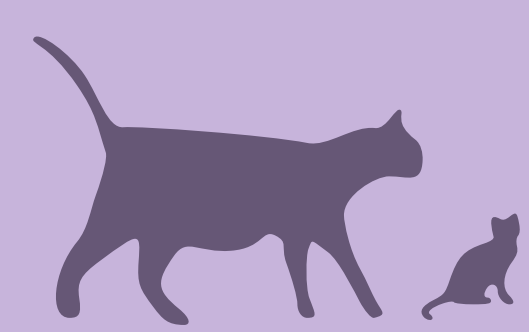


Kitten Season 101: Bottle Babies & Beyond!



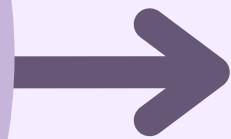
Kitten Season 101: Agenda

- 1 Kitten season: what & why
- 2 What to do if you find kittens
- 3 How to care for kittens
- 4 Common medical concerns
- 5 Preventing future homeless kittens

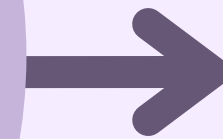


What is kitten season?

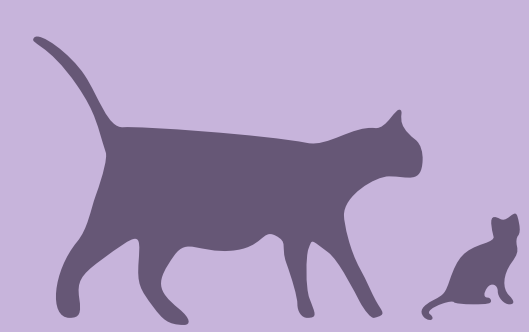
*Cats typically go
in to heat
April - October*



*Breeding
season!*



*Many litters
of kittens are
born*



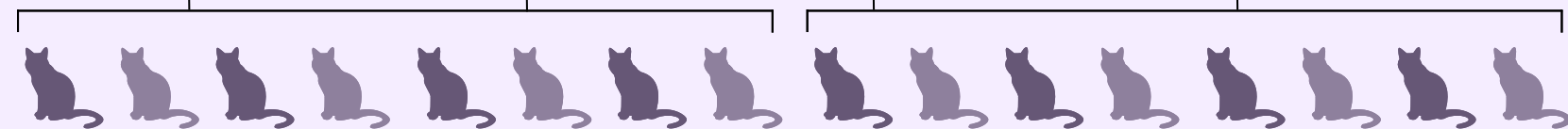
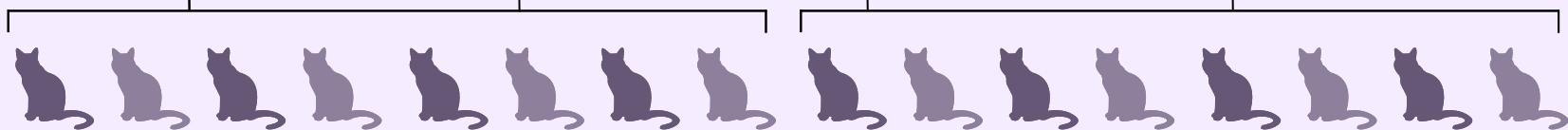
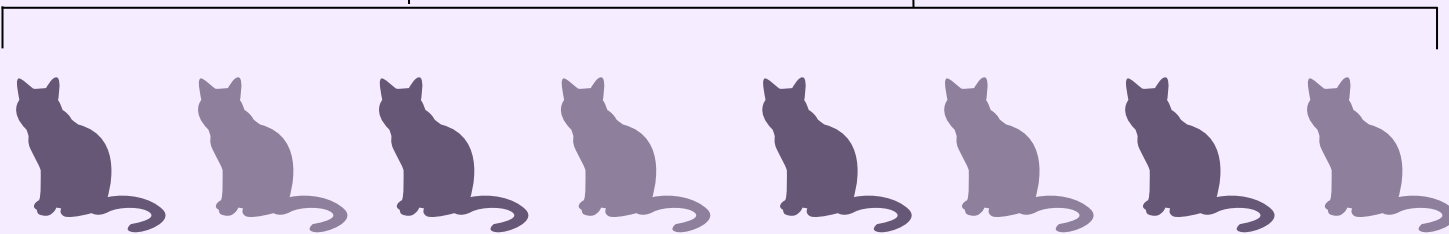
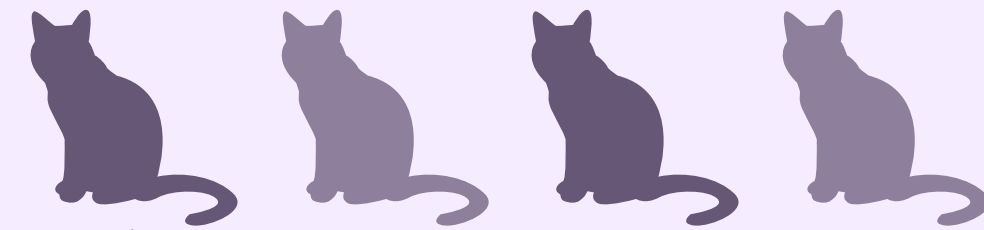
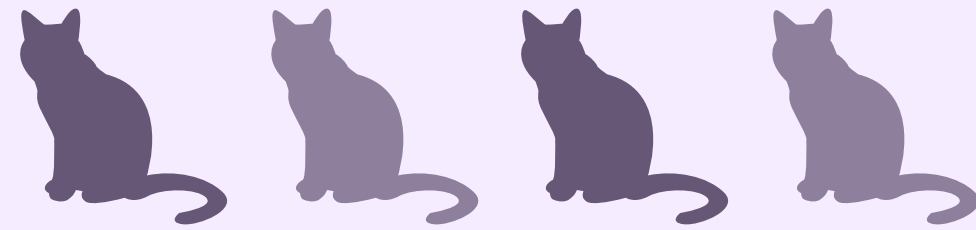
What is kitten season?



