



# Foster Program Manual for Cats



**Mt. Pleasant**  
Animal Shelter

194 State Route 10 West  
East Hanover, NJ 07936  
973.386.0590  
[www.njshelter.org](http://www.njshelter.org)

# About Mt. Pleasant Animal Shelter

For almost 50 years, Mt. Pleasant Animal Shelter has been providing exceptional care for homeless animals, working tirelessly to find a permanent, loving home for every cat and dog we serve. Mt. Pleasant animal shelter is a registered 501(c)(3) organization that is solely funded by contributions, grants and bequests.

Our priority is to save abandoned animals within our community; however, our efforts don't end there. We also partner with shelters around the country to save at-risk animals from being euthanized. Adoptable animals reside with us, or with one of our fosters, until they find their forever home. We become their loving family until they find their new home.

## Our Vision

We envision a community of people and organizations committed to working together to eliminate the occurrence of abused, neglected and homeless animals.

## Our Mission

To build a community of people and organizations working together to save today's, and prevent tomorrow's, abused, neglected and homeless animals.

How we do this .....

- Deliver the highest level of animal care to prepare today's animals in need for their future homes
- Bring together the cats and dogs who need a loving family with the people who want them
- Provide community services and resources to ensure every animal has a safe and healthy life

## Our Values

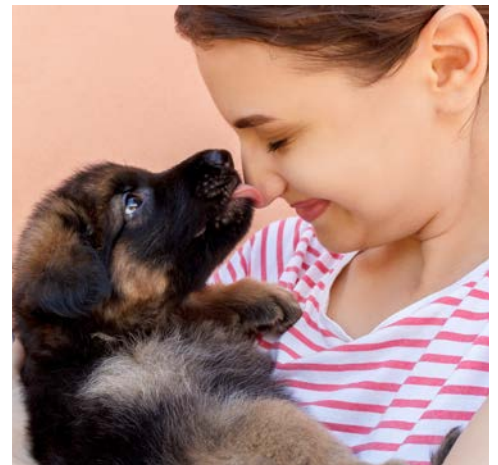
**Animal Focused:** Our highest priority is to provide the best care for our animals. We serve as the voice of our animals and bring the experience, knowledge and passion for animal welfare to ensure our animals find a loving home.

**Compassion:** We treat our animals, our animal welfare community and our staff with respect and dignity.

**Community Based:** We offer continued support to the adoptive families and their animals to ensure a safe, healthy and happy life together. We value our animal welfare community since we cannot achieve our mission without them.

**Personal Accountability:** Each person takes responsibility for their role and following through on commitments.

**Integrity:** All employees, directors and community members adhere to Mt. Pleasant Animal Shelter's values and principles. We strive to be timely, open and honest in our communications.



# Introduction

Thank you so much for your interest in fostering pets for Mt. Pleasant Animal Shelter. By opening your home to foster pets, you are not only helping to save lives, but you are also providing the individual attention and love these cats desperately need.

Once you have completed your foster application online, our foster coordinator will get in touch with you to sign you up for one of our scheduled orientation and training sessions. In the session, we will go over this manual and answer any questions you have about the program.

Our cat foster program is designed to help a cat get a second chance at finding a home — a chance they may not have received otherwise. Many of the cats who need foster homes require extra care and attention, which shelters often do not have the staff or resources to provide. But in a loving foster home, every cat can get the individual attention he or she needs to find a forever family.

Foster homes are asked to provide care for the cats, as well as transportation to and from veterinary appointments as needed, and transportation to Mt. Pleasant Animal Shelter regularly so foster pets can get an opportunity to meet prospective adopters. Care for foster cats includes feeding according to size and needs, exercise according to energy levels, and lots of play time and positive socialization.

Although fostering is a lot of work, it is a very rewarding experience. By participating in this program, you are saving lives and helping many different types of cats find the families they have been longing for. Through fostering, we can work together to save more lives.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### ***Where do the cats come from?***

Cats in need foster care come to us from two different situations:

**Owner Surrenders.** At times owners are unable to care for their animals and will ask for our help in finding them a new home. Our goal is to help every owner keep their pet, but in those occasions where that is not possible, we will take in the animal.

