

# Humane Society of West Michigan Foster Program

Adult Dog Manual



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## Setting Up

Prepare a safe and comforting space for your foster dog. Remove or put away any possible hazards such as cords, plants, garbage cans, household food, medications, etc. Make sure that they have access to plenty of soft and hard toys, soft bedding, and calming elements.

Your foster dog will need to have a crate available at all times that they can use as a safe space. Include a soft bed or blanket, toys, and a blanket that partially or fully covers the crate to allow for reduced stimuli. This space allows your dog to hide away or nap until they're comfortable in your home. Allowing them to come and go from their safe space whenever they please will help ease anxiety about going into the crate when you leave your home. Make sure to place the crate in a low traffic/low noise area of the home. **Their crate should never be used as punishment, and should be a place they go to in order to feel comforted.**

## Bringing Your Foster(s) Home

Moving to a new home can cause stress to dogs, so please go slowly and make sure you're interacting with them on their terms at first. Start slow and make introductions to people and your personal pets with caution. Please do not introduce your dogs to certain people or animals if you were instructed not to.

Crates and baby gates can be your best friend! You can feed your foster dog their meals in their crate if they're having trouble adjusting. Always praise the dog and give high-value treats when they enter their crate, and always provide the choice for them to go into their crate if they need a nap or break.

Your foster dog is going to need decompression time in your house before doing anything else. Two weeks is the standard amount of time it takes for a dog to fully decompress from shelter life. Let your foster dog relax and unwind before meeting personal pets. While unsupervised, make sure to put your foster dog in their crate until you're certain that they can be left out alone in your home without becoming destructive or having accidents. Providing them ways to stay stimulated while they're in their crate is key. Kongs, toys, and bones are great ways to do so! If you are having difficulty crating your dog due to them trying to break out or vocalizing, email us so we can help and figure out next steps.

# Daily Care

## **Feeding**

Your foster dog needs fresh food provided through two meals daily. Please only feed the appropriate diet that was provided to you by Foster staff.

### Daily Feeding Guide:

<b>Weight of Dog (lbs)</b>	<b>Cups per Day</b>	<b>Weight of Dog (lbs)</b>	<b>Cups per Day</b>
5	5/8	60	3 2/3
10	1	70	3 2/3
20	1 2/3	80	4 1/2
30	2 1/4	90	4 1/2
40	2 3/4	100	5 1/3
50	3 1/4	120	6 1/4

## **Cleaning/Potty Training**

We cannot guarantee that your adult dog won't have accidents in your home. Not all of our pets are housebroken, and it may require patience and training to teach them to go to the bathroom outside. Please offer multiple potty breaks throughout the day. Dogs do well with schedules and routines! If you establish a potty break schedule (a potty break 15-20 minutes after meals is a great way to start!), it can help them learn to hold it until that particular time of day. Always praise them/offer treats when they go to the bathroom outside!

## **Monitoring**

When feeding, cleaning, and interacting with your foster dog, monitor for signs of illness, decreased appetite, behavior changes, general attitude, etc. Email us right away if you notice anything out of the ordinary!

## **Playtime**

Your foster dog will need playtime and enrichment, as well as walks, every day! Some adult dogs will have no desire to play, but they still require exercise and enrichment from walks. If your dog is a senior and just wants to lay around all day, that's okay! Please encourage some walk time, even if it's just outside in the yard. You can also provide fun things like kongs, bones, lick mats, etc. for enrichment if they are not keen on playtime. If they enjoy interaction with other animals or people, you can enrich their daily life that way as well! Make sure to get approval from Foster staff before taking them to meet other animals outside of your household.

## Leash Pulling

Dogs can get very excited when they go for a walk, and they may pull on their leash. If your foster dog starts to pull on their leash, stop walking and wait for them to come back to you. Once they come back to their side, offer a treat and continue walking. The moment they start to pull again, repeat this process. You may have to stop a lot as they are learning, but they will pull less and less as time goes on.

