

Orphaned Kitten Feeding and Stomach Capacity Table

Estimated Age	Weight (grams)	Weight (ounces)	20 Kcal/100 g body weight ¹	Daily volume Commercial milk replacer (ml) Concentration 0.74 kcal/ml*	Stomach capacity (ml) (4 ml/100 g body weight ¹)	Approx. number of feedings per day**
Newborn	50	1.8	10	13.5	2	7
	75	2.6	15	20	3	7
	100	3.5	20	27	4	7
	125	4.4	25	34	5	7
~ 1 week	150	5.3	30	40	6	7
	175	6.2	35	47	7	7
	200	7.0	40	54	8	7
	225	8	45	61	9	7
~ 2 weeks	250	8.8	50	68	10	7
	275	9.7	55	74	11	7
	300	10.6	60	81	12	6-7
	325	11.5	65	88	13	6-7
~ 3 weeks	350	12.3	70	95	14	6-7
	375	13.2	75	101	15	~6
	400	14.1	80	108	16	~5
	425	15	85	115	17	~5
~ 4 weeks***	450	15.9	90	122	18	~5
	475	16.8	95	128	19	~4
	500	17.6	100	135	20	~4
~ 5 weeks***	525	18.5	105	142	21	~4
	550	19.4	110	148	22	~4

¹ Energy requirement and stomach capacity reference: Lawler DF. Neonatal and pediatric care of the puppy and kitten. Theriogenology, 70 (2008) 384-392.

Energy Requirement: 20-26 kcal/100g body weight/day

Comfortable Stomach Capacity: Approximately 4 mL/100g body weight

* Most commercial milk replacers in the US provide less than 1 kcal/ml (0.74 kcal/ml), acting to increase the volume of milk required to meet calorific needs. This can be problematic in terms of the number and size of feedings given relative to stomach capacity and more likely to result in gastrointestinal disturbances. This may also account for why bottle fed kittens grow slower than kittens that nurse off their mother.

** As the kitten is adjusting well to the milk and the feeding volume, you may be able to increase the volume fed to help reduce the number of feedings per day. This will exceed recommended comfortable stomach capacity and may put the kitten at risk of regurgitation, aspiration and diarrhea.

*** Kittens at this age are frequently eating some solid food, decreasing the amount of milk replacer required to meet daily calorific requirements. This may result in less frequent milk feedings.

Additional references:

1) Cline J, Cattery Management and Nutrition of the Queen and Her Offspring, in Management of Pregnant and Neonatal Dogs, Cats, and Exotic Pets, 1st ed, ed, Cheryl Lopate, Wiley-BlackwellAmes, Iowa, 2012, 15-24.

2) Zambelli D, Feline Neonatal Physiology, Behavior, and Socialization, in Management of Pregnant and Neonatal Dogs, Cats, and Exotic Pets, 1st ed, ed, Cheryl Lopate, Wiley-BlackwellAmes, Iowa, 2012, 145-158.