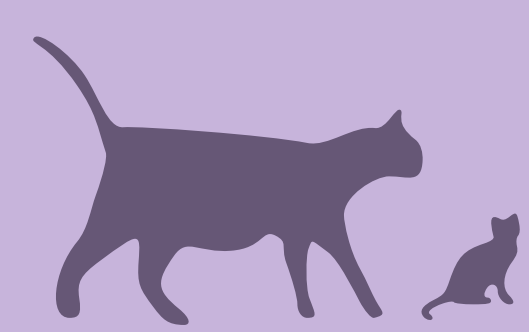
Mama Cat

Could have **2 litters per year** (average)

Of those kittens, at least 2 may be females **with each having 1 litter per year** (could have more)



And the cycle keeps on going!



Why is kitten season?

Lots of **unaltered** male & female cats (*owned + feral*)

Litters range from **4-8 kittens**

Gestation period = **60 days**

Cats reach sexual maturity as young as **4 months old**

Cats can have **multiple litters** per year

Kitten Season 101: Agenda

- 1 Kitten season: what & why
- 2 What to do if you find kittens**
- 3 How to care for kittens
- 4 Common medical concerns
- 5 Preventing future homeless kittens

?

What should I do if I find kittens?

?

Take
them
home?

?

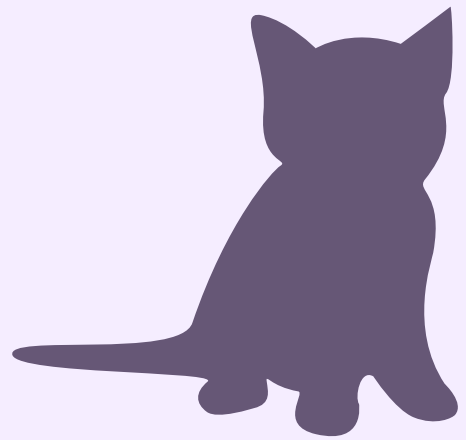
Take
them to
HSCC?

?

Leave
them
alone?

? What should I do if I find kittens?

Consider the following factors:



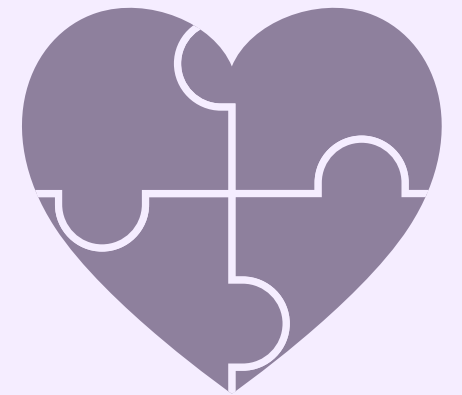
AGE



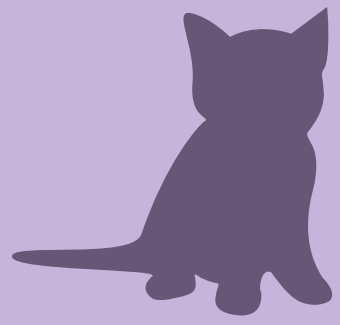
CONDITION



SETTING



ABILITY



How old is that kitten?



Newborn

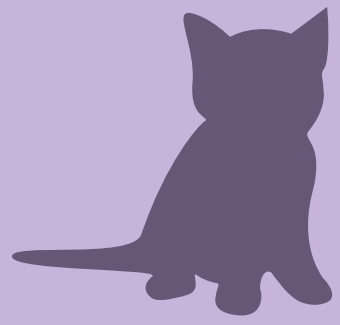
- Eyes closed
- Folded ears
- May have umbilical cord

1 Week

- Eyes may start to open
- Ears start to unfold
- Smaller than your hand

2 Weeks

- Eyes fully open + blue
- Incisors may start to show



How old is that kitten?



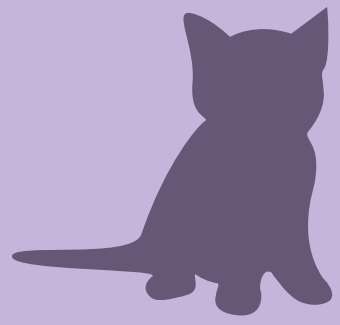
Newborn

- Eyes closed
- Folded ears
- May have umbilicus

2 weeks

- Eyes green + blue
- Ears start to

KEEP WITH MOM WHENEVER POSSIBLE!



How old is that kitten?

SOCIALIZATION WINDOW!



3 Weeks

- Eyes fully open and blue
- Ears fully upright
- Starting to walk but wobbly



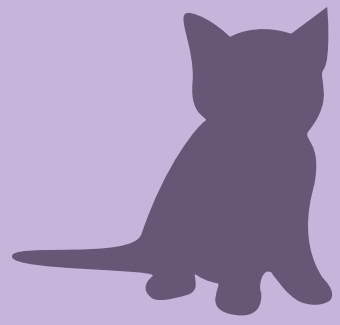
4 Weeks

- Eyes still blue
- Starting to explore
- Can start weaning and litter box training



5 Weeks

- Steady on their feet
- Playful
- Can eat wet kitten food supplemented with milk



How old is that kitten?