**Rescues.** We take in animals from other animal welfare organizations who might otherwise be euthanized for lack of space.

**Stays.** Generally, we do not take in strays as they are typically owned by someone or part of a feral community. On occasion, we may take in a stray, but those are on a case-by-case basis.

### ***What do foster families need to provide?***

Foster families need to provide:

- A healthy and safe environment for their foster cats
- Transportation to and from the shelter and all veterinary appointments as needed
- Socialization and cuddle time to help teach cats positive family and pet relationships
- Lots of exercise and positive stimulation to help them develop into great cats



## Frequently Asked Questions Continued

### ***How much time do I need to spend with a foster cat?***

As much time as you can. With that said, the amount of time will vary depending on the energy level and needs of the cat you are fostering. It is ideal to spend around two hours a day exercising and playing with your foster cat to ensure that he or she receives adequate socialization and stimulation.

### ***Can I foster cats even if I have a full-time job?***

Yes. The foster application is designed as a survey to help the foster coordinator match you with the best animal for your needs and your current schedule. If you have a full-time job, the foster coordinator will match you with a cat who may be OK alone during the workday. You would then just need to provide ample exercise before or after you go to work.

### ***Can I foster a cat if I do not have a fenced yard?***

Yes. We require that all foster cats be kept indoors for the duration of their stay in foster homes, so a fenced in yard is irrelevant.

### ***How long will the cat need to be in foster care?***

Ideally, foster cats stay in their assigned foster homes until they get adopted. Timelines vary depending on the condition of the foster cat. Foster homes are generally needed for cats with medical or behavioral issues that are best resolved in a home setting rather than a kennel environment. Different special needs require different amounts of time for healing.

### ***Will I need to give medicine to my foster cat?***

Almost all of the cats that we have in our foster program are from situations where they have been exposed to various illnesses. While we do our best to ensure that we are aware of all the conditions that a foster cat may have prior to going home, many illnesses have incubation periods, meaning symptoms can arise after you take a cat home. So, while some cats do not require any medicine, others may. If your foster cat needs medications, we can show you how to administer them before you take the animal home. Medications given to any of our animals must be prescribed by our shelter veterinarian.

### ***Can I let my foster cat play with my personal pets?***



No. Cats in shelters are very susceptible to illness and can carry or catch different diseases. Behaviors in the home can also be different than what has been observed at the shelter. If, for any reason, your personal pet becomes ill, or is injured by our foster pet, while you are fostering one of our shelter pets, we cannot be held liable or provide medical care for your personal pet.

## ***What if I want to adopt my foster cat?***

If you want to adopt a foster cat, you will need to complete an adoption application and follow the full adoption process. If you do decide to adopt your foster cat, please contact the foster coordinator right away. Foster parents have the right of first refusal if they wish to adopt their pet. Fosters can also recommend someone for adoption. Those recommendations will be looked at first in terms of adoption, however, no guarantee is made, as those people will need to be vetted by our adoption team.

## ***Who will take care of my foster cat if I need to go out of town?***

If you have travel plans while you are fostering for Mt. Pleasant Animal Shelter, you will need to contact the foster coordinator. Please provide at least one week's notice to ensure that we plan appropriately. If your trip is over a holiday, please provide a minimum of two weeks' notice.

You cannot leave your foster pet with an unauthorized person or pet sitter. We have specific training for foster parents, and pet sitters have not undergone that training or signed the release waivers for the foster program.

## ***What if my foster cat bites me?***

If any of your foster pets bite you and break skin, causing you to bleed, you need to report the bite to the foster coordinator within 24 hours of when the bite occurred. The law requires that we report all bites. The teeth of the animal, not the nails, must have broken the skin. If you are unsure, then please report the bite anyway.

