

# Kitten and Puppy Bottle Feeding Problems and Solutions Chart

## Do's and Dont's

- ✓ Weigh kittens or puppies daily
- ✓ Warm milk to 95-100°F before feeding
- ✓ Use the Maddie's Bottle Feeding and Stomach Capacity Chart for kittens or puppies
- ✓ Burp your kitten or puppy after every feeding
- ✓ Stimulate orphaned kittens or puppies to pee and poop
- ✗ Never feed a chilled kitten or puppy
- ✗ Never feed a kitten or puppy like a human baby; their feet should be toward the ground
- ✗ Never use a nipple tip that extends past your kitten's or puppy's tongue
- ✗ Don't use homemade milk-replacers long-term; they are only for emergency uses

NOTE: Kittens or puppies can have health problems directly related to the bottle feeding process. If they are otherwise healthy, some of these problems can be resolved at home. If none of the solutions below work, if they appear to be sick, or if any of their littermates have died unexpectedly, contact your foster caregiver immediately. Delayed veterinary care could lead to a negative outcome or longer recovery time.

What You See	Possible Causes	Solution
Coughing, Difficult or Labored Breathing	Inhalation (aspiration) of milk into lungs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If they cough for more than a few minutes or have trouble breathing, contact your foster coordinator immediately to arrange for emergency veterinary care.</li> </ul>
Not Taking the Bottle	Chilled kitten or puppy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See the <u>Maddie's Kitten and Puppy Temperature Chart</u> for normal body temperature.</li> <li>• Warm them up slowly with a Snuggle Safe® disc, hot water bottles, or rice packs.</li> <li>• Wrap the heat source in a towel to slow down warming and prevent burning of the kitten or puppy.</li> </ul>
	Milk is too cold	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Warm milk to 95-100°F using a warm water bath; avoid warming up in the microwave.</li> </ul>
	Not hungry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If kitten or puppy is alert and responsive and acting okay otherwise, use a cotton swab to rub white corn syrup on the gums. Wait 30 mins - 1 hour and try feeding again.</li> </ul>
	Sick, lethargic, and/or low blood sugar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use a cotton swab to rub white corn syrup on the gums.</li> <li>• Contact your foster coordinator to arrange for immediate or emergency veterinary care.</li> </ul>
	Additional advice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If your kitten or puppy goes for longer than 6 hours without taking the bottle, contact your foster coordinator to arrange for emergency veterinary care.</li> </ul>
Diarrhea	Overfeeding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weigh the kitten or puppy.</li> <li>• Verify the recommended food amount on the Maddie's Bottle Feeding Charts.<sup>1</sup></li> <li>• If feeding the right amount, try smaller amounts more frequently (every 2-3 hours).</li> </ul>
	Milk replacer too concentrated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If using powdered milk replacer, first double-check the label directions for mixing.</li> <li>• Temporarily dilute the milk replacer 50:50 with Pedialyte® for 24 hours.</li> </ul>
	Unclean bottle or nipple	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clean with dish soap and warm water between uses.</li> <li>• Sterilize in boiling water before first use, once every 24 - 48 hours, or between litters.</li> </ul>
	Sour milk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refrigerate leftover milk replacer in clean, closed containers for no more than 24 hours.</li> <li>• Throw milk replacer away if left out at room temperature for longer than 1 hour, previously warmed up, or contaminated with saliva.</li> </ul>