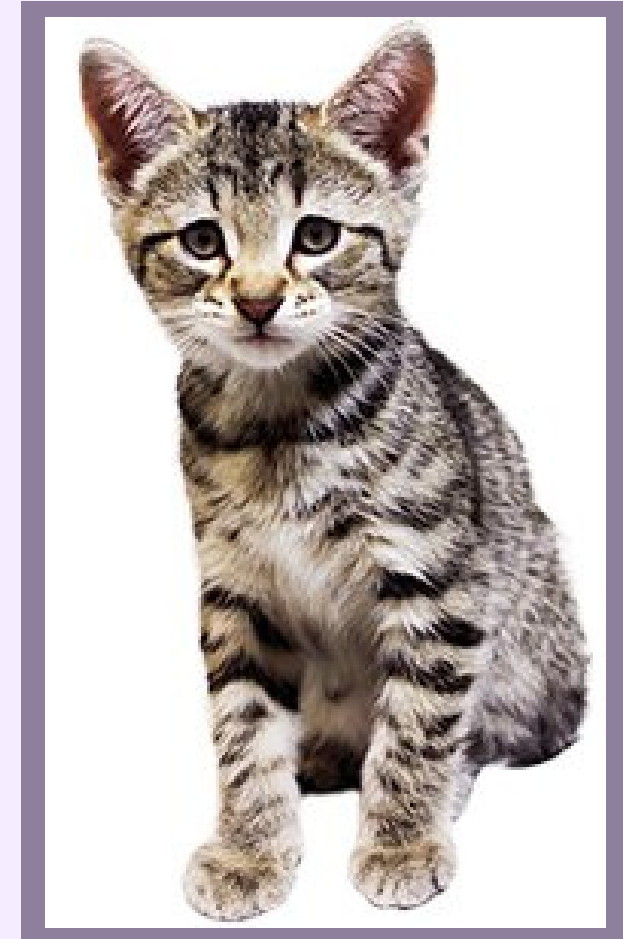
6 Weeks

- Weigh about 1-1.5 lbs
- Can clean themselves
- Can be fully weaned and survive without mom



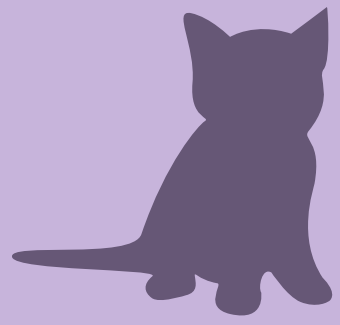
7 Weeks

- Eyes may change color
- Highly mobile
- Can eat wet + dry kitten food



8 Weeks

- Eyes now their adult color
- Weigh about 2 lbs
- Exclusively eating solid food



How old is that kitten?



OLD ENOUGH TO BE SEPARATED FROM MOM!

6 Weeks

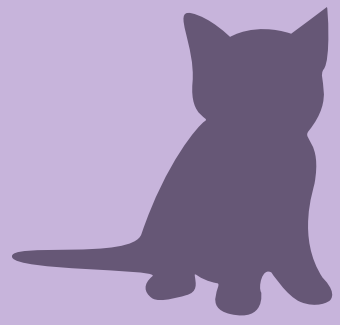
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7 Weeks

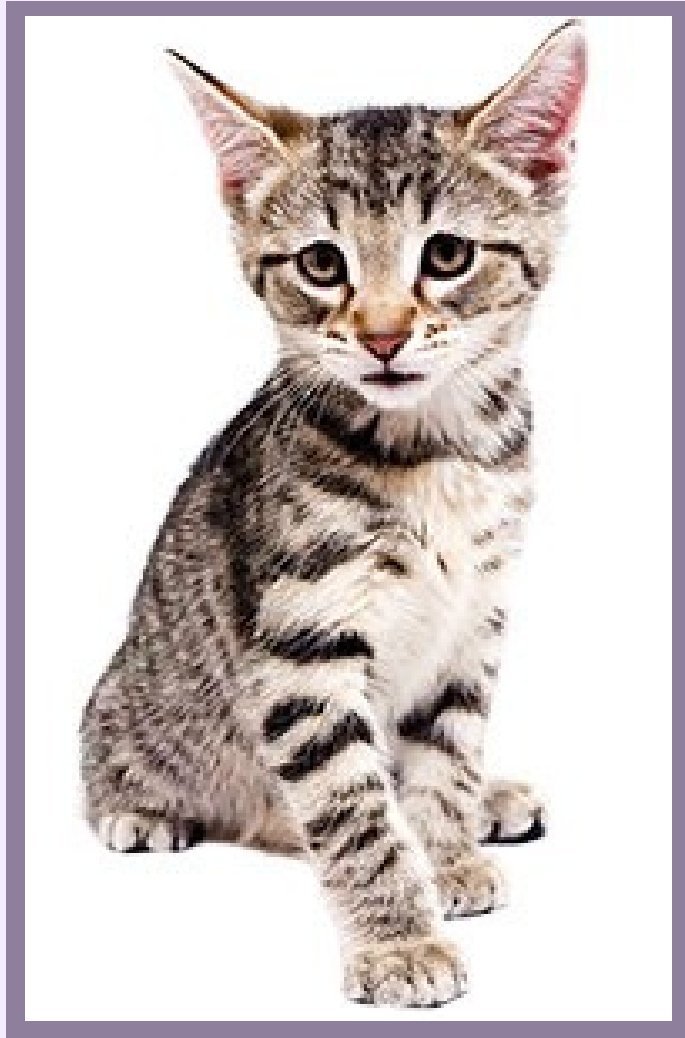
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8 Weeks