## ***What if my foster cat is not working out?***

You are not required to continue to foster a cat if you feel it is not working out. We will work on moving your foster cat out as soon as possible but ask for understanding and patience. Please call the foster coordinator during business hours if this situation arises.

## **Preparing for Your Foster Cat**

When you take your foster cat home, he or she may be frightened or unsure about what is happening, so it's important not to overwhelm him or her. Prepare a special area for the foster cat to help ease his or her adjustment into a new home environment. Sometimes it is better to confine the foster cat to a small room or area at first, such as a bathroom, to let the cat adjust before giving him or her free rein in your home. Equip the room with food and water dishes and a litter box.

Another reason that we recommend a small room is because cats will typically hide in new environments. It is not uncommon for a foster cat to hide underneath a bed or in a dark, quiet place for the first couple of days. Isolating your foster cat when you first take her home allows you to know what room she is in and helps you to monitor her eating, drinking and potty habits more closely.

### ***We request that all foster cats be kept indoors only.***

During the first couple of weeks, minimize the people and pet introductions to your foster cat, so that the cat is only meeting immediate family. If you have other pets at home, it is especially important to keep them in separate spaces. Do not leave your foster cat unattended in your home with your personal pets.

## Supplies You Will Need

Mt. Pleasant Animal Shelter will provide you with any supplies that you may need. However, we greatly appreciate any help that you can provide in supplying items for your foster cat. Here is what you will need to help your foster cat make a smooth transition to living in your home:

- At least one bowl for food and one for water: Stainless steel or ceramic work best.
- A supply of wet and dry cat food: All cats are fed a mixture of wet and dry cat food in the morning and dry food throughout the day, unless a special diet is needed. We feed our pets with foods that do not contain food dyes or coloring.
- A soft place to sleep: Old towels or blankets work well.
- Litter: Please use clumping litter unless you are given other instructions. We recommend clumping litter for all cats old enough to know not to eat it. Typically, this occurs 3-4 weeks after weaning. If a kitten is younger than that, we recommend non-clumping to avoid GI damage if ingested.
- Scratching posts or trays: Try different types to see which the cat prefers.
- Cat treats: Giving treats is a good way to help train and build a positive relationship with your foster cat.
- Cat toys: Make sure the toys are durable and safe (without bits that will be harmful if swallowed).
- Grooming supplies: A well-groomed cat has a better chance of getting adopted.

## Cat-proofing Your Home

Foster cats come from a shelter environment, and even if they have previously lived in a home, we don't always know how they will react in a new home. So, before bringing home a new foster cat, you'll want to survey the area where you are going to keep the cat. Remove anything that would be unsafe or undesirable for the cat to chew on, and latch securely any cupboards that the foster cat could get into. Cats like to climb up on shelves or bookcases, so you'll want to remove anything that can be knocked down. People food and chemicals can be very harmful if consumed by cats, so please store them in a place that the foster cat cannot access.

- Never underestimate your foster cat's abilities. Here are some additional tips for cat-proofing your home:
- Make sure that all trash cans are covered or latched and keep them inside a closet. (Don't forget the bathroom trash bins.)
- Keep the toilet lids closed.
- Keep both people and pet food out of reach and off all counter tops.
- Move houseplants out of reach. Many house plants are toxic to cats and they like to chew on them.
- Make sure aquariums or cages that house small animals, like hamsters or fish, are securely out of reach of your foster cat.
- Remove medications, lotions, or cosmetics from any accessible surfaces.
- Move and secure all electrical and phone wires out of reach. Cats may chew on or get tangled in them.
- Pick up any clothing items that have buttons or strings, which can be harmful to your foster cat if consumed.
- Relocate knickknacks or valuables that your foster cat could knock down.



# Bringing Home Your Foster Cat

Taking care of a foster cat requires a commitment from you to make sure the cat is happy and healthy. Thank you so much for opening your heart and your home to these cats who desperately need your help. Without you, we could not save as many as we do.

## Choosing a foster cat

The foster coordinator will work with you to select a foster cat who meets your specific requirements. We will always do our best to match you with a cat who fits with your lifestyle and schedule.