If your foster dog is a strong puller or isn't responding to the method above, let us know. We can provide other resources and also send you home with a gentle lead or a harness.

## Dog/Leash Reactivity

Many dogs struggle to stay relaxed when they see another dog, a person, or a specific stimulus when they are out on a walk. They can end up reacting with an intense stress or fear response. Their responses can be categorized into "fight" (barking, lunging), "flight" (avoiding/hiding), "freeze" (cowering, shutting down), or "fool around" (jumping, mouthing).

The Engage-Disengage game is helpful for dogs that respond with a "flight" or "fool around" response. This game decreases a dog's stress around the trigger and teaches the dog peaceful coping skills. Visit this link to learn more about the Engage-Disengage game and try it with your foster dog if they are exhibiting signs of reactivity:

<https://www.choosepositivedogtraining.com/single-post/2014/07/01/the-practice-of-selfinterruption-the-engagedisengage-game>.

## Food or Toy Possessiveness

We do our best to notify fosters of any possessive behaviors that dogs exhibit, but sometimes they do not show up until the dog is in foster. Food or toy possessiveness can happen toward other animals, or even people. **If a dog exhibits signs of possessiveness, do not take away the item they are being protective over.** This can reinforce the behavior and make it worse. Instead, please email Foster staff so that we can offer help or support for this behavior!

## Mouthing/Jumping

If your foster tries to mouth your hands or arms, jumps up on you, or tries biting the leash to play tug of war, don't engage with the behavior. Turn your back to them, pull your arms up and tuck them in front of you so they can't access your arms and hands. If you are on a walk, stop walking until they stop. Don't touch or push the dog away, as they may think you are playing with them. Instead, ask them to "sit" and reward them with a treat if they do so. Make sure they keep all four paws on the ground to get the treat. If they have a favorite toy, you can also use that as a substitute to keep them from mouthing you or biting the leash. If you have difficulty getting this behavior to stop, just email us!

## Chewing

Chewing is a normal behavior in dogs that helps relieve stress and anxiety, and promotes a sense of wellbeing. If you catch your foster dog chewing on things they aren't supposed to, don't punish them. Instead, encourage chewing on the correct items by trading them for a fun toy or treat that they ARE allowed to chew on! Praise them when they are chewing on the correct item. If you find an item they've destroyed after it's already been chewed up, don't punish them. They may not associate the item with bad behavior, and they won't understand why they are being punished. Below are other ways you can prevent your foster dog from chewing on things they aren't supposed to:

- "Dog proof" your house! Put items out of their reach, like trash bins or shoes.
- Give them chew toys that do not resemble common household items. For example, don't give them stuffed toys if you don't want them to get ahold of childrens' stuffed animals!
- Spray "bitter spray" to make items taste bad if they try chewing them. This is available upon request if we have it stocked in our building!
- Keep them entertained! Get their attention and encourage them to play with you if you find them chewing on things they aren't supposed to. They may just be bored.
- Use Kongs filled with yummy treats, peanut butter, or other dog-safe goodies.

## Crate Training

**Rule number one: Never make a dog's crate a negative space, or a place they go to for punishment.** The crate should be their safe place where they can decompress, so make it as inviting as possible! Place toys in the crate on top of a pile of comfy blankets, or on top of a cozy bed. Place treats in the crate to encourage them to go in, but also feel free to hide them in blankets for them to find by sniffing around. This will encourage them to explore their crate, as well as associate it with something positive. You aren't limited to doing this once, either – you can do it multiple times a day or throughout the week!

When it comes to shy dogs, providing them with a crate and making it as comfortable and positive as possible is the best way to help them feel safe. The crate is a great tool for helping them adjust and decompress. If they feel comfortable in a crate, they will feel comfortable watching their surroundings from it, including you. You can put a large blanket over part of it to make it feel more enclosed when they are feeling overwhelmed.