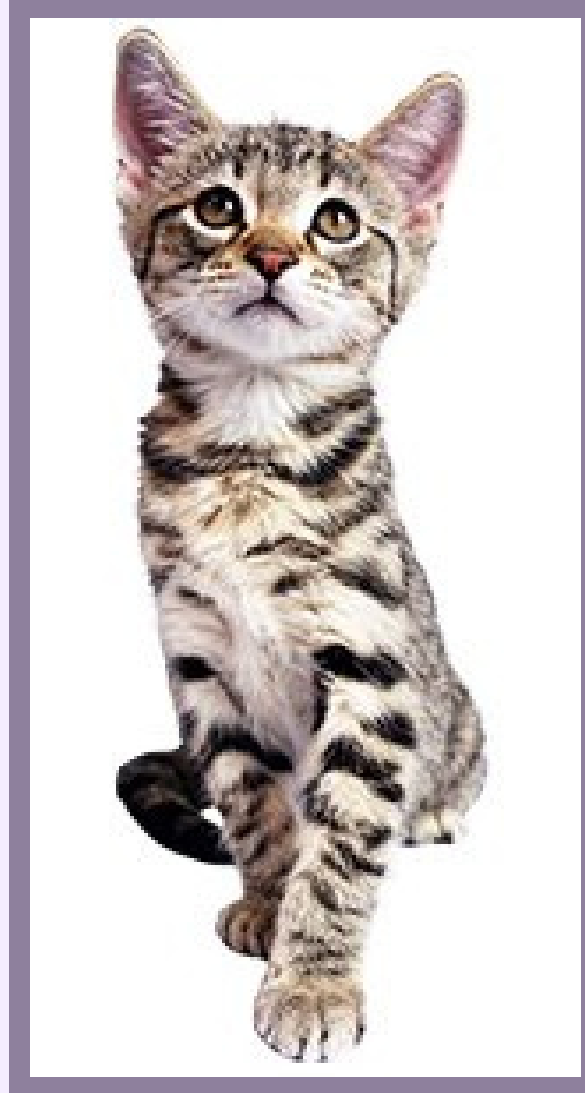
- Eyes now their adult color
- Weigh about 2 lbs
- Exclusively eating solid food



How old is that kitten?



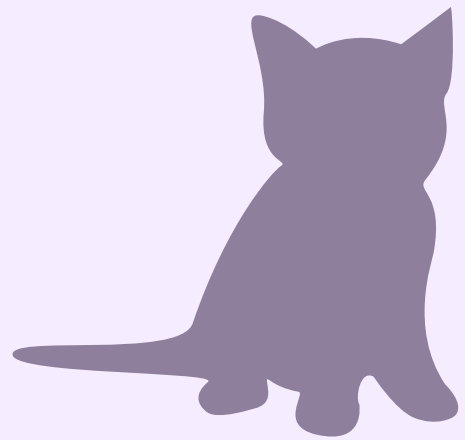
9 Weeks



10 Weeks

All grown up and ready
to find a home!

? What should I do if I find kittens?



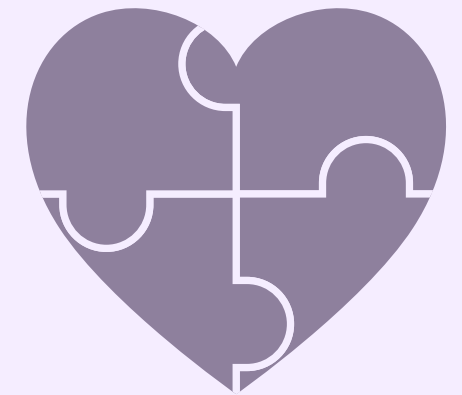
AGE



CONDITION



SETTING



ABILITY



What condition is the kitten in?



✓ Good Condition

- Clean and alert
- Portly and well-fed
- Not in distress



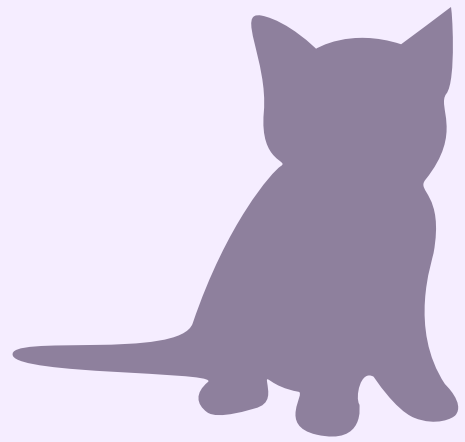
**NEEDS
URGENT
HELP!**

- Call HSCC
- Call BEVS

✗ Bad Condition

- Dirty or covered in waste
- Skinny, visibly underweight
- In distress or medical crisis

What should I do if I find kittens?



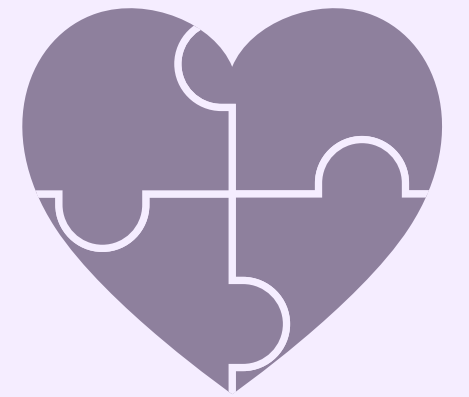
AGE



CONDITION



SETTING



ABILITY



What's the setting?

