



What To Do When You Find Kittens

Comprehensive Overview

It's completely natural to be concerned when you see small kittens without their mom. And it is easy to conclude that they may have been abandoned. BUT bringing them into your house or to the humane society is NOT necessarily the best course of action!

By taking kittens from where they are, you may be putting them in greater danger. The best thing you can do for healthy kittens is leave them outside with mom.

By leaving healthy kittens where they are we are giving them the best chance at survival. The one exception to this rule is if the kittens are old enough to be away from mom, they should be taken in to be spayed/neutered.

If the kittens are dirty, look malnourished or sick, are cold to the touch, or are crying constantly, they could be orphaned kittens. To know for sure:

- Plant yourself at a distance away to watch - being too close by may be what is deterring the mother from coming back

OR

- Check back on the kittens every 2-3 hours to see if mom came back

OR

- If the kittens seem to be staying in one general area, you can make a ring of flour around the kittens and check back later to see if there are any adult paw prints in the flour

If a mother does not return to the kittens within 6 hours, they may be orphaned kittens that do actually need your help.

Follow the steps outlined on the next pages to ensure that you're making the choice that is best for the kittens you've found.

If you have questions along the way don't hesitate to contact Humane Society of Sheboygan County (HSSC) with questions - 920-458-2012 x104.





What To Do When You Find Kittens

Comprehensive Overview Question #1

#1 - ARE THE KITTENS VISIBLY SICK, INJURED, OR MALNOURISHED?

NO - KITTENS ARE NOT VISIBLY SICK, GO TO QUESTION #2

YES - KITTENS DO NOT LOOK WELL:

- If they are cold, dirty, skinny, noisy, non-responsive to being touch then mom may be missing. Very young kittens cannot regulate their own body temperature, so a cold kitten may be an orphaned kitten. Look for sunken bellies, visible bones, or pale skin to confirm the kitten needs your help.
 - In this case, please bring them to Admissions at Humane Society of Sheboygan County (HSSC can only accept animals found within Sheboygan County).
- Admissions is open daily from 10:00AM - 4:00PM
- If you have found an animal after hours, you can call the non-emergency police number and request an officer to drop it off for you: 920-459-3333
- Consider applying to foster and help take care of these kittens. HSSC provides all supplies, treatments, and necessary medical care for foster pets.

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Comprehensive Overview Question #2

#2 - ARE THE KITTENS OLD ENOUGH TO BE AWAY FROM MOM?

NO - NOT OLD ENOUGH = 6 WEEKS OR YOUNGER, GO TO #3A

YES - OLD ENOUGH = 6 WEEKS AND OLDER, GO TO #3B

Age Indicators:

- 0-4 Weeks
 - Eyes closed, barely open, or baby blue eyes
 - Ears small and rounded or just started to point upwards
 - Claws are not yet retractable
- 4-6 Weeks
 - Canines (long teeth) and other deciduous teeth start to emerge
 - Ears are pointy and large or becoming more proportional
 - Eyes are transitioning to their permanent color
- 6+ Weeks
 - Eye color other than blue
 - Male kittens testicles have begun to descend
 - Ears are proportionate to body

More detailed age indicators can be found on the last page!

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What To Do When You Find Kittens

Comprehensive Overview Question #3A

#3A - IF THE KITTENS ARE 0-6 WEEKS OLD, DO YOU SEE A NEST OR HIDING PLACE?

**NO - IF IN A DANGEROUS LOCATION (SIDEWALK/NEAR ROAD),
MOVE TO A SAFE SPOT**

YES - GENTLY RETURN THEM TO IT

It is a common misconception that if humans touch the kitten that mom cats won't come back for them, but this is not the case.

DO NOT TAKE KITTENS if they are visibly healthy, warm, clean, plump, and quiet. Mom is doing her job and she'll be back shortly. She may be off hunting or hiding if people are present. She may not be back for several hours.

If kittens appear healthy and clean, leave them where they are! A kitten's best chance of survival is with their mom. If you want to help, make sure mom has access to shelter, food, and water and contact HSSC about TNR services for when mom and kittens are ready to be spayed/neutered.

Stake out the spot and wait for mom. If you don't have time to stay, spread a ring of flour around the general area the kittens are in and come back later to see if mom's footprints have crossed through the flour.

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What To Do When You Find Kittens

Comprehensive Overview Question #3B

#3B - IF THE KITTENS 6+ WEEKS OLD, IT'S TIME TO GET THEM SPAYED & NEUTERED!

- If you can keep the kitten, contact your veterinarian for an spay/neuter appointment or check out HSSC's website for [low-cost spay/neuter options](#). Keeping kittens at your home or helping to rehome them will free up space at your local shelter.
- If you cannot keep them, reach out to friends and family to try and rehome the kitten.
- OR consider turning in the kitten as a stray and fostering it! HSSC provides all supplies, treatments, and necessary medical care for foster pets.
- If they are not friendly and/or you do not see mom, they can be caught via a live trap.
- **Stray drop-off and live trap rentals are available in the HSSC Admissions Office 10AM-4PM daily.**
- **HSSC is only able to accept strays that were found in Sheboygan County. If found outside of the county, contact that county's local shelter.**

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KITTEN DEVELOPMENT

This is a guideline - every kitten is an individual and their development, health, and care needs may vary.



NEWBORN



- Eyes closed
- Ear canals shut
- Umbilical cord until ~day 5
- Require heat and stimulation to potty
- Weigh 50-100 grams
- Feed 2-6ml every 2 hours

1 WEEK

- Eyes closed; open at 8-12 days
- No umbilical cord
- Require heat and stimulation to potty
- Weigh 150-250 grams
- Feed 6-10ml every 2-3 hours



2 WEEKS

- Eyes open; pupils large; irises blue
- No teeth
- Ears small, rounded
- Require heat and stimulation to potty
- Weight 250-350 grams
- Feed 10-14ml every 3 hours



3 WEEKS



- Incisors emerging
- Ears upright, but still small
- Discovering litterbox
- Moving around slowly
- Require heat; learning litterbox
- Weight 350-450 grams
- Feed 14-18ml every 4 hours



4 WEEKS



- Canines emerging
- Ears pointy and large
- Vision improving
- Walking confidently
- Require toys/enrichment; learning litterbox
- Weight 450-550 grams
- Feed 18-22ml every 5 hours



5 WEEKS



- Premolars emerging
- Ears proportional
- Weaning gradually to wet food
- Require toys/enrichment; learning litterbox
- Weight 550-650 grams
- Offer wet food and bottle every 6 hours

6 WEEKS

- All deciduous teeth have emerged
- Transitioning to adult eye color
- Require toys/enrichment; using litterbox
- Weight 650-750 grams
- Offer wet food 4 times a day



7 WEEKS

- Coordinated and playful like an adult
- Adult eye color present
- Require toys/enrichment; using litterbox
- Weight 750-900 grams
- Offer wet food 3 times a day



8 WEEKS

- A mini cat!
- Require toys/enrichment; using litterbox
- Weight 900+ grams
- Offer wet food 3 times a day
- Can be spayed/neutered