As always, email us if you have any issues getting your foster dog to go in their crate, or any discomfort they may experience while in their crate (whining, barking, etc).

# Surgery Scheduling

All animals in HSWM's care are altered prior to adoption. If your animal is unaltered prior to going to foster with you, they will be scheduled for surgery. HSWM's Foster staff schedules surgeries 1-2 weeks after they go to a foster home. Fosters are responsible for checking the surgery schedule to see when their foster animal's surgery date is. **To find your foster animal's surgery date:**

1. Visit HSWM's website, and click on the Foster tab.
2. Click Foster Resources, then Appointment Scheduling.
3. Scroll down to the "Surgery" section, then click on the link that says "Surgery Schedule."
4. Request viewing access if this is your first time viewing the foster surgery schedule. Once you have access, find your name on the spreadsheet, and you will see your foster animal's surgery date.
5. Make sure to email **fostermedical@hswestmi.org** and let them know if you can or cannot make the surgery date. If you are unable to make the date, a new one will be offered.

*Once surgery is confirmed, please review the dropoff instructions below. Please note that these instructions are also listed below the foster surgery schedule spreadsheet on our website.*

# Surgery Instructions

***\*\*Adult animals generally go back to foster after surgery, unless otherwise discussed with Foster staff.\*\****

*\*\*Please remember: If you want to adopt your foster animal, you need to let our Adoptions team know the day prior to surgery!*

*\*\*If you are running late, please email HSWM's Foster staff AND [vetstaff@hswestmi.org](mailto:vetstaff@hswestmi.org) with your anticipated arrival time.*

**For adult cats and dogs:** Please refrain from giving them breakfast the morning of surgery to avoid stomach upset during surgery. Water is okay, and you can administer any prescribed medications as normal.

## **Dropoff**

1. Arrive between 7:30-8am at our **Admitting** doors unless a different time was discussed with Foster staff. Please ring the doorbell labeled "Pre-Op" when you arrive. One of our Vet Techs will meet you to take your animal(s).
2. If your foster is not returning home with you after surgery, please bring back your supplies and place them in the Foster Dropoff shed outside of the Foster Program doors. Please don't place them in the pickup shed!
3. Please be patient. There may be other animals being dropped off at the same time.

## Pickup

1. If you are picking up your foster after surgery, arrive between 4-4:30pm at the Admitting Doors, unless a different pickup time was previously discussed. Please ring the doorbell labeled "Pre-Op" and one of our Vet Techs will bring your animal to you.
2. A member of our Vet staff will go over postoperative pain medications. Post-op medication is given by mouth once daily, starting the day after surgery. **This must be administered as prescribed.**
3. Please be patient, as there may be several animals being picked up at the same time.

## Additional Surgery Notes:

- If something comes up that complicates your ability to make the surgery date or dropoff/pickup time, please email HSWM's Foster staff ASAP to discuss rescheduling.
- It is important to keep your animals as mellow and relaxed as possible (especially females) after surgery to avoid post-surgical complications.

*Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions/concerns in regards to surgery or post-surgery!*

## **Post Operative Instructions for Foster Dogs**

Most dogs will self-limit their activity following their surgery. Some may also be groggy for the rest of the day due to anesthesia/pain medication. You will be sent home with oral pain medication to start the day after surgery.

**Monitor appetite:** Some dogs will have little to no appetite following surgery. Some may vomit as well. If either of these symptoms persist past 24 hours, please let us know.

**Keep the incision dry:** No bathing or swimming should be done for 10 days.

**Monitor the incision:** Watch for pain, heat, redness, drainage, or excessive swelling for 7-10 days. If any of these symptoms are observed, please email [fostermedical@hswestmi.org](mailto:fostermedical@hswestmi.org).

**Discourage licking at the incision site:** If your foster is licking or chewing at the incision, they must be fitted with an E-collar (aka "cone"). This should remain in place at all times when they are not being directly supervised until the incision is completely healed. We can provide a collar, or you can get one at a pet store. For smaller animals, a paper plate can be crafted into a cone. You can email us for instructions.