When you and the foster coordinator have decided on a foster cat, an appointment will be scheduled so you can pick up the cat and any supplies that you will need. The appointment will be at the shelter where the cat is located. On occasion a cat may be picked up directly from another foster caregiver.

The foster coordinator will meet you at the shelter and introduce you to the cat. Together, you and the foster coordinator will decide if the cat is the right fit for you. Be honest: If you are not comfortable with anything about the animal you may be fostering, please tell the foster coordinator before you take the animal home.

## Children and cats

Since we do not always know a foster cat's history or tolerance level for different types of people and activities, please teach your children how to act responsibly and respectfully around your foster cat. We will do our best to place you with an appropriate animal for your home situation, but you should still supervise all interactions between children and your foster cat. Key things to remind your children:

- Always leave the foster cat alone when he/she is eating or sleeping. Some cats may nip or bite if bothered while eating or startled while sleeping.
- Do not tease or rile up the foster cat.
- Do not chase the foster cat around the house; it may scare him.
- Pick up the foster cat only when an adult is there to help. Cats can become scared when picked up, and they sometimes scratch with their sharp nails, even though they do not mean to cause harm.
- Be careful when opening and closing doors to not accidentally let the foster cat outside.

## Daily Care

### Feeding

All foster cats should be fed a diet of wet and dry food, unless otherwise specified by the foster coordinator. We ask that you use the food we provide or a food of similar or better quality. Feed your foster cat twice daily; the amount will be based on the age and weight of your foster cat. Make sure the cat always has access to fresh, clean water.

You can give your foster cat treats of any kind (unless he/she has known allergies, of course); giving treats helps you and your foster cat to bond with each other. You should limit treats to no more than 1-2 per day so it doesn't upset their stomachs or interfere with mealtimes. Keep in mind that some people food and house plants (which cats like to chew on) are poisonous for cats, so remove any plants or food from areas that your foster cat can access.



## Daily routine

When you first take your foster cat home, take care not to overwhelm her with too many new experiences all at once. Moving to a new environment is stressful in itself for many cats, so keep introductions to people and animals to a minimum during the first couple of weeks after you bring your foster cat home. It also helps to establish a daily routine of regularly scheduled feedings and play times.

In addition, on a daily basis, be aware of your foster cat's appetite and energy level. If it is not eating well or seems listless, something may be wrong medically. You might want to record your observations to make it easier to notice any health issues.

## Litter box habits

You can help your foster cat be more adoptable by paying close attention to his litter box habits and making the litter box as inviting as possible. The litter box should be located in a place that the cat can access easily. If you have other cats, there should be one litter box for each cat in the house, plus one extra. The litter boxes should be placed in quiet, low-traffic spots so that the cats are not startled when trying to take care of business.

We advise against the use of covered litter boxes because some cats do not like them, which can create litter box problems from the start. Covered litter boxes can trap odors inside the box, which is nice for you, but not for your cat. Cats are often quite fastidious; they are sensitive to the smell of urine and feces, as well as deodorizers.

You can also prevent litter box issues by keeping the litter box as clean as possible. Scoop out each litter box at least once daily and empty it completely to clean it every two weeks. When you clean the litter box, use a mild soap (such as dishwashing soap), not strong-smelling detergents or ammonia.

If your foster cat is not using the litter box, please notify the foster coordinator immediately so you can work on resolving the issue before not using the box becomes a habit. Keep in mind that a cat may miss the litter box if she has a medical issue like diarrhea or she may avoid the box if she has a urinary tract infection, which causes pain when urinating. If your foster cat has an accident, don't discipline or punish her. It will only teach her 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.

## Grooming

A clean and well-groomed cat has a better chance of getting adopted, so brush your foster cat regularly, especially if he has longer hair. Contact the foster coordinator if you feel that your foster cat needs to see a professional groomer. If you are comfortable with it, you can trim the cat's nails. But please be careful because you can cause pain and bleeding if you trim the nails too short. You can always schedule an appointment to bring your foster pet in to have its nails trimmed if they are uncomfortably long for the cat.

