

May 2026

# TAIL WAGGIN' TIMES

Monthly Newsletter for NHA Fosters



## Understanding Giardia & Coccidia in Shelter Animals

### What Foster Families Should Know 🐾



If you've fostered before, you may have heard terms like giardia or coccidia during pickups or veterinary visits. These intestinal parasites are extremely common in shelter environments, especially among young animals. While hearing that a foster pet has parasites can sound concerning, the good news is that both conditions are very treatable and manageable with proper care.

Shelter animals are often more vulnerable to intestinal parasites because many come from stressful or overcrowded environments with inconsistent nutrition and limited veterinary care. Stress can weaken the immune system, making it easier for parasites to take hold. Giardia and coccidia are both spread through contact with contaminated feces, surfaces, bedding, food bowls, or water, which is why they can spread quickly in shelters and rescue settings.

Giardia and coccidia cause a range of symptoms and require prompt treatment. Giardia is a microscopic parasite that lives in the intestines and is commonly spread when an animal swallows contaminated material. Pets with giardia may develop soft stool, diarrhea, mucus in the stool, vomiting, or poor weight gain, although some animals may not show symptoms at all. Coccidia are microscopic intestinal parasites that are especially common in puppies and kittens whose immune systems are still developing. Animals with coccidia may experience diarrhea, dehydration, lethargy, decreased appetite, or weight loss.



For foster families, treatment usually involves giving prescribed medication, monitoring stool quality and appetite, and helping maintain a clean environment to prevent reinfection. Frequent cleaning of bedding, food bowls, litter boxes, and living areas is important, as is promptly picking up feces. In some cases, bathing the foster pet during treatment may also be recommended to help remove parasite cysts from the fur. Many fosters also wonder whether these parasites can spread to people or resident pets. While some strains of giardia can affect humans, transmission from pets is relatively uncommon when proper hygiene is practiced. The types of coccidia typically found in dogs and cats are generally species-specific and do not usually infect humans. Washing hands thoroughly after handling animals, cleaning litter boxes, and following sanitation guidelines greatly reduces risk.

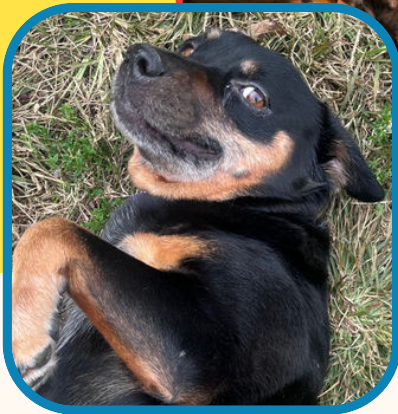
Most importantly, a diagnosis of giardia or coccidia does not mean an animal is unhealthy long-term or has received inadequate care. These are common, treatable parasites, and many young animals are exposed. These parasites are simply a common part of shelter medicine and rescue work. With treatment, patience, and supportive care, most animals recover quickly and go on to live happy, healthy lives. Thank you to all of our foster families for the care, compassion, and dedication you provide to shelter pets every day. Your support gives these animals the opportunities to heal and thrive in loving homes.



# Foster Wins, Love Begins



FOSTER  
FEATURE  
Aster!!



## ❤️🐾 Belly Rubs & New Beginnings: Aster's Story 🐾❤️

Aster's story is one of resilience, second chances, and the incredible impact of compassionate fostering. When she arrived at NHA during October 2025, she carried the weight of a difficult past. She had been rescued from a backyard breeding situation where she had spent 5 years tied outside, producing 2 litters of puppies annually with little care for her wellbeing. On intake, our veterinary team identified several medical needs, including malignant mammary masses, ear infections, and dental issues. During November 2026, during our annual Furriendsgiving Thanksgiving foster program, Patrick P. opened his home to Aster, offering what was meant to be a short-term break, but it became so much more. Despite everything she had endured, Aster showed gentle smiles, a love for belly rubs, and a remarkable ability to trust again. Even through multiple procedures and moments of stress in the kennel, she continued to show her sweet, resilient spirit. After completing her mastectomy and dental surgery, it was clear that Aster had already found her forever home. What started as a temporary foster turned into a lifelong commitment. Patrick P. adopted Aster, giving her the love, comfort, and stability she had always deserved. 🍀

## 🐾❤️ From Shelter to Loved ❤️🐾

### Celebrating Donley's Happy New Beginning

When Donley arrived at NHA from a transport in Brownsville, he needed a little extra care before he was ready for adoption. Like many shelter pets, Donley came to us with dental disease - a very common issue in animals lacking access to regular veterinary care. Dental procedures are an important part of shelter medicine because untreated dental disease can cause pain, difficulty eating, and long-term health problems. One of the goals of foster care is helping pets receive the medical attention they need before heading to their forever homes. By completing dental work prior to adoption, we ensure pets are more comfortable, healthier, and ready to start their next chapters with their new families.

While recovering in foster care with Timlyn R., Donley quickly stole hearts with his affectionate personality. His foster described him as the ultimate cuddle companion. He was always happy to greet people at the door, curl up beside them, and soak up attention. He called Donley "an actual angel." Recovering in a foster home gave Donley the chance to heal in a calm, loving environment while showing everyone just how special he truly is. It didn't take long for Timlyn R. to realize Donley was already home. Shortly after, Donley officially became part of the family.

Stories like Donley's are a wonderful reminder of the impacts foster homes make every day. Thank you to Timlyn R. and all of our incredible fosters for helping shelter pets heal, grow, and find the loving homes they deserve.

FOSTER  
FEATURE  
Donley!!





# PAWPARAZZI PICS

*From the Month of April*



Want your foster photo featured? Email us at [foster@nashvillehumane.org](mailto:foster@nashvillehumane.org) with photos or send them to our foster phone number mentioned in your guide.