppies stay hydrated by drinking water and eating canned food. Most puppies will adequately hydrate themselves. You can do a quick elasticity test. Pinch a little skin between your thumb and forefinger on your dog's back. When you release it, it should pop back into place immediately. Puppies should always have access to clean water. If you are concerned your puppy is becoming or is dehydrated alert the shelter.

Temperature

Your puppy's temperature does not need to be taken regularly. However, if you are concerned a puppy is too cold or running a fever it is best if you can take a rectal temperature. It is not difficult to take a rectal temperature but is easiest with two people. Using petroleum jelly or a similar substance insert the thermometer into the rectum. A normal temperature is between 100.5 and 102.

Hypoglycemia

Puppies will quickly become hypoglycemic if they miss even one meal. Just like a baby, puppies need to eat three to four times a day and always have access to fresh food. If puppies become even slightly hypoglycemic, they can begin to go downhill very quickly.

Signs of hypoglycemia are wobbliness, listlessness or seizures.

Anemia

Puppies are also susceptible to anemia. Anemia is a loss of red blood cells that, in puppies, is most often caused by an infestation of fleas or intestinal worms. The easiest way to check for anemia is to look for white or very pale gums. Normal puppy gum color is close to salmon pink. If your puppy's gums are white or grey contact the shelter at 813-836-0711 as this may be an emergency. If you are concerned your puppy's gums are not pink enough email a photo to info@mercyfullprojects.org.

Parvovirus Signs and Symptoms

Parvovirus is a highly contagious, serious, life-threatening condition that affects the intestinal tract and causes severe vomiting and diarrhea. The key to survival is early detection. If your puppy has a decreased appetite contact the shelter.

The signs and symptoms are:

- Decrease or loss of appetite
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea in conjunction with one of the above
- Lethargy

***If your puppy is experiencing any of these symptoms alert the shelter's owner.

Meatball Test

For the most part, a healthy puppy will always be excited to eat a treat. As a rule of thumb if a puppy is refusing to eat a meatball of canned food they may be sick. If you are concerned your puppy may be sick with either fever, parvo, parasites, or respiratory infection please offer a meatball of yummy food. If they do not eat it, alert the medical team at the shelter.

Activity

It is important to recognize and lethargic puppy from a tired puppy. Puppies will normally play, play, play then get tired and sleep for a period of time. If the puppy is going through this cycle that is normal. However, if the puppy is lethargic for an extended amount of time please notify the owner at the shelter.

Medical Fosters

Canine heartworm disease

Heartworm disease is a serious and potentially fatal disease in both dogs and cats in our area. It is caused by foot-long worms (heartworms) that live in the heart, lungs and associated vessels of affected pets, causing severe lung disease, heart failure and damage to other organs in the body. The mosquito plays an important role in the transmission of heartworms. Having your pet on a mosquito repellent and avoiding times of day when mosquitos are at their peak will help prevent transmission and infection. Once an animal is bitten by an infected mosquito, it takes approximately 6 months for the larvae to mature into an adult heartworm and it is not until then that an animal could test positive. In the early period of heartworm infection, most dogs are asymptomatic. Signs of mild heartworm disease may include a cough, reluctance to exercise, weight loss, decreased appetite and fatigue after moderate exercise. More severe disease may cause heart failure, severe coughing, a swollen abdomen due to fluid accumulation, collapse and labored breathing. Every cat and dog in this area should be on a heartworm prevention medication lifelong.

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Cage rest

Sometimes we have animals in our care that have undergone surgeries or medical procedures that require cage rest. This typically just involves placing them in a kennel for the majority of the time and monitoring when they are outside of that kennel. Potty breaks outside would need to be done on leash. By allowing the animal to heal for a few weeks, it can prevent numerous future medical problems. Cage rest outside of the shelter allows them individualized attention, socialization and an opportunity to de-stress while they are healing. The length of time the animal will need cage rest will be dependent on the extent and type of injury.