Cats do not generally like being bathed, so please do not give your foster cat any baths.

## Safety requirements

Foster cats must live indoors. If your foster cat seems very curious about going outside or is constantly at the door waiting for the right moment, please take extra precautions to ensure that he or she does not accidentally sneak out when you are coming or going. Please do not let your foster cat ride loose in a car. Always use a carrier to transport your foster cat to and from appointments.







## **Mental stimulation and exercise**

Because play time provides stimulation, encourages socialization, and releases excess energy, provide your foster cat with at least one or two play sessions per day. The length of the play sessions will vary, depending on the cat's age and health. Try a variety of toys (balls, squeaky toys, feather toys, etc.) to see which ones your foster cat prefers. Cat toys do not have to be fancy or expensive. Cats often enjoy playing with something as simple as a paper bag (remove the handles for safety) or a box with holes cut in the sides.

Do not leave your foster cat alone with any toys that could be easily ingested or cause harm to the cat. Examples are string toys, yarn, and Da Bird (feathers dangling from a string and wand). Toys such as ping-pong balls and toilet paper tubes are safe. Discourage your foster cat from play-biting your hands and feet. This is something that adopters may not find desirable.

## **Helping Your Foster Cat Get Adopted**

### **When is my foster cat ready to go up for adoption?**

All animals up for adoption are spayed or neutered and deemed healthy enough to go to a home by the shelter veterinarian. When you pick up your foster cat from the shelter, the foster coordinator will go over the medical records for the cat and determine what medical appointments the foster cat needs before he/she can go to find a new home.

Before coming to the center, all foster cats must have a basic wellness check with our shelter veterinarian. If your foster cat has any medical issues beyond the wellness check, they will need to be treated and fully resolved before your foster cat becomes available for adoption. Medical issues could include treatment for respiratory illness, dental surgery or spay/neuter surgery.

Animals waiting to be approved for adoption, can be in a "Foster to Adopt" situation. This means that a potential adopter may foster the animal until it meets the requirements to be formally adopted.

### **How often do I bring my foster cat to the shelter?**

All foster pets are frequently checked by the veterinary team and appointments for meet and greets with potential adopters will be scheduled as well. In these cases, the foster will be responsible for bringing the foster pet to the shelter during business hours. In the event an animal is scheduled for a spay/neuter, the foster pet must be brought to the shelter the day before the scheduled surgery.

### **How can I help my foster cat find a great home?**

As you get to know your foster cat, we ask that you stay in constant contact with the foster coordinator so that he/she can update the foster animal's biography online to reflect accurate information about the cat's preferences and quirks. Some people write their own biography for their foster cats, which we encourage, though they may be edited. We also welcome any quality photos that you take of your foster cat in your home; we can use the photos to create a kennel card and accompany the online biography. Please send the info about your foster cat and photos to [foster@njshleter.org](mailto:foster@njshleter.org).

You can also use social media or your own personal networks to find potential adopters for your foster pet. Please keep in mind that anyone who shows interest in adopting your foster cat will need to go through the adoption screening process and speak with a staff member before taking the animal home.

## What if I know someone who is interested in adopting my foster cat?

If someone you know is interested in adopting the cat, please contact the foster coordinator and give him/her the details. Also, tell the prospective adopter to start the adoption process (visiting the adoption center or filling out an adoption application) as soon as possible. Once the cat is up for adoption, we cannot hold him/her for anyone, but we do want to accommodate referrals from foster parents if we can.

## Will it be hard to say goodbye to my foster cat?

Saying goodbye can be the most difficult part of fostering, but keep in mind that many more cats in our shelter need wonderful foster homes like yours. Remember, you are playing a crucial role in helping to save animals.

## Medical and Emergency Protocols

When you pick up your foster cat, you will receive information that specifies the date for your next appointment. You are responsible for attending appointments for your cat's vaccines and/or treatments on the date indicated. All appointments will be by Mt. Pleasant Animal Shelter.

