

This guide refers to **Kittens 4 weeks of age and younger**, when care from their mom offers them the BEST chance of survival. Kittens that fit the descriptions below are possibly abandoned and need help from humans.

Kittens who need help:

COLD

Young kittens cannot regulate their own body temperature, and rely on mom, their siblings, and nesting material to keep them warm. They may lose some heat when mom is not with them, so unless they ALSO fit any of the other descriptions below, leave them and check again in 2-4 hours to see if mom came back.

DIRTY

A good mama cat keeps her babies meticulously clean. Kittens who need your help may have dirt, feces, or crusted urine on their bodies. They may be wet. Their genital areas may be red and inflamed, indicating urine scalding.

THIN

Kittens with a mom should be eating frequently. Their bellies will typically have a full, rounded appearance. Sunken bellies, visible bones, and pale skin/gums can indicate that the kittens need help and are not being fed.

NOISY

Orphaned and hungry kittens will cry loudly. But just being noisy by itself does not indicate that they are orphaned. Mom does not stay with the kittens all day, and she might be on her way back. She might even be watching you from the shadows, waiting for YOU to leave her babies alone. Leave these kittens alone for 2-4 hours, then check on them again. If they are quiet when you return, that means mom has probably been back to care for them, and you should let her keep up the good work.

SICK/HURT

Sick kittens might have discharge from the eyes and nose. Their eyes may be crusted shut. They may have wounds or open sores.



These kittens are clean, quiet and dry. They are plump and have full bellies with light pink coloring, showing that they are warm.

They do NOT need your help!



This kitten is noisy, dirty, and sick. It has nasal discharge and crusted-shut eyes.



These kittens are thin, wet, and cold. You can see their backbones.



This kitten is thin, wet, and cold, and has discharge from the eyes.

These kittens DO need your help!