Ringworm

Ringworm is a fungal infection of the skin, which is somewhat common in cats, and occasionally seen in dogs. It is highly contagious, can spread between animals and is zoonotic, as well. Classic signs of ringworm include skin lesions that typically appear on the head, ears and forelimbs. Ringworm causes patchy, circular areas of hair loss which may be flaky and red in the center. In mild cases, there may be localized areas of redness or simply dandruff, while more severe infections can spread over the animal's entire body. It is also possible for a cat to carry ringworm spores and not show any symptoms whatsoever. Ringworm is spread through direct contact with an infected animal or indirectly via fomites such as bedding, dishes and other materials that have been contaminated with the skin cells or hairs of infected animals. Ringworm spores are difficult to destroy and can survive in the environment for over a year.

Treatment

Begin Treatment for suspected positives:

1. House separately from non-infected animals.
2. Treatment typically takes 6-8 weeks, and can take up to 4 months.
3. Lime sulfur dips twice weekly until skin is normal.
4. Schedule lime dips for two weeks, then recheck.
5. Continue this pattern until skin is normal.

Dipping Procedure:

1. Mix dip according to instructions on bottle.
2. Apply lubricant to protect patient's eyes.
3. Soak patient to the skin, one patient at a time. Use a cotton ball to apply dip to the face and ears
4. Do not rinse off the dip. Let the animal air dry.
5. Give oral medication as prescribed.
6. Apply topical ointments, if prescribed.

The dip will help reduce the number of fungal spores being shed by the animal and help prevent spread to other animals.

*****Continue treatment until cleared by veterinarian with DTM culture.●●●●●●●●●●

Post-surgery

Please read all instructions in this link

<https://tlcpetsnip.org/new-page-55#:~:text=Limit%20activity%20for%20at%20least,in%20a%20fenced%2Din%20yard>

While spay and neuter surgery is a safe and routine surgery, it is very important that you keep a close watch on your pet for two weeks following surgery for any potential complications. Get in the routine of checking your pet's surgical site at least twice per day to ensure the site is clean and healing well. Please remember that your pet has just gone through surgery and needs appropriate care to properly recover, including a clean and dry place indoors to rest and recover. If you have any questions or concerns, please call the MFP at 813-836-0711.

What to expect when you get home

Your pet may be groggy when you get home and sleep more than normal for approximately 24 hours after surgery. He or she may also be agitated due to the after-effects of anesthesia. We strongly recommend that you keep your pet separated from other animals and confined in a crate (if crate trained) or small room the night after surgery.

Post-surgery instructions

To ensure your pet's successful recovery, make sure to carefully follow these rules:

1. Give your pet free access to water once you return home. It is important to keep your pet hydrated after surgery.
2. Approximately two hours after pick-up, please make sure to feed your pet about half of what they would normally eat. Anesthesia can cause upset stomach, so some animals may not eat for 24 hours post-surgery. Do not change your pet's diet or give table scraps during this time as this could mask post-surgery complications.
3. **Check your pet's incision site daily until it has fully healed.** A small amount of redness and/or swelling is normal, but females should have no discharge or pus at their incision site.
4. Males have a scrotal neuter, which leaves a small incision open so that the surgery site can drain. They may have small drops of blood/fluid that will drain from their incision site for two to three days after surgery.
5. Your pet was given a pain injection. This will last for several days, please do not give your pet any additional pain relievers as mixing medications can be FATAL.
6. All animals have dissolvable sutures unless otherwise noted by the veterinary staff. This means that your pet will not have to return to the shelter as the sutures will dissolve on their own.
7. **Prevent your pet from licking the surgery site as it can re-open the incision and cause a painful infection.** Putting an e-collar on your pet may help with the licking.
8. No excessive running, jumping, or playing for seven days after surgery. Too much activity can cause the surgery site to open or become swollen. This means that no visiting the dog park, no solo yard play, and no training classes.
9. Do not allow your pet to get wet for two weeks after surgery, as this could cause the dissolvable sutures to dissolve before they should. This means no swimming, no beach and no baths for at least two weeks after surgery.
10. Keep your pet away from other animals, especially those who may have not been sterilized yet. Unaltered males may continue to try and mount newly spayed females, especially those that were in heat. This can cause life-threatening complications, so it is very important to keep any at risk animals separated. Additionally, neutered males can still impregnate un-spayed females for up to 30 days after surgery.
11. If your pet received a microchip today it was inserted under the skin, between the shoulder blades. It is very important that you do not briskly/firmly rub the area between the shoulder blades for the first few days, as it could cause the microchip to dislodge or migrate to other areas of the body.