If you are fostering a cat who is on medications, please make sure that he/she gets all prescribed doses. Do not end medication early for any reason. If your foster animal has not responded to prescribed medications after five days (or in the time instructed by a veterinarian), please contact the foster coordinator.

### Veterinary care

Mt. Pleasant Animal Shelter provides all medical care for our foster animals at our approved veterinary clinics. Because we are ultimately responsible for your foster cat's well-being, our staff must authorize all treatment for foster cats at our approved veterinary partners.

**For non-emergency situations**, please understand that our veterinary team may not be available for same-day appointments. We ask that you schedule basic non-emergency appointments (drop-off, pick-up, vaccines, and supply pick-ups) at least 24 hours in advance.

***The shelter medical team is responsible for all medical care and treatment from outside veterinarians without authorization is not permitted.*** Remember, foster parents will be responsible for payment of any medical care if they take their foster animal to a veterinarian without authorization from the foster coordinator or shelter veterinarian.



## Signs of illness and what to do next

Cats generally do a good job of masking when they do not feel well, so determining if your foster cat is under the weather will require diligent observation of the cat's daily activity and appetite levels. It is a good idea to keep track of these levels in a journal. You will also want to record any of the following symptoms, which could be signs of illness.

**Eye discharge.** It is normal for cats to have some discharge from their eyes when they wake up and some may have more than others, depending on the breed. But if your foster cat has yellow or green discharge or swelling around the eyes (making it hard for him to open his eyes), or the third eyelid is showing, you need to contact the foster coordinator to schedule a vet appointment.

**Sneezing and nasal discharge.** Sneezing can be common in a cat recovering from an upper respiratory infection. If the sneezing becomes more frequent, watch for discharge coming from the nose. If the discharge is clear, the infection is probably viral, and medication may not be necessary. You can try nebulizing the cat to relieve her discomfort. Nebulizing can be done in two ways: (1) place the cat in the bathroom with a hot shower running (do not place the cat in the shower); (2) put the cat in a carrier, cover it with a towel, and place a nebulizer or humidifier under the towel.

If the discharge becomes colored, contact the foster coordinator to schedule a vet appointment because the cat may have a bacterial infection. Be sure to monitor the cat's breathing. If the cat starts to breathe with an open mouth or wheeze, call the foster coordinator immediately and follow the emergency contact protocol. Also, once you notice nasal discharge, monitor the cat's eating habits more closely to ensure that he or she is still eating.

If your cat is sneezing or has nasal discharge, please make an appointment to have them seen by the medical team.

**Loss of appetite.** Your foster cat may be stressed after arriving in your home, and stress can cause lack of appetite. But if the cat has not eaten after 24 hours, please notify the foster coordinator. Also, if the cat has been eating well, but then stops eating for 12 to 24 hours, call the foster coordinator to set up a vet appointment. Please do not change the cat's diet without contacting the foster department. An abrupt change in diet can cause diarrhea, which can lead to dehydration.

**Lethargy.** The activity level of your foster cat will vary depending on age and personality. Keeping an activity log and journal will help you notice whether your foster cat is less active than he normally is. If the cat cannot be roused or seems weak and unable to stand, it's an emergency, so start the emergency contact protocol.

**Dehydration.** Dehydration is usually associated with diarrhea, vomiting and/or loss of appetite. To test for dehydration, gently pinch the cat's skin around the scruff area. If the skin stays taut, the cat is dehydrated. Please call the foster coordinator the next business day to schedule a vet appointment.

**Vomiting.** Sometimes cats will vomit up a thick tubular hairball with bile or other liquids. This is normal, but please call the foster coordinator if the cat has out-of-the-ordinary vomiting that does not occur in conjunction with a hairball. Don't worry about one or two vomiting episodes as long as the cat is acting normally otherwise: eating, active, no diarrhea.

