

## Orphaned Kitten Physical Exam

EXAM	NORMAL FINDING	ABNORMAL FINDING
<b>Weight</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Birth: ~100 g (2-4 oz.)</li> <li>• Gain 7-10% of birth weight each day (10-15g)</li> <li>• Weight doubles by 2 weeks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Underweight for age</li> <li>• Not gaining weight</li> </ul>
<b>Attitude</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bright and alert</li> <li>• Hardly cries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lethargic, unresponsive</li> <li>• Cries a lot</li> </ul>
<b>Body condition</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 0-6 weeks: Plump and round</li> <li>• Symmetrical body and limbs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thin body condition</li> <li>• Taut, over-distended abdomen</li> <li>• Asymmetry</li> </ul>
<b>Coat condition</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hair shiny and free of debris</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hair loss, skin irritation, cuts, fecal stained hair</li> </ul>
<b>Muscle tone</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weak, flaccid</li> </ul>
<b>Rectal temperature</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 0-2 weeks: 95-99°F</li> <li>• 2-4 weeks: 97-100°F</li> <li>• 4+ weeks: 100-101.5°F</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anything below 95°F is abnormal. Warm kittens up slowly at 2°F per hour to prevent organ failure.</li> <li>• Anything above 101°F may be a fever</li> </ul>
<b>Heart rate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 220-260 beats per minute</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slow or irregular heart rate. Chilled kittens heart rate will slow down.</li> </ul>
<b>Respiratory rate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Birth: 10-18 BPM</li> <li>• After 1 week: 16-32 BPM</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Labored breathing</li> </ul>
<b>Reflexes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 0-14 days: Rooting, and suckle reflex</li> <li>• 0-39 days: Elimination reflex</li> <li>• 0-7 days: Gag reflex</li> <li>• 3-17 days: Startle reflex</li> <li>• 6-8 days: Shiver reflex</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weak, fading kittens will have diminished reflexes.</li> <li>• Chilled – Newborn kittens do not shiver.</li> </ul>
<b>Oral exam</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Palate closed</li> <li>• 2-3 weeks: Incisor 1 and 2</li> <li>• 3-4 weeks: Incisor 3 and canine</li> <li>• 4-5 weeks: Lower premolar</li> <li>• 5-6 weeks: Upper premolar</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cleft palate</li> </ul>
<b>Mucus membranes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pink, moist and slippery</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dark red, dry and tacky</li> <li>• White, pale membranes</li> </ul>
<b>Eyes and ears</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5-14 days: Eyes open</li> <li>• 6-17 days: Ears open</li> <li>• 4-6 weeks: Iris color and normal vision</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Swelling, discharge or pain around area</li> </ul>
<b>Abdomen</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slightly plump and enlarges after nursing</li> <li>• 2-4 days: Umbilical stump falls off</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distended and painful with excessive crying</li> <li>• Redness, pain and/or swelling around umbilicus</li> </ul>
<b>Anus/Genital exam</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Present and patent</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Red, swollen</li> <li>• Yellow or green discharge</li> <li>• Not present or patent</li> </ul>
<b>Urinary exam</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dilute yellow</li> <li>• 3-4 weeks: Urinating on own</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dark yellow</li> </ul>
<b>Gastrointestinal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responsive to bottle</li> <li>• Interested in solid food at 3-4 weeks</li> <li>• Eating dry food by 8 weeks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unresponsive and weak</li> <li>• Poor appetite</li> <li>• Vomiting</li> <li>• Diarrhea</li> </ul>
<b>Ambulation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1-10 days: Forelimb support</li> <li>• 4 days after forelimbs, hind limb support</li> <li>• 16 days: Walking</li> <li>• 21 days: Normal gait</li> </ul>	

REFERENCES:

- 1) Greco DS and Partington BT, The Physical Examination and Diagnostic Imaging Techniques, in Veterinary Pediatrics: Dogs and Cats from Birth to Six Months, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, ed, Johnny D Hoskins, WB Saunders Co, Philadelphia, 1995
- 2) Zambelli D, Feline Neonatal Physiology, Behavior, and Socialization, in Management of Pregnant and Neonatal Dogs, Cats, and Exotic Pets, 1<sup>st</sup> ed, ed, Cheryl Lopate, Wiley-BlackwellAmes, Iowa, 2012, 145-158.
- 3) Root Kustritz MV. History and physical examination of the neonate, in Small Animal Pediatrics: The first 12 months of life, 1<sup>st</sup> edition, ed, Michael E Peterson. Elsevier/Saunders, China, 20-27, 2011