



BOTTLE FEEDING BEST PRACTICES

for neonatal kittens



Ensure the Kitten is Alert

Kittens should be fully awake and alert before and during a feeding. If a kitten is sleeping, wait until they wake up for their next meal.



Positioning is Key

A natural, belly-down position is best for feeding kittens.



Use Fresh Formula

Formula should be less than 24 hours old — ideally less than 12 hours old.



Check Nipple Flow

Formula should drip slowly from the bottle when held upside down. *Ensure the bottle cap is loose to maximize airflow.*



Administer Medication

Before or after feeding, if needed.



Assist With Elimination

Kittens may need to be eliminated before they will nurse. If a kitten isn't latching, try stimulating before feeding to make sure they are not in any discomfort.



Prioritize Cleanliness

Keep a kitten clean with warm water and gentle motions to prevent infections.



Above all: be patient and observant!





TROUBLESHOOTING

Why won't my kitten nurse?

-  **Kitten is cold or dehydrated**
Don't feed your kitten until they are stable, warm and hydrated
-  **Kitten is not hungry**
Especially with new intakes of healthy kittens older than 2 weeks
-  **Formula is too cold or hot**
Formula, bottle and nipple should all be warm
-  **Formula is bad**
Try a new bag, your kitten might not like the taste if your formula is bad
-  **Kitten may need to eliminate**
Make sure your kitten has urinated/defecated before a feeding
-  **Kitten is not fully awake**
Your kitten should be alert for their feeding
-  **The nipple opening is too small**
Formula should drip slowly when held upside down
-  **Kitten has a physical deformity**
This should be noted during the intake exam (cleft palate, etc.)
-  **Kitten has an illness**
A big red flag! Seek medical attention for URI, panleukopenia, etc.
-  **Kitten is old enough for solid food**
Try offering your kitten solid food instead