Your animal will have a small green tattoo on his/her underside to indicate they have been spayed or neutered.

Complications

What you see on the day of surgery is what we consider normal. If you see any of the following signs please call the shelter immediately at (850) 983-4680 to schedule a recheck.

- Bleeding
- Decreased Body Temperature
- Diarrhea
- Lethargy
- Loss of Appetite
- Pale Gums
- Vomiting
- Lack of urination or defecation after two to three days

General and Emergency Veterinary Care

MFP covers all approved medical expenses for the animals in the shelter's foster program. General medical care for MFP foster animals are provided at the direction of the veterinarians and veterinary technicians that work with MFP. You should contact the shelter during regular hours at 813-836-0711 if it is an after-hours emergency.

Once a foster animal is in your care, you are responsible for transporting them to the shelter veterinarian for necessary medical care. Always make sure the pup has a harness or leash and collar that is secure. A scared or spooked pup can easily get away so use due diligence especially when transporting the pet.

Should foster dogs require care from veterinary specialists, MFP will arrange appointments with approved veterinarians in the area.

Foster parents must not medicate or shave any animals in their care without prior approval from the shelter.

If the onsite veterinarian is not available, then you may be able to seek emergency medical care. However, emergency care must be approved PRIOR to the vet visit. Call the shelter for guidance and approval from the shelter's owner. Otherwise, MFP will not reimburse the veterinary expenses. On approval, you will be directed to one of the local emergency clinics. Upon arrival at an emergency vet clinic, you MUST tell the veterinary staff that you cannot approve any treatment or charges. All treatments will be authorized by the shelter director over the phone.

Be sure to get copies of the medical records of the emergency visit for the file.

Cleaning Between Your Foster Animals

The joy of letting go of one foster animal is knowing that they will be going to a loving home while you are able to take in another that may not otherwise be able to find shelter to grow in such a loving environment. Please consider the following guidelines when transitioning between groups.

Once you have taken your foster pet back to the shelter, it is time to clean and prepare your home for your next foster group. You will need to remove all bedding and wash it in hot water with bleach added. Follow your machine's guidelines for adding bleach to the wash load.

For food and water dishes you can run them through the dishwasher or use diluted bleach to sanitize and they will be cleaned for your next group.

If you have carpeted floors you will need to vacuum well and spot clean any areas that need it. If you have a carpet cleaner you should use it between groups. If you do not have carpet, sweep and mop the floor. Once the floor is dry, mop again with a bleach water solution (1 cup of bleach to 1 gallon of water) and let it sit for ten minutes. Afterwards you will want to rinse with clear water and then let it dry.

You will need to wipe down all surfaces with a bleach water solution or Clorox Cleanup. You should also wipe the walls down. You do not have to do all of the wall but at least the bottom three feet.

If you have a bed in the room, change the covering on it. If you have a chair or couch in the room you will need to vacuum it and spot clean if needed. Ideally, your foster room will be void of anything covered in material like a chair or couch unless it is covered with a plastic sheet designed to protect them.



Foster Program FAQ's

How do I become a foster parent?

You will need to fill out an on line application. You will also need to sign a Foster Care Agreement that we keep on file. Animals needing foster care are listed on our website as well as on our [facebook page](#). but the best way to meet everyone available for fostering is to come directly to our facility located at 901 N Fremont Ave Tampa Fl 33606

What is required of me as a foster parent?

You are responsible for ensuring that your foster animal receives any scheduled medical treatments on time. You serve as an advocate for your MFP and help it to adapt to life outside of a shelter environment. It can be very rewarding knowing you are saving lives and the shelter thanks you for your help.

What supplies do I need to provide myself?

Foster parents can be given a kennel, food, food dishes, toys, bedding and other small incidentals. If you need specific supplies, let us know which ones and we can make sure we have them ready when you come to pick up your foster animal. Any supplies you are able to provide on your own is greatly appreciated and it will help us to be able to spread our limited shelter supplies further. **Please see form for supplies provided by MFP**

How do I get a foster dog?

After you have completed your foster application we emailed you asking for a home video where our rescue dogs will live, than Foster coordinatoor will reach out to have you come to our facility where you will meet all animals in need of foster.

Can my foster dog interact with my resident pets?

