

Orphaned Kitten Physical Exam

EXAM	NORMAL FINDINGS	ABNORMAL FINDING
Weight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Birth: 90-110g • Gain 7-10% of birth weight each day • Weight doubles by 2 weeks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Underweight for age • Not gaining weight
Attitude	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bright and alert • Hardly cries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lethargic, unresponsive • Cries a lot
Body condition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0-6 weeks: Plump and round • Symmetrical body and limbs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thin body condition • Taut, over-distended abdomen • Asymmetry of limbs or body
Coat condition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hair shiny and free of debris 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hair loss, skin irritation, cuts, fecal stained hair
Muscle tone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weak, flaccid
Rectal temperature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0-2 weeks: 95-99°F • 2-4 weeks: 97-100°F • 4+ weeks: 100-101.5°F 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anything below 95°F is abnormal. Warm kittens up slowly at 2°F per hour to prevent organ failure. • Anything above 101°F is a fever
Heart rate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 220-260 beats per minute 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slow or irregular heart rate. Chilled kittens heart rate will slow down.
Respiratory rate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Birth: 10-18 BPM • After 1 week: 16-32 BPM 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labored breathing (effort increased) • Increased rate
Reflexes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0-14 days: Rooting, and suckle reflex • 0-39 days: Elimination reflex • 0-7 days: Gag reflex • 3-17 days: Startle reflex • 6-8 days: Shiver reflex 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weak, fading kittens will have diminished reflexes. • If chilled – remember that newborn (<6d) kittens do not shiver.
Oral exam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Palate closed at birth • 2-3 weeks: Incisor 1 and 2 • 3-4 weeks: Incisor 3 and canines • 4-5 weeks: Lower premolars • 5-6 weeks: Upper premolars 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cleft palate
Mucus membranes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pink, moist and slippery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dark red, dry and tacky • White, pale membranes
Eyes and ears	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5-14 days: Eyes open • 6-17 days: Ears open • 4-6 weeks: Permanent iris color and normal vision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swelling, discharge or pain around eyes or ears
Abdomen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slightly plump and enlarges after nursing • 2-4 days: Umbilical stump falls off 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distended and painful with excessive crying • Redness, pain and/or swelling around umbilicus
Anus/Genital exam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present and patent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Red, swollen • Yellow or green discharge • Not present or patent
Urinary exam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dilute yellow at all times • 3-4 weeks: urinating on own 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dark yellow indicates dehydration
Gastrointestinal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsive to nipple at birth • Interested in solid food at 3-4 weeks • Eating dry food by 8 weeks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unresponsive and weak • Poor appetite • Vomiting • Diarrhea
Ambulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1-10 days: forelimb support • 4 days after forelimbs, hind limb support • 16 days: walking • 21 days: normal gait 	