✓ Safe Setting

- Mom is present
- Caregiver is present
- Family has food, water, & shelter

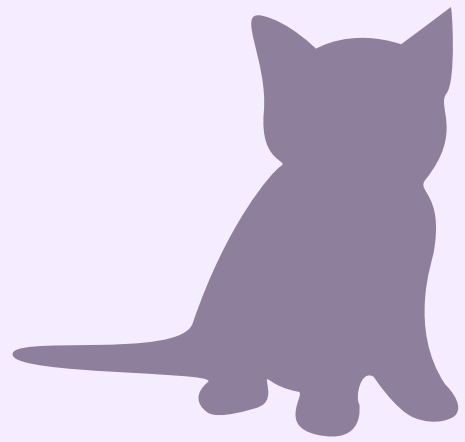
✗ Unsafe Setting

- Mom is missing (*and doesn't come back*)
- Extreme weather
- Situational hazards

Every situation is different, so use your best judgment!

You can always call HSCC for help and guidance.

? What should I do if I find kittens?



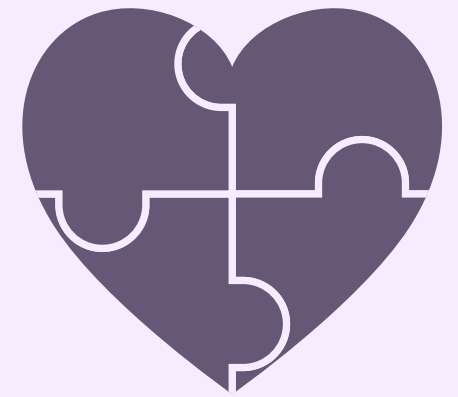
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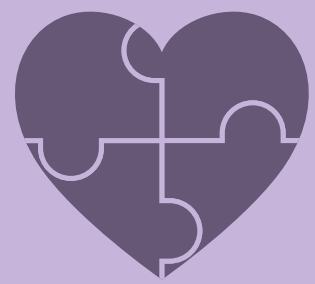
CONDITION



SETTING



ABILITY



How are you able to help?

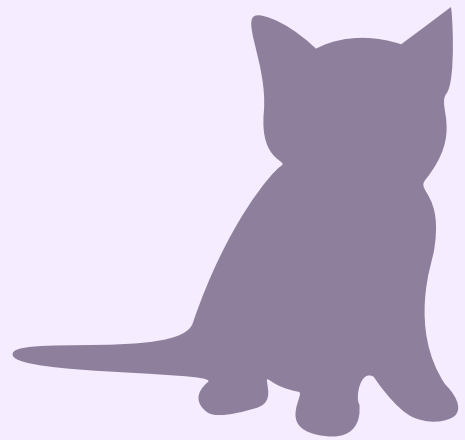
Ask yourself:

- Am I able to observe and assess the situation?
- Am I able to provide foster care?
- Do I have the time to safely and comfortably meet the needs of kitten care?

Be realistic about what you're able to do in a given situation, and work within your means and capacity!

? What should I do if I find kittens?

Okay, I've considered the factors...



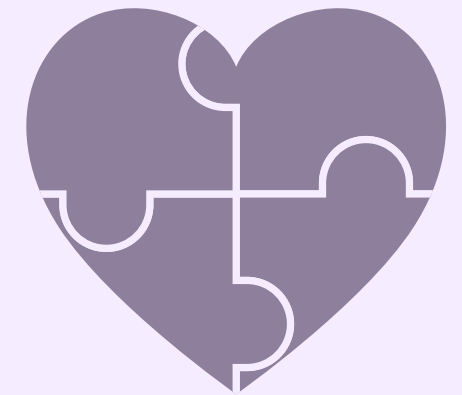
AGE



CONDITION



SETTING



ABILITY

What's next?



START HERE:

Are the kittens injured or critically sick?

YES

Monday-Friday 8AM-4PM

Saturday - Sunday*
or Monday-Friday 4PM-8AM

**HSCC does not have medical staff on the weekends!*

CALL HSCC!

CALL BEVS

NO ↓

ESTIMATE THE AGE OF THE KITTENS



0-2 WEEKS OLD



2-4 WEEKS OLD



4-6 WEEKS OLD



6-8 WEEKS OLD



8-12 WEEKS OLD

STOP! Can you see the mom cat OR a nest?

YES ↓

DON'T KIT-NAP!

A kitten's best chance of survival is with mom. **Leave the kittens with mom** until you can make a plan or get in touch with HSCC.

NO ↓

ARE YOU SURE?

Mom may be hunting, moving the litter, or avoiding humans. **Watch for a few hours to see if she comes back.**

PRO TIP: Leave a ring of flour around the kittens. Check back for mom's foot prints.

CALL HSCC!

Or request an appointment to bring them to us on our website under "Rehoming a Pet"

If you feel comfortable and confident in caring for them, please **take the kittens home** to care for them until we can take them in.

LEAVE THEM BE!

Make a plan for TNR, and call HSCC for assistance.

If you can, make sure mom has access to shelter, food, and water.

MOM CAME BACK

STILL NO MOM

MOM IS FERAL

MOM IS FRIENDLY



Feral vs. Friendly

MOM IS FERAL

- Won't meow, beg, or purr
- Unlikely to make eye contact, won't blink
- May crawl, crouch, stay low to ground
- Will not approach people



TNR (Trap-Neuter-Return) is the best option. If the kittens are **4-6 weeks old**, the whole family should be trapped so mom can be TNR'd and kittens can be socialized and adopted.

MOM IS FRIENDLY

- May be vocal
- Will likely look at you, blink
- May walk with tail up
- May approach people, houses



Follow recommendations for strays and try to find an owner. The whole family can be brought inside.



Why would you leave kittens outside?

- **Isn't it dangerous?**

It depends on the situation, but keep in mind that cats are incredibly resourceful, especially if they're used to living outside.

