

They're cute, cuddly and desperately in need of your help. Or are they?

If you happen upon a litter of tiny kittens outdoors, it's natural to want to scoop them up and try to care for them yourself or take them to a shelter. But both of those options may actually place them in more danger. To give newborn kittens the best chance of survival, follow these steps:

1. Leave the kittens alone and try to figure out if their mom is still around. Observe them from a distance every couple of hours for 12 to 18 hours. If the kittens seem content and are not fussing, there's a good chance their mom is coming back.
2. If the kittens are in danger due to their location, move them to a safer spot nearby so the mom can easily find them when she returns.
3. If the kittens are dirty, meowing or appear sick, underweight or dehydrated, contact a local rescue organization or a trap-neuter-return (TNR) or community cat program. They can help you determine if the kittens are at risk and if you should intervene.
4. If you spot the mom, leave the kittens alone. When the kittens have been eating on their own for about four weeks or are big enough for surgery (typically when they're between two and three months old), humanely trap the whole family and have them spayed or neutered. A local TNR program may be able to help you with the trapping process. After the cats are fixed, release them at the location where you found them. TNR is the most humane method of preventing cats and kittens from entering the shelter system.



Thank you for all you do for community cats and kittens. Together, we can Save Them All®.

To learn more about caring for newborn kittens:

bestfriends.org/straykittens