You must bring your pet to meet our animals to ensure they get along . You must supervise all interactions between your foster and resident animals. **WE ARE NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY CONTAGIOUS DISSEAS THAT CAN BE TRANSFER TO YOUR PET/PETS**

Can my children interact with the foster dog?

We encourage your children to have supervised interaction with foster animals. Even the mildest tempered dog can be unpredictable when around children. Caution and direct supervision is a must!

Who do I call for help?

Please call the shelter 813-836-0711 for foster assistance from 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. M-F. If it falls outside of these times, you are welcome to post on the Foster/Volunteer Facebook page. If it is an absolute EMERGENCY that cannot wait until the next business day, the owner can be reached via text or calls at 813-836-0711. You will have a group of people that will support your fostering journey.

If my foster animal gets sick do I take them to my own vet?

All veterinary care will be provided through MFP. Foster parents are not permitted to seek veterinary care from outside clinics. Any visits to outside veterinarians that are not pre-approved will be the financial responsibility of the foster parent.

What do I do if my own pets get sick?

Your foster animal should be housed separately if its sick from your resident pets. However, we do recognize that cross contamination can happen. If your own animals get sick it is your responsibility to seek veterinary treatment. Remember there is always an inherent risk of disease when you bring new animals into your home. This is why we require that all animals in the home are current on vaccinations.

Do my resident pets have to be up to date on their vaccines?

For everyone's protection and safety your resident pets are required to be up to date on vaccines. and they must be spay and neuter.

Do my resident pets have to be spayed or neutered before I foster?

MFP does encourage all pets to be spayed and neutered to help control the pet population. This is a requirement to foster. We may be able to provide you with resources in our area to assist you, should you be interested, please ask.

What if I have to leave out of town unexpectedly?

Contact the foster coordinator as soon as possible so that we can find alternate placement for your pets.

Mercy Full Project Foster Care Provider Agreement

I, _____, make the following statements and voluntarily enter into this Foster Care Agreement (hereinafter "Agreement") to provide temporary care as a foster caregiver for Mercy Full Project Animal Services (hereinafter "MFP").

1. _____ I have never been convicted of animal cruelty, neglect, or abandonment. I agree to notify MFP if I am convicted of animal cruelty, neglect, or abandonment in the future.
2. _____ I agree to comply with all other federal, state and local laws that pertain to companion animals and pet ownership in the jurisdiction where I reside.
3. _____ I understand that MFP reserves the right to check on the welfare of my foster animal, which may include a visit to my foster home. I further understand that if MFP finds a direct and immediate threat to my foster animal, MFP may remove the animal from my care.
4. _____ I agree to not take my foster dog(s) or my foster cat(s) to dog parks, off-leash areas, daycare facilities, crowded public areas, or any similar locations, unless given prior approval by the MFP Supervisor. I understand that I will be solely responsible for any injury or damage caused by my foster animal if I do not comply with this provision.
5. _____ I understand that MFP recommends that my foster animal(s) is to be kept separate from any other animals currently living in my home. I agree that if I choose to introduce my foster animal(s) to any other animal living in my home, I will be solely responsible for any illness or injury to other animals.
6. _____ I agree that the animal(s) that I foster will reside in my home and will be kept as a household pet(s).
7. _____ I agree to notify MFP by phone and in writing at 813-836-0711 immediately if my foster animal(s) becomes lost or separated from me.
8. _____ I agree to notify the MFP immediately by phone at 813-836-0711 or by email info@mercyfullprojects.org, if my foster animal demonstrates any aggressive behavior, including, but not limited to, biting a person or another animal.
9. _____ I agree to seek immediate medical attention if I am bitten by my foster animal, or if I receive any other physical injury resulting from interaction with my foster animal. I further agree to seek immediate medical attention for any member of my household who is bitten or suffers any other physical injury resulting from interaction with my foster animal.
10. _____ I agree to return my foster animal(s) at any time upon the request of any MFP staff member.

11. _____ I agree to receive and respond to calls and emails concerning my foster animal(s), from MFP.

12. _____ I agree to transport the animal to MFP for an approved veterinary clinic to receive medical treatment as requested by the MFP Foster Coordinator or MFP staff. If my foster animal experiences a medical emergency, I agree to follow the instructions outlined under “In Case of an After Hours Emergency” in manual.