- **Wouldn't they have a better chance of survival inside?**

It depends on the cat (and the situation), but neonatal kittens always have a better chance of survival with their mom, even if it's outside.

- **Won't they be happier in a home?**

Also depends on the cat! Even if your home is very nice, a mother cat may become so stressed by being confined in the new environment that it impacts her health and her ability to care for her kittens.



What if I can't help?

If you find kittens or a family and you don't have the capacity to help, *it's okay.*

→ Do what you can

→ Reach out to your community

Keep in mind that cats are smart, resourceful, and capable of surviving and thriving in a variety of different circumstances.

Kitten Season 101: Agenda

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Caring for kittens at home



With mom

- Take care of mom
- Observe and socialize kittens



Without mom

- Bottle feeding
- Stimulation
- Socialization



Caring for kittens at home

Set Up

- Heat source
- Bedding (towels, blankets)
- Hiding spot (for mom)
- Kitten proof the area
- Keep separate from other animals (*bathrooms, bedrooms with closets*)





Caring for kittens at home

Bottle Feeding

for kittens 0-4 weeks old

Tools:

- KMR
- Syringe or bottle
- Miracle nipple

Tips:

- Make sure formula is comfortably warm
- Keep kitten tummy-down
- Hold kitten steady
- Invert bottle to allow flow
- Do NOT squeeze the bottle!



Caring for kittens at home

Bottle Feeding

kitten weight and feeding chart

| AGE | WEIGHT | AMOUNT PER FEEDING | SCHEDULE |
|-----------|---------------|------------------------------------|-----------------|
| 0-1 week | 50-150 grams | 2-6 ml | Every 2 hours |
| 1-2 weeks | 150-250 grams | 6-10 ml | Every 2-3 hours |
| 2-3 weeks | 250-350 grams | 10-14 ml | Every 3-4 hours |
| 3-4 weeks | 350-450 grams | 14-18 ml | Every 4-5 hours |
| 4-5 weeks | 450-550 grams | 18-22 ml | Every 5-6 hours |
| 5-8 weeks | 550-850 grams | (weaning; offer ample wet food) | Every 6 hours |



Weigh kittens daily to ensure weight gain!



Caring for kittens at home

Bottle Feeding Demonstration!





Caring for kittens at home

Stimulating

for kittens 0-4 weeks old

- Kittens under 4 weeks old need help to pee and poop!
- Stimulate after bottle feeding
- Warm, moist wash cloth
- Gently rub anal area to stimulate urination and defecation