**Pain or strain while urinating.** When a cat first goes into a foster home, he or she may not urinate due to stress. If the cat hasn't urinated in more than 24 hours, however, please contact the foster coordinator. Also, **if you notice the cat straining to urinate with little or no results, or crying out when urinating, please contact the foster coordinator immediately because it may be indicative of an infection or a urethral obstruction, which can be life-threatening.**

**Diarrhea.** It is important to monitor your foster cat's pooping habits daily. Soft stool is normal for the first two or three days after taking a cat home, most likely caused by stress and a change in food. If your foster cat has liquid stool, however, please contact the foster department so that an appointment can be scheduled to ensure that the cat doesn't need medications. Keep in mind that diarrhea will dehydrate the cat, so be proactive about contacting the foster department. If your foster cat has bloody or mucoid diarrhea, please contact the foster coordinator immediately and start the emergency contact protocol.

**Frequent ear scratching.** Your foster cat may have ear mites if she scratches her ears often and/or shakes her head frequently, or if you see a dark discharge that resembles coffee grounds when you look in her ears. Ear mites can be treated by a veterinarian, so please call or email the foster coordinator for a medical appointment.

**Swollen, irritated ears.** If your foster cat has irritated, swollen or red or pink ears that smell like yeast, he may have an ear infection called otitis. It's more common in dogs, but some cats do get it. If you see these signs, please contact the foster coordinator.

**Hair loss.** Please contact the foster department if you notice any hair loss on your foster cat. It is normal for cats to have thin fur around the lips, eyelids and in front of the ears, but clumpy patches of hair loss or thinning hair can indicate ringworm or dermatitis. It is important to check your foster cat's coat every day.

## Common ailments in animals from shelters

Shelter cats may suffer from upper respiratory infection, giardia, or intestinal parasites. Symptoms of upper respiratory infection include sneezing (often with colored discharge), discharge from the nose and/or eyes, decrease in appetite, dehydration, and slight lethargy. Symptoms of giardia or intestinal parasites include vomiting, diarrhea (often with a pungent odor) and/or dehydration. **If your foster cat is displaying one or more of these signs, please contact the foster coordinator. These ailments can worsen if left untreated.**

## Criteria for emergencies

What constitutes a medical emergency in a cat? A good rule of thumb is any situation in which you would call 911 for a person. Here are some specific symptoms that could indicate an emergency:

- Not breathing or labored breathing
- Signs of extreme dehydration: dry gums, weakness, vomiting, not urinating, skin tenting (when the skin is pulled up, it stays there)
- Abnormal lethargy or unable to stand
- Unconsciousness or unable to wake up
- Cold to the touch
- Broken bones
- Any trauma: hit by a car, dropped, stepped on
- A large wound or profuse bleeding that does not stop when pressure is applied
- Loss of appetite for more than 24 hours

If your foster cat displays any of these symptoms, please follow the emergency phone protocol. If the animal is vomiting or has diarrhea, but is still active, eating and drinking, you can probably wait until the next day to get help.

If you think your foster pet may incur permanent damage or pass away if not seen by a veterinarian immediately, please proceed to the approved emergency clinic and start the emergency phone chain on the way.

## **Emergency Phone Protocol:**

Call the shelter at 973-386-0590 Monday – Sunday between 8 am and 4 pm

Rayan Ramadan, Foster Coordinator  
Brisa Prada, Veterinary & Foster Assistant  
foster@njshelter.org  
973-386-0590

Taylor Woehle, Lead Veterinary Technician  
vettechmanager@njshelter.org  
973-386-0590 x 15

Veterinary Technician Team  
vettech@njshelter.org  
973-386-0590 x 15

### **For after hours emergencies the shelter is affiliated with:**

Veterinary Emergency Group  
<https://veterinaryemergencygroup.com>  
(multiple locations in NJ)  
201-438-7122

## Behavior Support

One of your goals as a foster parent is to help prepare your foster cat for living successfully in a home. So, we ask that you help your foster cat to develop good habits and skills through the use of positive reinforcement, which builds a bond of trust between you and your foster pet. The basic idea is to reward desirable behaviors and ignore unwanted behaviors.

