



Caring Hearts Cat Rescue & Sanctuary

POTENTIAL INDICATORS OF AN UNHEALTHY KITTEN

Foster carers with young kittens should keep an eye out for the following symptoms, as these may be an indication of underlying illness (treatable or otherwise) or failure to thrive. It is important for foster carers to get their kittens checked by a veterinarian as soon as any of the following signs are noticed so that they can be examined and treated accordingly (early detection generally results in more favourable outcomes for the animal/s concerned):

Non-specific signs of illness:

- Failure to gain weight over a few days
- Stunting (failure to reach body sizes that are appropriate for age)
- Loss of weight over a couple of measurements (weighing daily is important)
- Persistently thin, ribby condition
- Inappetence – not eating or poor appetite
- Excessive and persistent weakness or sleepiness (a low-energy, listless kitten)
- Sudden death of one or more of a litter – should indicate an issue with the litter in general
- Excessive thirst (kittens in a litter excessively seeking water)
- Vomiting or diarrhoea
- Bloating of the belly and/or abdominal pain

Cat flu signs:

- Sneezing or coughing.
- Clear, watery or thick yellow / green discharges coming from the eyes and/or nose
- Ulcers on the mouth or tongue
- Difficulty breathing or heavy breathing
- Failure to feed or poor feeding (often trouble suckling)
- Fading – kittens losing weight over days (often a poor sign with very young babies)

Signs of gastro-intestinal problems (including parasitic disease):

- Diarrhoea (watery or custard-consistency faeces)
- Blood in the droppings
- Mucus (jelly-like substance) in the faeces

Weight loss

- Straining to pass faeces
- Bloating of the belly
- Abdominal pain
- Redness and scalding of the anus-region
- Worms seen in the droppings (especially tapeworms)
- Excessive thirst

Other things that need checking:

- The eyes not opening properly when they should be open
- Deformity of the body or legs
- Sudden weakness, lameness or non-use of one or more legs
- Scalding and redness of the urinary (penis/vulva) or faecal (anus) area
- Redness or scabbing of the skin on the body or hair loss
- Seizures or incoordination – suggestion of neurological (nervous system) disease
- Faecal or urinary incontinence (releasing urine or faeces without apparent control)