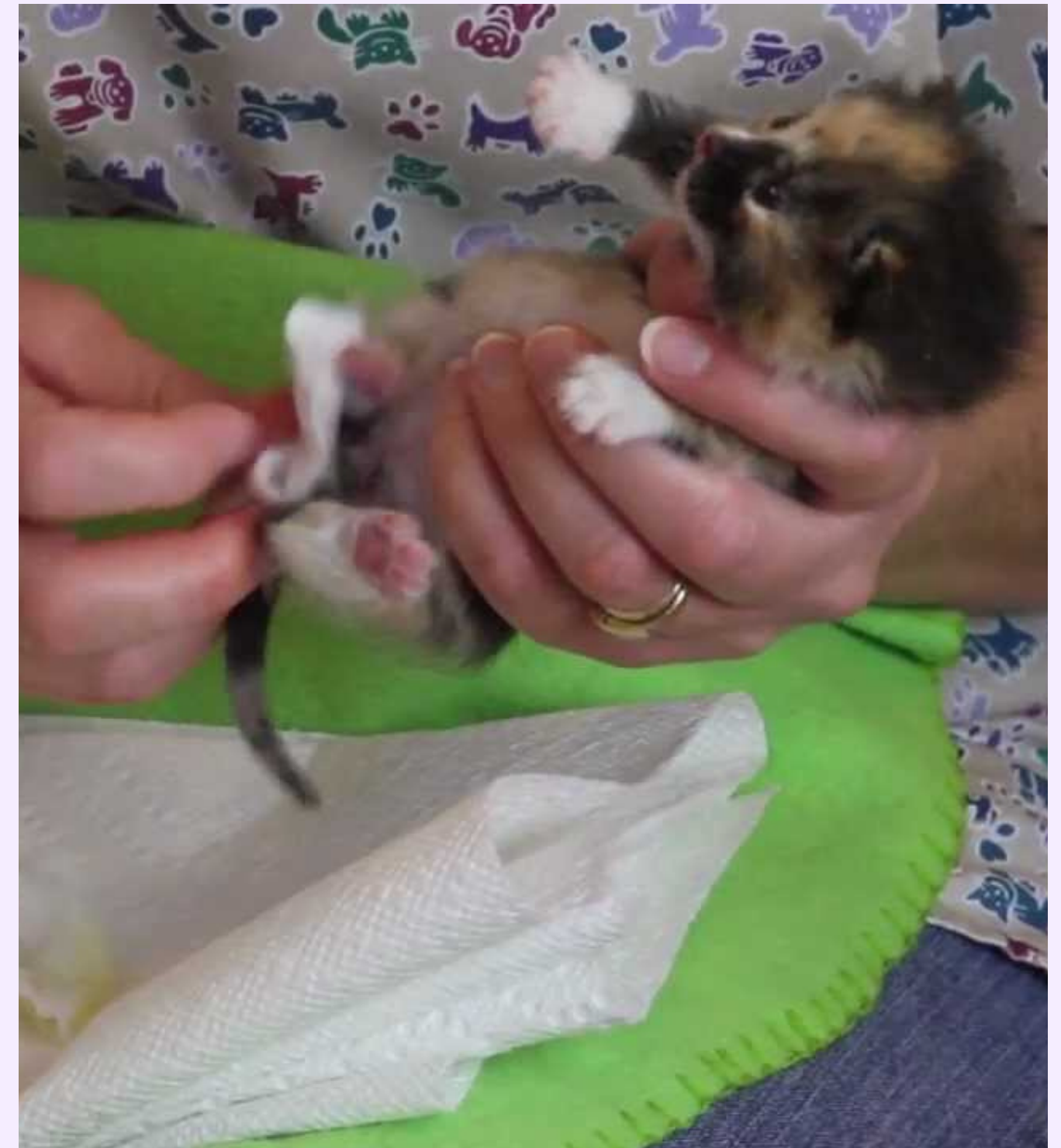


Caring for kittens at home

Stimulating

for kittens 0-4 weeks old

- Pee = every time you feed them
- Poop = a few times a day
- Kitten poop is normally mustard yellow with the consistency of toothpaste
- Gently clean area with a baby wipe



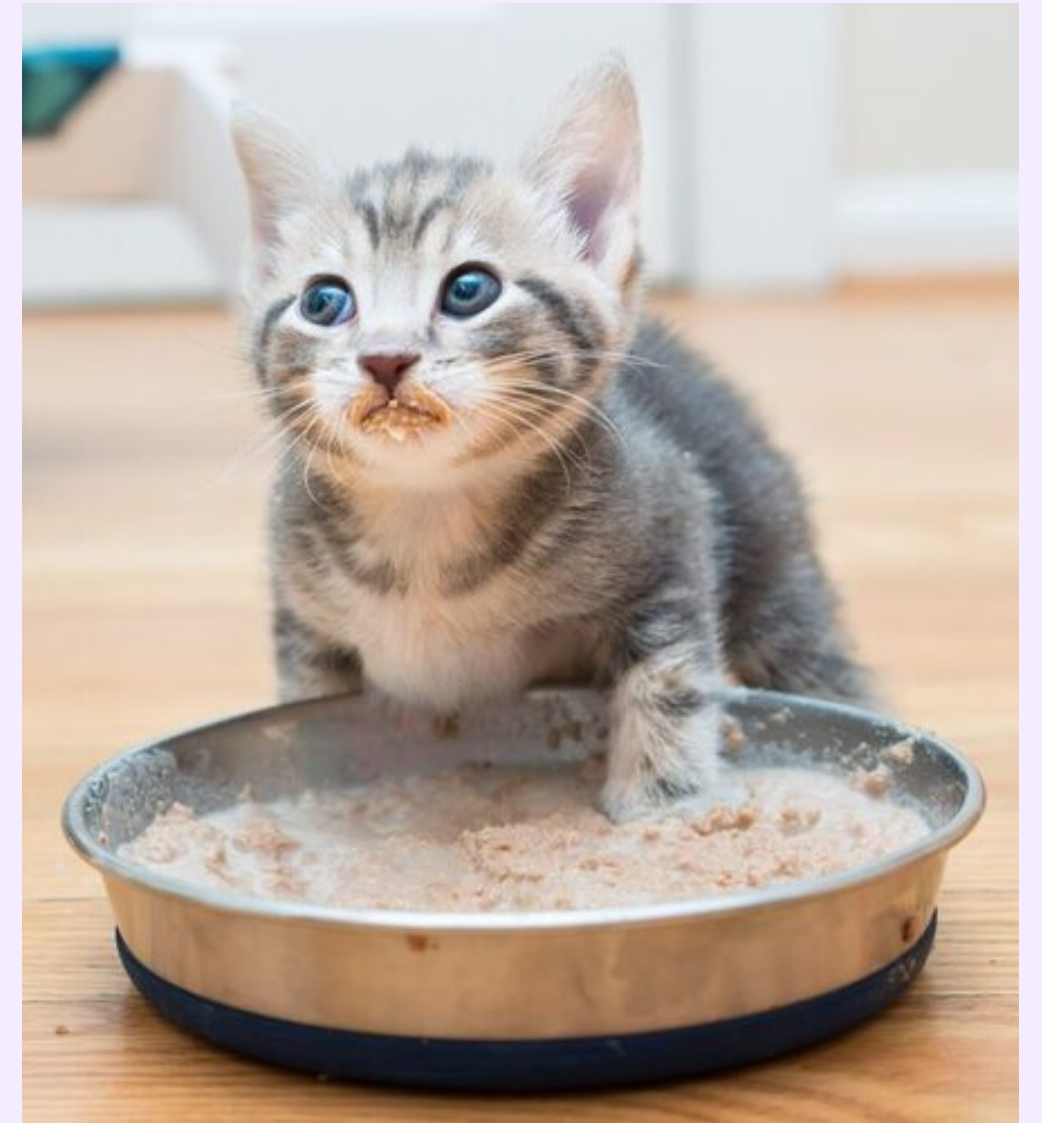


Caring for kittens at home

Weaning

for kittens 4+ weeks old

- Don't rush it!
- Kitten food slurry mixed with formula *(if no mom)* or water *(if they are nursing)*
- Offer small bites on a spoon or finger
- Continue to supplement with formula or nursing





Caring for kittens at home

Socialization

for kittens 2+ weeks old

Critical window = 2-6 weeks old

Socialization methods:

- *Touch*
- *Purrity*
- *Play*
- *Use food*





Caring for kittens at home

Kitten's first vet care

- **First distemper vaccine:** *4-6 weeks old, boosters every 2-3 weeks until 5 months old*
- **First rabies vaccine:** *3 months old*
- **Deworming (Pyrantel):** *start at 2 weeks old, 3 rounds every 2 weeks*
- **First flea treatment:** *8 weeks old*

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Common Medical Concerns

URI & Conjunctivitis

Diarrhea & Constipation

Worms

Fading Kitten Syndrome

Fleas

Ringworm, Panleuk, etc.