13. _____ I understand that MFP will not reimburse me for any routine or non-emergency care for my foster animal that is not pre-approved in writing by the MFP Supervisor.

14. _____ I agree to contact the facility at 813-836-0711 or text for other any other emergency or non-emergency matters.

15. _____ I agree to assume the risks implicit in working with animals who may have been abandoned, neglected, mistreated, or who may suffer from an illness or disease. My participation in the MFP Foster Program is entirely voluntary and without the promise or expectation of compensation. I have no known physical or mental condition that would impair my ability to participate in the MFP Foster Program. I understand that while MFP staff carefully monitors all animals, MFP may have limited knowledge of their behavioral and medical backgrounds. Therefore, I understand that MFP makes no warranties or representations regarding my foster animal’s health, behavior, temperament, age, or breed. I further understand that environmental changes may affect and change the temperament of my foster animal(s).

16. _____ I understand and agree that Hillsborough County, its members, officers, directors, agents and elected officials have no liability or responsibility of any nature for injuries or damage to any person, animal, or property which may be caused by my foster animal(s) or my participation in the MFP Foster Program. I, for myself and my heirs, executors, administrators and assigns, hereby release, indemnify and hold harmless MFP County, its members, officers, directors, agents, elected officials, and their heirs, administrators, executors, successors, and representatives from all liability for and all risk of damage or bodily injury or death that may occur to me (including any injury based on negligence) now or hereafter in connection with my foster animal(s) and my participation in the MFP Foster Program. I expressly agree that this release, waiver and indemnity is intended to be as broad and inclusive as permitted by the State of Florida and that if any portion is held invalid, the remainder shall continue in full force and effect.

By my signature below and, and by my initials beside each numbered paragraph above, I affirm that all statements and stated agreements contained in this document are truthful, I affirm that I have read and understand this Agreement in its entirety, and I agree to abide by the terms of this Agreement.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Printed Name: _____

Information from Foster Home



Foster Name: _____ Contact: _____

Animal Name: _____ Date: _____

Although you may wish to change the schedule or diet to fit your family's lifestyle, the following is intended to provide an idea of the current conditions or habits that the animal is accustomed to. You may wish to transition slowly into changes, especially dietary as changing too quickly can create digestive upset.

FOOD

Type of Food: _____
Kibble Brand: _____ Qty: _____ Cup per meal Level or Heaping

Wet Brand: _____ Qty: Level or Heaping
 Teaspoon or Tablespoon

Feed Schedule:

	Breakfast	Meal 2	Meal 3	Dinner
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_____ x Day General times: _____ / _____ / _____ / _____ Take water away at bedtime.

..... If eats too fast, spread food out on plate or tray with sides or use a slow feed bowl.

ROUTINE

Generally, wakes @ _____ Bedtime @ _____

Naps _____

Potty usage: Potty Pads / Grass / Both / litter box _____

***For best potty training **ALWAYS immediately** after waking and after eating**

Daytime Routine? _____

Nighttime Routine? _____

LEARNING

Special Words: (such as "Go Potty", "No Bite", "Easy", "Gentle"....)

_____ = Potty _____

Learning or Training being reinforced: (i.e.: learning to sit, stay...)

SPECIAL

Medications if applicable:

Currently on _____ times per day _____ Doses remaining _____

for _____.

Notes, Personality, or Additional Behavior: _____

If recently neutered/spayed, please continue to monitor incision for redness, swelling, drainage, or opening. DO NOT allow licking of the incision site. Quite often a cone/surgical collar is necessary to prevent this. NO bathing or water to area for two weeks from surgery. Surgical Glue may be used. Water can compromise integrity of site and allow pathogens. Please read post-operative instructions. Your new family member may have experienced a lot of changes recently. Possibly spay/neuter surgery, transport to vet or rescue, loss of a sibling group, and unfamiliar new environment in your home. This can all be overwhelming, but animals are loving and resilient. They will adapt. Please consider these changes when setting your expectations. Time is required for them to feel safe and become accustomed to your routine. Time and positive reinforcement are your friends. Please read 333 rule attached.

THE 3 DAYS, 3 WEEKS, 3 MONTHS RULE OF ADOPTING A RESCUE DOG

The 3-3-3 Rule is a general guideline of the decompression process for a Canine in a new environment.

