



What to do when you find kittens

Nancy Mingus, ACHS Volunteer

Found kittens?

If you find a litter of kittens, or a single kitten alone, don't assume they've been abandoned. In most cases, the best thing you can do is leave them be. Kittens have the highest chance of survival when they remain with their mother.

Outdoor, feral, or unsocialized female cats choose many different places to give birth: storm drains, barns and sheds, under houses and decks, or in bushes and tall grass.

Assess the kittens

Are they warm, clean, plump, and sleeping? If yes, their mom is caring for them. She may be hiding nearby and watching you—or she might be out searching for food.

Observe before intervening. Move at least 35 feet away, and stay as hidden as possible. Watch for 8–12 hours if you can.

Only intervene if the kittens are in immediate danger, such as cold or rainy weather, heavy foot or vehicle traffic, or the presence of loose dogs.

How old are these kittens?

On page 2 we've pasted a terrific Kitten Development Chart from [Alley Cat Allies](#).

ACHS Volunteers: please bookmark [alleycat.org](#) for great information. They deserve donations and support!

When to step in

Only step in if the kittens are thin, dirty, or crying constantly—or you've waited several hours and the mom has not returned. Then it's time to help.

If you do decide to remove the kittens, have a warm setup ready for them:

- A box or container
- Heating pad on low
- Warm water bottle wrapped in a towel or a microwaved rice pack
- Soft blankets

Important:

- Never feed a cold kitten
 - Never give cow's milk
- Both of these can be fatal!

Instead of cow's milk, use Kitten Milk Replacer, available in stores locally.

Get help immediately

We have trained fosters and bottle feeders who can help. If you are not prepared, experienced, or able to care for orphaned kittens, please reach out. Seeking professional help is vital to their survival.

Contact the Athens County Humane Society:

740-592-6047 Main phone line

740-590-0711 Humane Agent

These numbers are monitored by our Executive Director, Humane Agent, and key volunteers. They may be working with animals when you call, but they check messages frequently and will return your call as soon as possible.

Pass this along—this information saves lives.

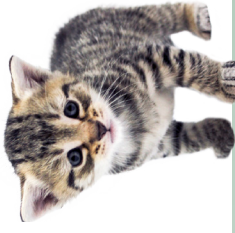
HOW OLD IS THAT KITTEN?



Alley Cat Allies®

Kittens are adorable at any age, but did you know that figuring out how old a kitten is can help determine what sort of care they need? It can be tricky to tell, but our at-a-glance kitten progression chart, featuring Darling the kitten, is here to help you out!

a little wobbly!



FOUR WEEKS



THREE WEEKS



TWO WEEKS



ONE WEEK



NEWBORN

When kittens are first born they are completely helpless—their eyes are closed, their ears are folded, and they can't stand, keep themselves warm, eliminate waste, or eat on their own. They rely on mom for everything!

Darling is starting to become more aware of his surroundings! At about seven days old, a kitten's ears will unfold and their eyes may start to open.

Look at those blue peepers! Darling's eyes are fully open, and he is taking his first wobbly steps. Kittens this age start interacting more with each other, but still need mom.

Darling's now playing with his siblings and getting more mobile. You should be able to tell if kittens are boys or girls. You can start providing a litter box and wet food.

Look how much Darling has grown! At four weeks kittens are sturdy on their feet and playing with each other, toys, and people.



FIVE WEEKS

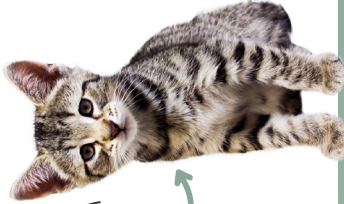
let's play!



SIX WEEKS



SEVEN WEEKS



EIGHT WEEKS

so grown up!



NINE WEEKS



TEN WEEKS

ready to take on the world!

Get ready for a lot of fun! Darling is now full of energy and plays exuberantly. Interacting with people is important for kittens at this age. Darling is developing lots of personality!

Every day Darling is getting more sure of himself through socialization and play. He's using the litter box and eating cat food—though he still visits mom for snacks and comfort.

Darling is almost fully weaned, and continues to play and learn. Being introduced to new people, places in the home, and other pets is an important part of socialization.

Two pounds! Darling now weighs enough to be neutered. He's also getting more skilled and adventurous. Darling is learning so much from his mom, siblings, and human caregiver.

Looking pretty grown-up, Darling! At this age kittens are behaving and using their body language like adult cats. Darling is eating all solid food, and his eyes have gone from blue to yellow.

Darling is fully weaned, neutered, and—because he was socialized to people—ready for his loving adoptive home. They grow up so fast!

Get even more details (and cute pics!) with our week-by-week kitten progression resource at

alleycat.org/KittenProgression

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THIS WONDERFUL CHART COMES FROM ALLEY CAT ALLIES, AN INFORMATION SOURCE WE SHOULD ALL KEEP HANDY. THEIR SITE IS FULL OF ESSENTIAL INFORMATION, AND YOU CAN EVEN BUY PRINTED PIECES—LIKE A POSTER OF THIS CHART!