**Discourage activity:** For 5-7 days (for females), try to discourage running, jumping, or strenuous activity. For males, 3-5 days is adequate. Increased activity may cause post-op complications and delayed healing. Keep your foster pet confined to an area that limits activity.

**Do not give your dog Aspirin, Tylenol, Advil, or any other over the counter pain medication:** These substances are very toxic to dogs and can be fatal, especially when combined with the pain medication sent home with you. If your foster pet is in excessive pain, please let us know and we can prescribe additional pain relievers.



## Common Non-Emergency Medical Concerns

We may not need to do anything right away, but we need to be made aware of the following medical issues when they occur. Please email [fostermedical@hswestmi.org](mailto:fostermedical@hswestmi.org) if any of these things are observed within the respective time frame given.

	<b>Neonate Puppies and Kittens</b>	<b>Puppies and Kittens under 5 months</b>	<b>Adult cats and dogs</b>
<b>URI Symptoms - sneezing, congestion, discharge</b>	As soon as it's observed	After 24 hours of showing symptoms	After 48 hours of showing symptoms
<b>Conjunctivitis/Eye swelling/redness</b>	As soon as it's observed	After 24 hours	After 24 hours
<b>Vomiting</b>	As soon as it's observed	After 24 hours	After 48 hours, or 24 hours if frequent
<b>Diarrhea - soft to liquid consistency</b>	As soon as it's observed	After 24 hours - As soon as it's observed if there is blood	After 48 hours - after 24 hours if blood is continually present
<b>Constipation - zero stool output</b>	After 24 hours	After 24 hours	After 48 hours
<b>Decreased Appetite</b>	As soon as it's observed	As soon as it's observed	After 24 hours of decreased appetite OR after 12 hours for <b>zero</b> food intake
<b>Weight loss or weight plateau (primarily kittens)</b>	As soon as it's observed	After 24 hours	After 72 hours

**The following items are less common non-emergency medical concerns:**

- Straining to urinate, difficulty eliminating
- Itchy skin or ears.
- Blood in stool
- Frequent and excessive water intake
- Decreased activity – not lethargy

If any of these are noted, please contact [fostermedical@hswestmi.org](mailto:fostermedical@hswestmi.org) .

# **Canine Parvovirus a.k.a. “Parvo”**

## **What is Parvo?**

Canine Parvovirus is a virus that is very contagious to unvaccinated or freshly vaccinated dogs and puppies. Without early intervention, it can be devastating. It is hard to kill, lives a long time in the environment, and is easily spread. Thankfully, this virus cannot go between species and only affects canines.

## **What are the symptoms of Parvo?**

If dogs stop eating or become less interested in eating, that is typically the first sign of Parvo. Other symptoms include decreased activity/lethargy, diarrhea (with or without blood), and vomiting. Sometimes symptoms are glaringly obvious, but sometimes they are more subtle. Parvo mostly affects puppies, but adult dogs can also be affected.

## **Situational examples of symptoms:**

1. **Attitude/Activity change:** They can go from running around your house to just meandering around, or simply just not running around as excitedly.
2. **Appetite loss:** They scarf down a bowl of food that morning or the night prior but their next meal they only eat half the bowl, if at all.
3. **Stool change:** Stool is even becoming softer and darker in texture, or they seem to be uncomfortable while going to the bathroom. Or, their stool suddenly becomes diarrhea with an odd, sweeter smell to it.

***It's important to monitor your dog's daily health, note any changes and report them as soon as they are noticed.***

## **Can Parvo spread to the dogs in your home?**

If they get their yearly distemper vaccine on time, which protects them from Parvovirus, and have a good track record of their vaccines throughout their life, they will likely be fine! Regardless, if you have a dog who ends up contracting Parvo, everything the dog may have touched should be cleaned appropriately. Email us for a step-by-step guide to cleaning surfaces that have been touched by a dog with Parvo.

