

**What If My Foster Animal Becomes Ill or Injured?**

As a foster parent we ask that you carefully monitor the health of your foster animals. If you notice any changes in the health or behavior of your foster animals, please notify the Foster Department right away. Catching an illness or injury early could save your foster animal’s life. The most common ailments that occur with foster animals are Kennel Cough, Feline Upper Respiratory Infection, and diarrhea.

**Use the following guide to determine the severity of your foster animal’s symptom(s) and what measures should be taken.**

**COMMON SYMPTOMS**

If you observe any of the following symptoms, or any other concerning health issues, in your foster animal(s) but they appear stable please notify the Foster Department at **Foster@sspca.org**. Your foster animal may or may not be scheduled for a vet exam depending on symptom.

The best way to notify the Foster Department of a health concern is via email. Email allows multiple staff members to easily track your foster animal’s history. Please attach photos or videos if possible, as they can be very helpful in determining what type of medical issue your foster animal is having. You can call the office phone line at **(916)504-2808**.

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| * External parasites such as fleas or ticks
* Internal parasites (worms in feces)
* Redness, swelling, flaky, or excessively itchy skin
* Reoccurring loose stool
* Onset of liquid or watery diarrhea
* Noticeable change in color of stool (grey, yellow, green) or presence of light-colored blood
* Minor injury such as a superficial scrape, minor limping
* Discharge from the eyes or nose
* Squinting or swelling eye(s)
* Frequent coughing (often sounds like hacking or gagging)
* Frequent sneezing
* Has not had a bowel movement in 24 hours (kittens/puppies) – 48 hours (cats/dogs)
* Has not eaten in 6-8 hours (kittens/puppies) –24 hours (cats/dogs)
* Noticeable decrease in energy level
* Weight loss
* Excessive scratching at, swelling, redness, discharge, or foul odor from ears
* Onset of vomiting (not caused by car ride)
* Ingested a substance other than the food provided that is not poisonous, but could potentially be harmful to a dog/cat
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**EMERGENCY SYMPTOMS**

If you note any of the following symptoms or feel as though your foster animal needs immediate veterinary assistance, please follow the emergency protocol.

**If you have an emergency between the hours of 7am –7pm:**

* Call the ***Emergency Cell at (916)296-3688*** to notify SSPCA staff of the emergency. In the case that the ER Cell goes to voicemail, please leave a message with your name, foster animal’s name, and the nature of the emergency.
* Then, bring the foster animal to the Sacramento SPCA to be examined right away. If none of the front desks are currently open, please knock on any door or enter the side gate to access the back of the shelter to locate a staff member.

**If you have an emergency between the hours of 7pm –7am:**

* If your foster animal is having a life-or-death medical emergency that cannot wait until 7am when SSPCA staff arrives at the shelter, please take them to an emergency veterinary clinic. Outside veterinary clinics will be advised to provide basic ER care to stabilize your foster animal until it can be transferred to the SSPCA or to perform humane euthanasia if needed. Outside veterinary clinics will not be able to provide bloodwork, surgeries, x-rays, or other extensive procedures.
* If you need to take your foster animal to an outside veterinary clinic, please leave a voicemail on the ER Cell or send an email to the Foster Department to notify us of the situation. You will be asked to provide an invoice from the veterinary clinic in order to receive a reimbursement.

***If your foster animal is showing more than one of the following symptoms, it is likely a serious medical emergency and needs to be seen by a veterinarian as soon as possible.***

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| * Trouble breathing (choking, labored, open mouth breathing or gasping for air)
* Sudden swelling of the face or neck
* Dark colored blood in stool
* Liquid diarrhea with no control of bowels (animal is defecating without seeming to realize it is doing so)
* Vomiting repeatedly
* Very lethargic or not responding to normal stimuli
* Kitten/puppy has not eaten or drank water in 12 hours
* Unable to walk
* Severe, traumatic injury such as a broken bone or deep wound that may require stitches
* Ingested an non-edible object or toxic substance
* Male cat is straining to urinate (getting in and out of litter box frequently with little to no urine present)
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