

FOSTERING FAQS

WHAT EXACTLY DO FOSTER FAMILIES DO?

They provide love, love, and more love. And, of course, food, water, shelter and exercise. Depending on the foster animal's needs, foster families may also be asked to administer medication, drive to vet appointments and adoption events, help train the animal to respond to basic cues or help improve social skills. In other words, foster families love and treat foster animals as if they were their own.

Many rescue groups will pay the costs associated with fostering an animal so that the foster family doesn't have to. Some rescue groups reimburse for supplies such as food, litter, toys and veterinary costs. Others may just provide all the supplies your foster animal needs. Be sure to find out the rescue group's policies before you take your foster animal home.

HOW WILL FOSTERING AN ANIMAL AFFECT MY OWN PETS?

No one knows your pets like you do, but they may actually be your best assistants. If your foster animal is shy, your pets may be able to model good behaviors and help your foster animal to socialize.

But, at first, your pets may get a little upset at the foster animal's arrival. That's why, for everyone's safety, you should isolate your foster animal from your pets until they get used to one another. It's also a good idea to make sure your pets are up-to-date on their vaccinations.

For more information about making introductions, read "[Introducing a New Cat](#)," "[Introducing a Cat and a Dog](#)" and "[Introducing Dogs to Each Other](#)" in the [Resources](#) section of the Best Friends website. Also, be sure to talk with staff at the rescue organization for which you're fostering to determine what's best in each situation.

WHY DO PEOPLE VOLUNTEER TO FOSTER?

Fostering is a wonderful way to help save an animal's life, and it's also a very rewarding experience. Here are a few other reasons why people foster:

- It's a volunteer job that doesn't require you to show up at a specific time for a certain number of hours.
- For those who can't adopt a pet right now, it's a great way to enjoy a pet without making a lifetime commitment to the animal.
- Fostering is a great "test drive" to see how a permanent pet would fit into your lifestyle.

DO I QUALIFY TO FOSTER AN ANIMAL?

If you love animals, you probably qualify. It is easier if you've had pets before, but most rescue groups and shelters are happy to provide any information you need to make fostering a pleasant experience.

In some instances, an animal needs a particular kind of foster home. The foster pet might require a well-fenced yard or her own area away from other pets, or she may have special needs that require giving medication. But don't worry: Your rescue group or shelter will make every effort to match you with a foster animal who's the right fit for you.

HOW MUCH TIME IS INVOLVED IN FOSTERING A PET?

That depends on who you foster. Newborn orphaned kittens, for example, require feeding every few hours and a shy pet might need extra socialization time. You can discuss your time availability with the rescue group or shelter to determine what type of pet you'll be best suited to foster.

HOW LONG WILL THE FOSTER ANIMAL BE WITH ME?

It's really hard to say. Your foster animal might get adopted right away or it could take a bit of time before he or she finds the right home.

IS IT MY JOB TO FIND A PERMANENT HOME FOR MY FOSTER ANIMAL?

It depends on the arrangement that you have with the rescue group or shelter for which you are fostering. Rescue groups and shelters frequently participate in adoption events, and some of them ask foster families to bring their foster animals to the events. Since you've been taking care of the foster pet in your home, you are an invaluable resource for potential adopters because you can give them firsthand insight into your foster animal's personality, likes and dislikes, and fun quirks.

Even if you're not required to bring your foster pet to adoption events, the rescue group or shelter for which you are fostering will certainly appreciate any efforts that you make to help your foster animal find a home. One way to do that is to let all your friends, family and anyone else in your social circle know that you have a wonderful pet available for adoption.

AND WHEN IT'S TIME TO SAY GOOD-BYE?

Be brave and keep this in mind: You brought this homeless animal into your heart and home, helping him to overcome whatever obstacles he faced, and now all of that love and care will benefit another family. Remember, you helped to save a life by fostering this pet, and you can save more by continuing to foster.

Some people like to be there when their foster pet goes home with his new family. Seeing your foster animal ride off happily into the sunset will help you remember that he has found a loving new home. A lot of foster families even get photos and updates of their old charges enjoying their new homes.

ISN'T FOSTERING EMOTIONALLY HARD ON THE ANIMALS?

Living in a loving home with a warm bed and enjoying toys, quality care and friendship is not hard for an animal. Your foster pet will be sad to say goodbye, but then he's off to an even brighter future.

Foster homes are a lifesaving bridge for homeless pets, giving them an opportunity to experience life in a house and to learn that people can be kind, food is available, and there is a warm, secure place to sleep. When your foster pet goes to her permanent home, chances are she'll adjust more easily than if she hadn't spent time in a foster home. There's no shortage of animals who need this preparation time before finding their own family.

HOW DO I GIVE FOSTERING A TRY?

If you're ready to help save the life of a homeless pet, please visit our [Foster](#) information section.

Thank you so much for considering fostering an animal. Together, we can Save Them All®.