If your own pet is not vaccinated, or is coming up on being due on their vaccines, please email [fostermedical@hswestmi.org](mailto:fostermedical@hswestmi.org) and we can further discuss what to do to help your pets stay safe and how we can assist with that. If your animal were to test positive for Parvo, you must seek treatment with your primary veterinarian, as we will not be able to provide treatment.

## **Monitoring and Reporting**

It is extremely important to report any symptoms of Parvovirus you see in your fosters. We want to intervene as soon as possible! The sooner we are able to intervene, the better the outcome for all of the dogs involved. We would rather check your foster pet and have it turn out to be nothing serious, versus holding off and seeing them when it is too late.

# **Diarrhea in Shelter Animals**

Diarrhea is one of the most common issues we see at the shelter. It can be uncomfortable for the animals, and possibly for you, but we have the resources to help resolve it! It can be caused by stress, parasites, or dietary changes.

## **Preventing diarrhea**

All animals receive dewormers on intake to help prevent diarrhea. Make sure to keep your foster animal on the food they were sent home with to avoid stomach upset. If they do not enjoy the food sent home with them, we can provide new food. Make sure to do a slow transition from old to new food over 7 days. Mix a small amount of the new food into their old food, and slowly increase the amount of new food until they are fully switched over on the 7th day.

## **My foster dog has diarrhea, what should I do?**

Let us know! For adult dogs, let us know within 48 hours if they have diarrhea. If there is blood present, let us know within 24 hours. If you notice severe diarrhea with significant blood, please follow the emergency protocol in our General Policy Manual!

## **I have been asked to bring a stool sample in. How do I do that?**

We only need about a spoonful of fecal matter to run tests. You can ask us for a fecal sample tube, or you can put it in a dog poop bag, sandwich bag, or another container you don't mind parting with. Grass in the sample is okay! The sample needs to be less than 24 hours old. Please write the date and name of the foster animal on the container. Samples can be dropped off in our foster dropoff shed, in the basket labeled "Sample basket." Please email us before arriving so that we know you will be dropping off a sample.

## **What is the treatment for diarrhea?**

We may prescribe a probiotic and bland diet for a few days. After screening the fecal sample (if provided), we will send home appropriate medications home based on what we find, or we will ask you to bring your animal in for further treatment.

## **What do parasites look like? Do all parasites cause diarrhea?**

There are many parasites that can cause diarrhea, but not all are visible to the naked eye. The most common parasites you can see at a glance are roundworms (which resemble a spaghetti noodle) and tapeworms (which resemble a grain of rice).

## **Can the parasites be passed on to me? What about my animals?**

It is extremely rare for parasites to be passed onto people, and there is minimal risk of this happening! Certain parasites can be passed on to other animals. Most diarrhea due to parasites will show up during the 10 day quarantine period your foster animal will go through, so there is minimal risk of your personal animals contracting parasites. If your personal animal becomes infected and starts having diarrhea, you will need to go to your primary veterinarian for care and treatment.

# **Upper Respiratory Infections in Shelter Animals**

## **What is Upper Respiratory Infection (URI)?**

URI is a common illness in shelter animals that can affect many different species, most commonly felines. It targets the upper airways and is similar to the common cold. In most cases, a round of medication will address the illness. In more severe cases, your foster animal may need additional treatment. URI is commonly passed through saliva or nasal discharge via direct contact. It can also be passed indirectly, through sneezing, eating from the same bowls, etc.

## **What are the symptoms of URI?**

The most common symptoms of URI are frequent sneezing and/or coughing, nasal congestion, and nasal discharge. Conjunctivitis (inflammation/redness of the eyelids) can also occur. Depending on the severity of the URI, they may have more severe symptoms like loss of appetite, decreased activity levels, nausea, etc.