What You See	Possible Causes	Solution
Diarrhea	Digestive system has not adjusted to the milk replacer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Temporarily dilute the milk replacer 50:50 with Pedialyte® for 24 hours.</li> <li>Add a pinch of probiotic powder, Fortiflora®, to the bottle.</li> <li>Swap to a different brand of milk replacer.</li> </ul>
	Intestinal parasites (worms)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contact your foster coordinator to discuss de-worming.</li> </ul>
Vomiting	Overfeeding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Weigh the kitten or puppy.</li> <li>Verify the recommended food amount on the Maddie's Bottle Feeding Charts.<sup>1</sup></li> <li>If feeding the right amount, try smaller amounts more frequently (every 2-3 hours).</li> </ul>
	Milk replacer too concentrated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If using powdered milk replacer, first double-check the label directions for mixing.</li> <li>Temporarily dilute the milk replacer 50:50 with Pedialyte® for 24 hours.</li> </ul>
	Milk coming out too fast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Milk is coming out too fast if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is dripping faster than 1-2 drops per second.</li> <li>It is seen coming out of the kitten's or puppy's nose.</li> <li>The kitten or puppy is swallowing more frequently than every 2-3 suckles.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Get a new nipple. Poke a hole in the tip with a hot needle or cut a snip in an "X" shape. See <a href="#">Maddie's How to Bottle Feed Kittens and Puppies</a> for a video on how to do this.</li> </ul>
	Milk too cold	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Warm milk to 95-100°F using a warm water bath; avoid warming up in the microwave.</li> </ul>
	Unclean bottle or nipple	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clean with dish soap and warm water between uses.</li> <li>Sterilize in boiling water before first use, once every 24 - 48 hours, or between litters.</li> </ul>
	Sour milk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refrigerate leftover milk replacer in clean, closed containers for no more than 24 hours.</li> <li>Throw milk replacer away if left out at room temperature for longer than 1 hour, previously warmed up, or contaminated with saliva.</li> </ul>
Constipation	Milk replacer too concentrated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If using powdered milk replacer, first double-check the label directions for mixing.</li> <li>Temporarily dilute the milk replacer 50:50 with Pedialyte® for 24 hours.</li> </ul>
	Dehydration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See the Dehydration section below.</li> </ul>
	Orphans: Need stimulation to pee and poop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Check out: <a href="#">How to Stimulate an Orphaned Kitten or Puppy to Pee and Poop.</a></li> </ul>
	Additional advice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Swap to a different brand of milk replacer.</li> <li>Temporarily dilute the milk replacer 50:50 with Pedialyte® for 24 hours.</li> <li>Kittens and puppies normally poop once every 1 - 2 days. If they haven't pooped in 2 days or more, are crying, or straining, contact your foster coordinator immediately. An enema may be needed.</li> <li>Don't give mineral oil to your kitten or puppy (by mouth or by bottle).</li> </ul>
Distended Belly	Overfeeding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Weigh the kitten or puppy.</li> <li>Verify the recommended food amount on the Maddie's Bottle Feeding Charts.<sup>1</sup></li> <li>If feeding the right amount, try smaller amounts more frequently (every 2-3 hours).</li> </ul>
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What You See	Possible Causes	Solution
Distended Belly	Milk too cold	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Warm milk to 95–100°F using a warm water bath; avoid warming up in the microwave.</li> </ul>
	Chilled kitten or puppy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See the <a href="#">Maddie’s Kitten and Puppy Temperature Chart</a> for normal body temperature.</li> <li>Warm them up slowly with a Snuggle Safe® disc, hot water bottles, or rice packs.</li> <li>Wrap the heat source in a towel to slow down warming and prevent burning of the kitten or puppy.</li> </ul>
	Swallowing air while nursing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When bottle feeding, position the kitten or puppy with their feet down (sternal), and with head and neck stretched upward and forward. Don’t let the neck extend too far back.</li> <li>Avoid air in the nipple by holding the bottle upright; stopping feeding before the amount of milk in the bottle is low; and not shaking the bottle, creating bubbles.</li> <li>Burp your kitten or puppy after every feeding.</li> </ul>
	Constipation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See the Constipation section above.</li> </ul>
	Orphans: Need stimulation to pee and poop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Check out: <a href="#">How to Stimulate an Orphaned Kitten or Puppy to Pee and Poop.</a></li> </ul>
	Intestinal parasites (worms)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contact your foster coordinator to discuss de-worming.</li> </ul>
	Fluid in the abdomen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contact your foster coordinator to arrange for immediate or emergency veterinary care.</li> </ul>
Restless and Crying	Hungry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Weigh the kitten or puppy.</li> <li>Verify the recommended food amount on the <a href="#">Maddie’s Bottle Feeding Charts</a>.<sup>1</sup></li> <li>If feeding the right amount, try smaller amounts more frequently (every 2–3 hours).</li> </ul>
	Uncomfortable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Check for constipation; see the constipation section above.</li> <li>Contact your foster coordinator to arrange for immediate or emergency veterinary care.</li> </ul>
Weight Loss or Lack of Weight Gain	Underfeeding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Weigh the kitten or puppy.</li> <li>Verify the recommended food amount on the <a href="#">Maddie’s Bottle Feeding Charts</a>.<sup>1</sup></li> <li>If feeding the right amount, try smaller amounts more frequently (every 2–3 hours).</li> </ul>
	Milk replacer too dilute	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If using powdered milk replacer, first double-check the label directions for mixing.</li> <li>If diluting the milk replacer, cut back on the amount of Pedialyte® or water added.</li> <li>Try feeding your kitten or puppy more frequently (every 2–3 hours).</li> </ul>
	Fading Kitten or Puppy Syndrome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If the kitten or puppy appears to be sick or lethargic, or does not start putting on weight within 1–2 days of trying the above solutions, contact your foster coordinator to arrange for immediate or emergency veterinary care.</li> </ul>
Dehydration	Underfeeding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Weigh the kitten or puppy.</li> <li>Verify the recommended food amount on the <a href="#">Maddie’s Bottle Feeding Charts</a>.<sup>1</sup></li> <li>If feeding the right amount, try smaller amounts more frequently (every 2–3 hours).</li> </ul>
	Not Taking the Bottle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See the <a href="#">Not Taking the Bottle</a> section above.</li> </ul>
	Diarrhea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See the <a href="#">Diarrhea</a> section above.</li> </ul>
	Vomiting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See the <a href="#">Vomiting</a> section above.</li> </ul>
	Additional Advice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dehydration is difficult to assess in a very young kitten or puppy (0–4 weeks).</li> <li>Temporarily dilute milk replacer 50:50 with Pedialyte® to increase fluid intake.</li> <li>Contact your foster coordinator to arrange for immediate or emergency veterinary care.</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Maddie’s Bottle Feeding and Stomach Capacity Chart for [kittens](#) or [puppies](#).