

Bottle Baby Tracker

A printable tracking guide for fostering orphaned newborn puppies. Use it for daily feeding logs, weight and temperature checks, and as a quick reference for normal ranges and red flags.

Puppy information

Puppy name or ID:	
Date of birth (or best estimate):	
Birth weight (grams):	
Intake date:	
Sex (M / F / Unknown):	
Rescue contact:	
Vet contact:	
Notes about the puppy or litter:	

How to use this tracker

- Use the **Daily Feeding Log** pages to record every bottle feeding. Newborn puppies typically feed every 2 to 3 hours around the clock, for 6 to 8 feedings a day.
- Use the **Daily Vitals Log** pages to record weight and temperature, at least once a day. Same time each day is ideal.
- Use the **Reference Ranges** page to check whether a value is normal for the puppy's age.
- Use the **Red Flag Checklist** to spot anything that calls for an immediate phone call to the rescue or vet.
- Use the **Development Milestones** page to know what to expect at each stage.

Bottle baby foster care is intense, around-the-clock work. There is no shortcut, only the next feeding, and then the next. You are doing one of the most generous versions of foster work that exists.

Reference Ranges

Normal values for orphaned newborn puppies. Anything outside these ranges is a reason to call the rescue.

Puppy rectal temperature (normal range)

Age	Days old	Low (°F)	High (°F)	Notes
Week 1	0 - 6	95	99	Cannot regulate own temperature. Heat source required.
Week 2	7 - 13	97	100	Still relies on external warmth.
Week 3	14 - 20	98	101	Transitioning to adult range.
Week 4+	21+	100	102	Adult-dog normal range.

Environment temperature (the puppies' nesting space)

Age	Days old	Low (°F)	High (°F)	Notes
Days 0-4	0 - 4	85	90	Heat lamp or pad on low. Place under half the box so puppies can move off.
Days 5-9	5 - 9	80	85	Gradually decrease.
Days 10-20	10 - 20	75	80	Continue gradual decrease.
Day 21+	21+	70	75	Approaching room temperature.

Weight gain expectations

Age	Expected gain	Milestone	Red flag
First 4 weeks	About 5% of body weight per day	Birth weight doubles by 8-10 days; triples by 3 weeks.	No gain, or weight loss, in a day.
Weeks 5-8	Steady gain, slower rate	Continued growth alongside transition to solids.	Any weight loss.

Feeding schedule by age

Use commercial canine milk replacer (e.g., Esbilac). Never give cow's milk. Always feed at body temperature (~100°F) until weeks 3-4, then room temp is fine.

Age	Frequency	Amount	Notes
Week 1 (days 0-6)	Every 2-3 hrs; 6-8 feedings / 24 hrs	~1 cc per ounce of body weight every 3 hrs	Use commercial canine milk replacer at ~100°F. Never cow's milk.
Week 2 (days 7-13)	Every 3-4 hrs	Per label, adjusted for weight	Continue monitoring daily weight gain.
Week 3 (days 14-20)	Every 4 hrs	Per label	Introduce shallow water dish. Start offering gruel.
Week 4+ (days 21+)	Every 4-6 hrs	Gradually replace formula with gruel	Weaning sequence: formula → gruel → wet food → dry puppy food.
Week 6+	3-4 feedings / day	Dry puppy food	Mostly weaned. Fresh water always available.

Other essentials

- **Stimulating for elimination:** For roughly the first 2 weeks, gently massage the genital area with a warm moist cloth after each feeding to trigger urination and defecation. After ~2 weeks, puppies start eliminating on their own.
- **Bedding:** Newspaper or packing paper layered on a flat towel for week 1. After they can lift their heads, switch to towel, sheet, or blanket. Avoid loose soft cloth that newborns can get caught in.
- **Hygiene:** Wash hands before handling. Change clothes and shoes if you have been around other dogs or in animal facilities before entering the puppies' space.
- **Visitors:** Limit visitors and handling for the first few weeks. Anyone who has been around sick animals should not visit.
- **Eyes open:** Days 10-14. Keep out of direct sunlight until ~4 weeks. **Ear canals open:** Days 5-8.

Red Flag Checklist

Any of the following is a call-the-rescue-now situation. Do not wait until morning. For seizures, collapse, or labored breathing, call the emergency vet first, then the rescue.

Sign / symptom	What it looks like	What to do
Cold puppy (hypothermia)	Body temperature below the age-appropriate range, OR puppy feels cold.	Warm gradually. Never feed a cold puppy. Call rescue.
Fading puppy (hypoglycemia)	Lethargic, weak, limp, unresponsive, muscle twitching, or convulsions.	Place a few drops of corn syrup on the gums and under the tongue. Warm gently. Call vet IMMEDIATELY.
No weight gain or weight loss	Failure to gain weight day-over-day, OR any weight loss.	Recheck after next feeding. Call rescue same day.
Aspiration during feeding	Coughing during feeding, milk coming out of the nose, gurgling sounds.	Stop feeding immediately. Tilt head down to drain. Call vet.
Severe diarrhea	Watery, persistent, bloody, paired with lethargy, or lasting more than 3-4 feedings.	Bring a stool sample to the vet. Call rescue same day.
Dehydration	Skin tent stays up when scruff is gently pulled. Gums sticky instead of moist.	Offer warm water by syringe between feedings. Call vet.
No urination or defecation	Puppy has not urinated or defecated after stimulation for more than 12 hours.	Try stimulating again with warm moist cloth. Call rescue if still nothing.
Vomiting	Any vomiting, especially repeated or with blood.	Call vet.
Bloated belly	Distended or hard belly, especially with discomfort. May indicate parasites or obstruction.	Stop feeding. Call vet.
Pale gums	Gums look white or very pale instead of healthy pink.	Call vet immediately.
Bleeding or bruising	Any unusual bleeding, bruising, or pinpoint red dots on the belly.	Call vet immediately.
Labored breathing	Fast, shallow, struggling breathing. Open-mouth breathing in a young puppy.	Call emergency vet first, then the rescue.
Seizures or collapse	Any seizure activity, or sudden collapse.	Call emergency vet first, then the rescue.
Refusing to nurse	Puppy will not latch onto bottle, refuses formula completely.	Try once with warmed formula. Call rescue same day.

Development Milestones

What to expect at each developmental stage. Ranges are typical, not guarantees.

Age	Stage	What is happening
0 - 7 days	Newborn	Eyes and ears closed. Sleeps most of the day. Cannot regulate temperature. Cannot urinate or defecate without stimulation. Should nurse vigorously when offered the bottle.
8 - 14 days	Eyes opening	Eyes open between days 10-14. Vision is blurry at first; keep out of direct sunlight. Ear canals open between days 5-8. Body weight typically doubles by day 8-10.
15 - 21 days	Transition	Walking wobbly. Beginning to urinate and defecate on their own. Body weight typically triples by day 21. Introduce a shallow water dish. First vet checkup is appropriate this week.
22 - 28 days	Weaning begins	Walking more confidently. Lapping gruel (formula mixed with softened puppy food). Continue formula feedings alongside gruel. Environment temperature can come down to 70-75°F. First socialization with calm, vaccinated dogs and gentle handling by varied people.
29 - 42 days	Active puppy	Playful, curious, more coordinated. Mostly eating gruel and softened puppy food. Vaccinations typically start at 4-6 weeks. Continue gentle socialization with sights, sounds, surfaces.
43 - 56 days	Pre-adoption	Eating dry puppy food. Most have completed first vaccinations. Spay/neuter often happens around 8 weeks at a minimum weight of 2 lb. Ready to begin meeting adopters.

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