## **My foster animal is showing signs of URI. What should I do?**

The occasional sneeze here and there is perfectly normal and not cause for concern. If you notice persistent or worsening symptoms, please notify us within 48 hours for adult dogs. In order to avoid the added stress of coming back to the shelter, we may ask you to send us a video of their sneezing/breathing, or a picture of the eyes if there are ocular symptoms.

## **How is URI treated?**

We prescribe an oral antibiotic that is given once daily for 10 days. If your dog also has conjunctivitis along with their URI, we prescribe an eye medication that is put on the affected eye(s) every 12 hours for 7 days. If they are still sneezing and congested after their oral meds are finished, we may do another round of medication. If their nose is raw or plugged, a warm/wet washcloth can be used to gently wipe their nose and help them breathe better. You can also take them into a steamy bathroom to help clear up their sinuses.

## **How can I give the oral medication?**

See the "How to Administer Medications" section for more help. You can also email [fostermedical@hswestmi.org](mailto:fostermedical@hswestmi.org) if you are still struggling with administering the medication.

## **Can my own animals contract URI from my foster animal?**

It is possible for dogs to transfer the virus to other dogs. When animals are kept separate for the quarantine period, it lessens the chance of URI passing to them. If your animals are up-to-date on vaccines, it decreases their chances of getting sick as well. As long as your animals are kept separate during quarantine and you wash your hands after interacting with a dog with URI, the risk of your personal animals getting sick is minimal. If your personal animals get sick, you will need to go to your primary veterinarian for treatment.

## **Can I catch the illness?**

No! It cannot be passed onto humans or other species.

# **Conjunctivitis in Shelter Animals**

## **What is conjunctivitis?**

Conjunctivitis is inflammation of the lining of the animals' eye(s). It commonly occurs along with upper respiratory infections, but can occur by itself as well. It is most common in cats.

## **What are the symptoms of conjunctivitis?**

Redness/irritation of the eye(s), squinting, watery eye(s), swelling of the eye(s), clear or colored ocular discharge (yellow/green/cloudy), cloudy eye(s), and raising of the third eyelid.

## **What should I do if my dog has symptoms of conjunctivitis?**

Let us know! Email a picture to [fostermedical@hswestmi.org](mailto:fostermedical@hswestmi.org) to help us evaluate if it is conjunctivitis or a different issue. Providing details of the symptoms you're seeing will be helpful as well. If you are unsure if you are also seeing URI symptoms, please refer to the above "Upper Respiratory Infections in Shelter Animals" section.

## **How is conjunctivitis treated?**

Conjunctivitis is treated with an ointment that is applied to the affected eye(s) at least every 12 hours for 7 days. If the eye clears up before the instructed time, it is important to continue to give the medication. If symptoms persist after treatment, please email us.

## **How do I apply the eye medication?**

Please see the "How to Administer Medication" section for help. You can also email [fostermedical@hswestmi.org](mailto:fostermedical@hswestmi.org) if you need further assistance with administering medication.

# **Ear Mites vs. Ear Infections**

## **What are ear mites?**

Ear mites are tiny mites that live in the ear canals of animals. Ear mite debris appears dry and dirty, similar to coffee grounds. Ear mites are confirmed via microscopic examination.

## **What are symptoms of ear mites?**

Dirty ears and itchy ears! This is usually accompanied by the animal shaking their head/ears, redness on the ear flap, and intense scratching of the ears.

## **How are ear mites treated?**

All dogs receive ear mite prevention upon intake, which prevents and treats ear mites. Occasionally, some dogs may need additional treatment.

## **What's the difference between mites and an ear infection?**

An ear infection is the result of an overgrowth of bacteria in the ear. Similar to ear mites, ear infections can cause itching, redness, and shaking of the head. The main difference is that ear infections present with a varying consistency of colored ear debris (light yellow to dark brown, rather than coffee ground color from ear mites), but it is usually softer than ear mite debris.