Every dog is unique and will adjust differently, so give them space and allow them to go at their own pace!

3D

THE FIRST 3 DAYS,

- GIVE THEM SPACE
- SET YOUR BOUNDARIES EARLY
- STAY CALM AND GIVE CLEAR DIRECTION
- START YOUR DAILY ROUTINE RIGHT AWAY
- DO NOT FORCE INTERACTION
- BE PATIENT AND STAY POSITIVE

3W

AFTER 3 WEEKS,

- WILL FEEL MORE SETTLED
- WILL START TO TEST BOUNDARIES
- WORK BASIC O (SIT, WAIT, DOWN, COME)
- GIVE CLEAR DIRECTION AT ALL TIMES
- GIVE CALM, CLEAR FEEDBACK TO THEM ON WHEN THEY ARE MISBEHAVING
- PRaise EVERY SUCCESS!

3M

AFTER 3 MONTHS,

- WILL START TO TRUST NEW HOME
- WILL UNDERSTAND ROUTINE
- DO NOT EASE OFF TRAINING, MORE IS BETTER!
- WILL START TO BUILD BOND - USE AFFECTION AS A RESOURCE!
- WILL BEGIN TO BUILD GREAT HABITS IF YOU FOLLOW THIS!

It Doesn't Happen Overnight

The 3/3/3/ rule is a general guideline for the adjustment period of a pet after adoption. Every pet is unique and will adjust differently. Please have patience and allow your new pet time to settle in.

		
<p>3 Days <i>To Decompress</i></p>	<p>3 Weeks <i>To Learn Your Routine</i></p>	<p>3 Months <i>To Start to Feel at Home</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeling overwhelmed • May feel scared or unsure of what's going on • Not yet comfortable to be "himself" • May not want to eat or drink • Shuts down and/or hides under furniture • Tests the boundaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Starts settling in • Feels more comfortable • Realizes this could be his forever home • Figures out his environment • Gets into a routine • Lets his guard down; beginning to show his true personality • Behavior issues may appear 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finally feels completely comfortable in his home • Begins to build trust and a true bond • Gains a complete sense of security with his new family • Sets into a routine <p style="text-align: right;">CatBehaviorSolutions.org</p>

FOSTER SUPPLIES PROVIDED

Animal Name : _____

Date: _____

Foster Name: _____

Phone: _____



Dog Foster Supplies:

- | | | | | | | |
|--|--|-----|---|-----|---|-----|
| <input type="checkbox"/> ID Tag | <input type="checkbox"/> Enclosed Metal Crat | S | / | M | / | L |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Leash | <input type="checkbox"/> Travel Crate | S | / | M | / | L |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Collar | <input type="checkbox"/> Playpen | 24" | / | 36" | / | 48" |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Poop / Waste Bags | <input type="checkbox"/> Dog Bed | | | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dog Food-Dry | <input type="checkbox"/> Grooming Supplies | | | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dog Food- Wet | <input type="checkbox"/> Toys | | | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Treats | <input type="checkbox"/> Plans for Training | | | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Flea & Heartworm Prevention | <input type="checkbox"/> Plans for Veterinary Care | | | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ | | | | | |

Cat Foster Supplies:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Premium Brand Cat Food | <input type="checkbox"/> Cat Carrier |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Safety Collar with ID Tag | <input type="checkbox"/> Cat Bed / Box with Towel or Blanket |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Food Dish | <input type="checkbox"/> Interactive Toys |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Water Bowl | <input type="checkbox"/> Grooming Supplies: Brush or Comb |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Litter | <input type="checkbox"/> Scratching Post or Scratching Pad |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Litter Box | <input type="checkbox"/> Plans for Veterinary Care |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Treats | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Flea & Heartworm Prevention | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |

Please understand that as a non-profit, we have limited resources to provide all necessities and additional enrichment for each animal in our care. We appreciate your care and effort as a foster. Unfortunately, we often do not receive the supplies back when foster care has ended. Every dollar saved is a dollar that can be used to further the cause of caring for and placing as many animals as possible in loving fur-ever homes. Most items can be sanitized and reused. Thank you, in advance for returning all supplies that have been

I understand that the pet supplies provided for foster are the property of Mercy Full Projects and are to be returned at the end of the foster period.

Foster Signature: _____