Common Medical Concerns

URI (*Upper Respiratory Infection*) + **Conjunctivitis**

Symptoms:

- Nasal discharge
- Sneezing
- Lack of appetite
- Decreased energy, lethargy
- Eye discharge (cloudy, yellow, or greenish)

Solutions:

- Stimulate appetite
- Fluids
- Warm compress/steam
- Antibiotics*
- Anti-nausea medication*

**Medications must be prescribed by a veterinarian*



Common Medical Concerns

Worms (*roundworms, hookworms, tapeworms*)

Symptoms:

- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Seeing worms in vomit/stool
- Swollen or distended belly
- Decreased energy, lethargy

Solutions:

- Fecal test through vet
- Dewormer
 - Different depending on parasite
 - Get from a vet
 - *In a pinch, can get dewormer from Tractor Supply, but be very careful with dosage!*



Common Medical Concerns

Fleas

Symptoms:

- Visible fleas on coat/skin
- Flea dirt (flea poop!)
- Fur loss/skin irritation

Solutions:

- Flea bath
 - Dawn dish soap + flea comb
 - Be sure to blow dry!
- Flea/tick treatment (8+ weeks only)



Common Medical Concerns

Diarrhea

Symptoms:

- Loose or liquid stool
- May also be vomiting
- May also have low appetite

Solutions:

- Keep kittens hydrated!!
 - Can mix formula with Pedialyte instead of water
 - Fluids
- Stimulate appetite
- Rule out worms
- Fortiflora or other probiotic
- Consistent diet



Common Medical Concerns

Constipation

Symptoms:

- 24+ hours without pooping
- Straining
- Small, hard stool
- Distended abdomen
- Palpable stool build-up

Solutions:

- Hydration
 - Pedialyte or fluids
- Warm water bath
- Miralax (*ask a vet for dosage*)
- Lactulose
- Enema (VETS + EXPERTS ONLY!)



Common Medical Concerns

Fading Kitten Syndrome (*AKA "failure to thrive"*)

Symptoms:

- Hypothermia/low body temp
- Extreme lethargy
- Labored breathing
- Excessive vocalization

Solutions:

- Provide warmth
- Increase blood sugar
 - Karo syrup
 - Nutrical
- Seek emergency vet care



Less Common Medical Concerns

Ringworm

- Scaly, circular patches of hair loss (usually not itchy)
- Zoonotic (*people and other animals can get it!*)
- Requires prescribed antifungals
- Lime sulfur dip (*topical treatment*)

Anemia

- Symptoms:
 - Lethargy, not eating
 - Pale to white gums
- Usually from fleas, but can have other causes
- If severely flea infested, treat the fleas
- If no fleas, seek a vet ASAP



Less Common Medical Concerns

FIP (*Feline Infectious Peritonitis*)

- General symptoms:
 - Inappetence
 - Vomiting
 - Lethargy
 - Eye or neurologic changes
- Difficult to diagnose
- Even harder to treat
- Usually fatal
- Could be a whole topic in itself...

Panleukopenia (*Feline Distemper*)

- Viral disease in cats/kittens
- Causes vomiting, diarrhea, severe dehydration
- Often fatal!
- Supportive emergency care is best:
 - IV fluids
 - Appetite stimulants
 - Antinausea meds
- Highly contagious - *isolate from other cats and disinfect everything!*



Less Common Medical Concerns

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**SEEK
VET
ASAP!**



When to seek urgent care

Lethargy

Respiratory Distress

Not eating

Not urinating

Vomit/Diarrhea

Collapse/Seizures

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Preventing Homeless Kittens



**Spay & Neuter
Your Cats!**



**Spay-The-Mom
Program**



TNR
(Trap-Neuter-Return)



Preventing Homeless Kittens

Spay & Neuter Your Cats!

- HSCC's Community Pet Clinic offers low-cost spay & neuter for cats (and dogs!)
- Kira's Fund is available to help local families who cannot afford cat spay/neuter



 Humane Society
of Chittenden County

Community Pet Clinic

Low-cost preventative veterinary care services

Spay/Neuter Clinic

*Mondays, Tuesdays, & every other Thursday**

All surgeries include:

- + Rabies / Distemper vaccines
- + Bordetella vaccine (dogs only)
- + Flea/tick treatment
- + Nail trimming
- + Ear cleaning

**By appointment only*

Learn more + book on our website
hscvt.org/community-pet-clinic or call us at
(802) 923-9028!



Preventing Homeless Kittens



Spay The Mom Program

- For pregnant or nursing cats (dogs too!)
- Free spay, vaccines, and microchip
- HSCC finds homes for kittens

For more information, call (802) 862-0135 or visit hsccvct.org/surrender-prevention



Preventing Homeless Kittens

TNR (Trap-Neuter-Return)

- Feral cats only
- Returning to original location
- Caretakers provide food & water
- Rent a humane trap from HSCC
- Before you start trapping: **make a plan and an appointment**
- Free TNR through the CPC



For more information, call (802) 923-9028 or visit hscvvt.org/community-pet-clinic



Interested in fostering?

Become a kitten foster
for HSCC!

Apply today on our website:
hscct.org/Foster-Care





Resources

Kitten Lady.

Alley_Cat Allies

Maddie's Fund

Best Friends Animal Society.



Thank you for coming!



Questions?