### **How are ear mites/ear infections diagnosed?**

You will be asked to bring your foster in for an exam, or bring in a sample swab of their ear debris. We will look at the sample under a microscope and determine if they have mites or an infection. They will be prescribed ear medication for one or both ears.

### **How do I get an ear swab sample?**

The easiest way to get a sample is to use a Q-tip. It is best to get a sample right before you plan to drop it off to prevent it from drying out. Be gentle while acquiring the sample and don't be too forceful with the Q-tip in the ear. Animals have an extra turn in their ear, so it is harder to hit their eardrum, but you can still hit it if you apply too much force.

1. Gently hold their ear flap in your fingers and bend it towards the center of their head to open their ear for easier access. Locate the ear canal.
2. Take one Q-tip and insert into the ear canal. Move the Q-tip around against the walls of the ear canal to pick up any debris inside the ear. Repeat for the other ear, using the new Q-tip.
3. Take the Q-tip used to acquire the **LEFT** ear sample and bend it into an L. This will help us distinguish between the left and right ear samples, in case there are different medications needed for each ear.
4. Put the Q-tips in a sealed bag and bring them in as directed by Foster staff.

### **How are ear mites/ear infections treated?**

If your foster animal has an ear infection, they will be prescribed ear ointment or drops. Most commonly, these are given for 7-10 days, depending on the severity of the infection. Approximately two weeks after the medication is started, another ear sample will need to be collected and brought in to make sure the infection is gone. If ear mites are found, we will also send home the appropriate medication. If you are comfortable cleaning your foster animal's ears, you will be provided ear cleaning supplies if necessary. This process is similar to obtaining a sample (above) with the addition of medicated solution applied in the ears.

## **How to Administer Medications**

In general, it's best to have two people helping administer medications. However, you may be by yourself and will need to medicate your foster animal on your own.

- Always read the label of your medication for: method to administer, amount to administer, how often to administer, and for how long
- Never give medication to your foster animal, at any time, that has not been prescribed by HSWM's Foster staff or Veterinary staff.
- Please do not stop or wean medications without discussing with Foster staff first.

### **Liquid medications**

Luckily for you, medication is much easier to administer to dogs than cats! When giving a dog any medication, it is best to have their butt against something (your lap, another object, etc.) so that they can't back away.

## Step-by-step guide for liquid medications

1. Draw up the directed amount of medication into the syringe.
2. Hold the dog's head gently and wiggle the syringe into the side of their mouth. Most times, they will open their mouths on their own.
3. Push the end of the syringe to administer the medication into their mouth. Be careful not to shoot it directly into their throat.

### Alternative method for liquid medications (for dogs who are not tolerant of medication administration):

If you have an adult dog on medication, it is often easiest to mix the medication into a small meatball of canned food, a high value treat, baby food, whipped cream, or spray cheese. After they eat the entirety of their medication, you can offer more food or treats without the medication as a reward.

*Tip: If administering the medication directly, you can suck up some tuna juice, baby food, or chicken broth into the syringe to make it taste better for your foster dog. You can pull the end of the syringe back and forth a few times to mix it into the syringe.*

### Pill and capsule medications

It's super easy to hide pills in tasty treats! You can try hiding their pills in the following: wet food shaped into a little meatball, peanut butter, spray cheese, deli cheese, deli turkey/ham, hot dogs, pill pockets. When administering a meatball filled with pills, use the sandwich method, where you give them one meatball without medicine followed by a meatball with the medicine. Then, immediately follow with another meatball without medicine. Some dogs will become suspicious of foods if they always contain the medication, and this method will help minimize the suspicion.

Some dogs can, and will, still chew around the pill and spit it out. If this happens, try hiding them in other foods. If they continue to chew around their medication, you can crush the pills and hide them again in wet food or something tasty. **Please ask for approval for this method, as some medications cannot be crushed.**

We recommend direct pilling as a last resort, as it can be very stressful to the animal, and risks the possibility of a bite. If possible, use a pill pusher. We can provide one upon request!

