

# Foster Care FAQs:

## Q: What is Foster Care?

Foster care volunteers provide temporary care for kittens, puppies, dogs and cats. **The Foster Care Program serves as a lifeline for those animals who come in under eight-weeks-old, very sick, injured, or needing some extra socialization or training.** Our Foster Families provide quiet, stress-free, and loving environments, allowing every pet that is fostered through our program a better chance at a happier and healthier life with a forever family.

Some animals may only need a home for several days if they need to gain weight before surgery, while others may need several weeks of care in the case of a broken bone. By offering your time, energy and home to an animal in need, you prepare the animal for adoption into a permanent home as well as prevent overcrowding in our adoption center. The Maryland SPCA is always looking for foster parents to help save more animals' lives.

## Q: Do I get to choose what types of pets I foster?

Yes. In your initial interview our program coordinator will ask what types of pets you are interested in fostering. During this time, the coordinator will also go over in detail all the types of fostering situations. Together you will discuss the best fit for you and your family. If you begin your fostering journey with dogs, you may always switch to cats (and vice versa) in the future. Switching is as easy as a discussion with the program coordinator when that time comes.

## Q: What if the foster in my home is not fitting into my lifestyle and/or not getting along with my pets?

We do our best to make a good match from the beginning by providing foster parents with all of the information we know about a pet before pick up. We ask that you try to make it work but we understand that sometimes it is just not a good fit. There is a "two-week shut down period" where you will not have the foster and your pet together under any circumstance. If after that time it is too difficult to keep them separate and/or they are not getting along the program coordinator will assist you in returning the pet back to the shelter.

## Q: What if I need to unexpectedly leave town while I have a foster in my home?

We understand that things come up! If you unexpectedly need to leave town you will be expected to inform the program coordinator and return your foster animal to the shelter.

*(More FAQs on back!)*



Young puppies and kittens often stay with Maryland SPCA volunteer foster families until they are old enough to be spayed or neutered then adopted from the shelter.

**Q: How often does a foster animal need to be brought in for check-ups?**

Foster parent volunteers need to transport animals to the MD SPCA on a regular basis for vaccinations, vet checks, weight checks and spay and neuter surgeries. Vaccination appointments and weigh-ins for kittens and puppies are scheduled every two weeks. Veterinarian appointments are scheduled as needed for each animal.

**Q: What if I'm unavailable to foster an animal when you call?**

We will simply call another foster volunteer. We want to make sure you feel like you'll be able to give the time needed, so we don't pressure you into taking an animal. If you can't foster this time around, we'll just call you the next time.

**Q: Will a foster animal have accidents or cause damage?**

Foster animals, like any other companion animal in your home, may destroy carpeting, drapes, clothing and other valuable items. Preparing your home and the area the animals will stay in can prevent most accidents, but not all of them.

**Q: Do I need to keep foster animals separate from my pets?**

As mentioned above there is a "two-week shutdown period" during which you will need to keep the foster animal separate from your pets. The shutdown period is meant to give the new animal time to adjust to you and your family and new environment, and to prevent the spread of illnesses. It may seem complicated but trust us, it's best for you, your pets and your foster!

**Q: Will the MD SPCA treat my personal pet if he is injured or becomes sick because of a foster animal?**

No. If your pet is injured or becomes sick you will need to take them to your veterinarian. We try and prevent this from happening with the "two-week shutdown" and by informing you of all of the potential risks and how to minimize them. (If you have dogs at home we will do a dog-meet-dog at the shelter in advance of taking foster dogs home. Our behavior team is always available to speak with fosters and will create specific plans for animals depending on the case.)

**Q: I love the idea of fostering, but I'm worried about how I'll feel when it's time for the animal to be brought back to the shelter for adoption.**

It can be difficult to let go once you have become emotionally attached to a foster animal. Be prepared for tears and some heartache when you bring your foster animals back to the MD SPCA. But remember, foster care volunteers play a crucial part in helping unwanted animals get to permanent, loving homes they deserve.

**Q: What if a friend or family member wants to adopt my foster animal?**

Thank you for helping find homes for your foster animals! Please keep in mind however, that the animals will not be available until their medical work, including spay or neuter surgery, is completed. Please refer interested adopters to the MD SPCA Foster Care Program at 410-235-8826 x167 or [foster@mdspca.org](mailto:foster@mdspca.org) to start the adoption conversation.

**Q: What if I want to adopt the animal I'm fostering?**

This can happen when foster parents fall in love with the animals. If you wish to adopt a foster animal, please call the program coordinator to start the adoption conversation. Having available foster homes is crucial for saving lives, so we ask foster parents to consider how adopting a foster animal may affect their ability to continue fostering other animals in the future. 🐾

**NEXT STEPS:**

If you are interested in fostering for the Maryland SPCA, you can begin the application process by completing our foster care application online. The questions asked in the application are to ensure that your foster experience is positive for both you and the animals. **When completed, please send your application to the MD SPCA using the contact information below!**



**FOSTER DEPARTMENT:**

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