You must not punish a cat for a behavior that you find undesirable because punishment is ineffective at eliminating the behavior. If the cat is doing something undesirable, distract him or her before the behavior occurs. It is also important for every human in the foster home to stick to the rules established for your foster cats, which will help them to learn faster.

Some foster cats will have behavioral issues, which we are aware of at the time of their rescue. Some of these behavior challenges are fearfulness, house soiling or aggression toward other animals. We will only place cats with behavioral issues with a person who feels comfortable working with the cat on his/her particular issues. We will provide that person with all the necessary information so that proper care and training can be given to the foster cat.

If you feel unable to manage any behavior that your foster cat is exhibiting, please contact the foster coordinator during business hours to discuss the issue. We will guide you and help in every way that we can. Thank you so much for opening your heart and your home to foster pets. Together, we can save more lives.

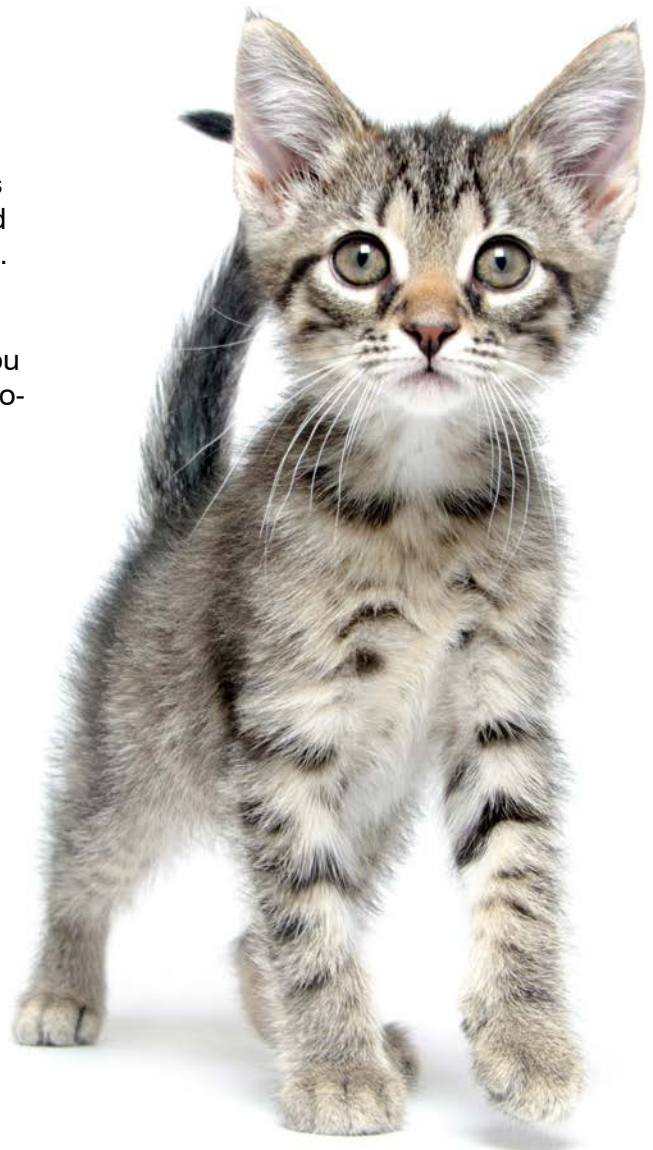
## Join the Fear Free Movement

Mt. Pleasant Animal Shelter has joined Fear Free Shelters to help educate our community on ways to recognize and reduce fear, anxiety and stress for the animals in our care.

To join the movement, please send an email to [Outreach@njshelter.org](mailto:Outreach@njshelter.org) to receive instructions on how you can become Fear Free certified. Learn more about this program at [www.fearfreeshelters.com](http://www.fearfreeshelters.com).



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East Hanover, NJ 07936  
973-386-0590  
[info@njshelter.org](mailto:info@njshelter.org)

Monday-Sunday 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.  
Due to COVID-19, admittance to the shelter is by appointment only.