### Step-by-step guide for pilling a dog:

1. Put the pill/capsule in the tip of the pill pusher.
2. Gently place your hand on top of their head with your fingers by their cheekbones.
3. Lift their head up slightly and wiggle the pill pusher into the side of their mouth. Most dogs will open their mouths on their own.
4. Push the pill pusher all the way to the back of the mouth, as far as the dog will allow.
5. Push the end of the pill pusher to shoot the pill down the dog's throat.
6. If unsure if they swallowed the pill, close and hold their mouth shut gently. Watch for swallowing. If the dog spits the pill out, repeat the process until they swallow it.

### Eye drops and ointment

Having your foster dog's butt against something like yourself or another object will make ear drops/ointment easier to apply. The goal is to get the medication into the ear canal, not just on the surface of the ear flap.

### **Step-by-step guide for ear drops/ointment**

1. Gently hold their ear flap in your fingers and bend it toward the center of their head to open their ear up for easier access.
2. Locate the ear canal (toward the base of the ear).
3. Take your medication and take the tip into the ear canal. Squeeze the bottle to administer the medication.
4. Massage the base of the ear. Repeat for the other ear, if necessary.

*Tip: The label will tell you how many drops to administer into each ear canal. Prior to administering, you can practice without your foster pet by squeezing the bottle onto a cloth to see how much pressure you need to apply to administer the correct amount.*

### **Additional tips and tricks:**

- Make it a positive experience! Always give your dog treats after getting their medication.
- Be patient! It can be frustrating to medicate an animal. If you have to take a break and come back to it later, that's okay. We want to make the experience as positive as possible for the animal – and for you! If you are having difficulty after trying these suggestions, please email [fostermedical@hswestmi.org](mailto:fostermedical@hswestmi.org) for more help and alternatives.



# **Adoption Process: From Foster to Forever Home**

If your animal is healthy, behaviorally assessed, and at least 2 months of age, they can become available for adoption even if they are still waiting on a medical procedure. This can happen within a few days of bringing them home!

## **Building an Adoption Profile**

We rely on our fosters to provide photos of their foster animals that will help them to become adopted! Please send as many photos as possible, and make sure there is good lighting and that your dog looks comfortable and happy. Feel free to showcase their personality – if they are goofy, feel free to send photos of them playing or making silly faces! If they are a cuddle bug, you can send pictures of them snuggling with you.

\*\*\*To send videos of your foster animal to be uploaded to their adoption profile, you can submit them here: <https://tinyurl.com/HSWMFosterUpload>

Writing a bio for your foster dog can make a huge difference in adoption interest. Please feel free to write your own bio, or just email us to tell us all about what makes your foster animal special and what you love about them! If the content is sweet, funny, or relatable – even better! When your foster animal does something positive that affects you emotionally, make a note of it so we can share that with potential adopters.

## **The Adoption Process from Home**

Once animals are cleared to be adopted, potential adopters can view them on our website! This is why it is so important that they have a great adoption profile! Once someone applies to adopt your foster animal and their application is approved, our Adoptions Department will reach out to both you and the potential adopter to schedule a meet-and-greet. This can be done at HSWM, over a video call (Zoom, Google Meets, etc.), or wherever you are comfortable. As the foster, you know more about your foster animal than anyone, so feel free to answer questions and tell the potential adopter(s) everything you've learned about them!

If the potential adopters decide to go through with the adoption, please email our Adoptions department so they can coordinate a transfer of care meeting. Transfer of care meetings should happen at HSWM's facility, unless otherwise approved by an HSWM staff member. On the day of the transfer of care meeting, you will show up at the designated time and place with your foster animal. You can either help facilitate the transfer and meet the adopter, or you can drop off the animal to our adoptions team and they can handle it from there! If all your foster animals have been adopted, make sure you return your supplies to our foster dropoff shed by the foster doors. Please feel free to send any favorite toys, blankets, or beds home with the adopters!