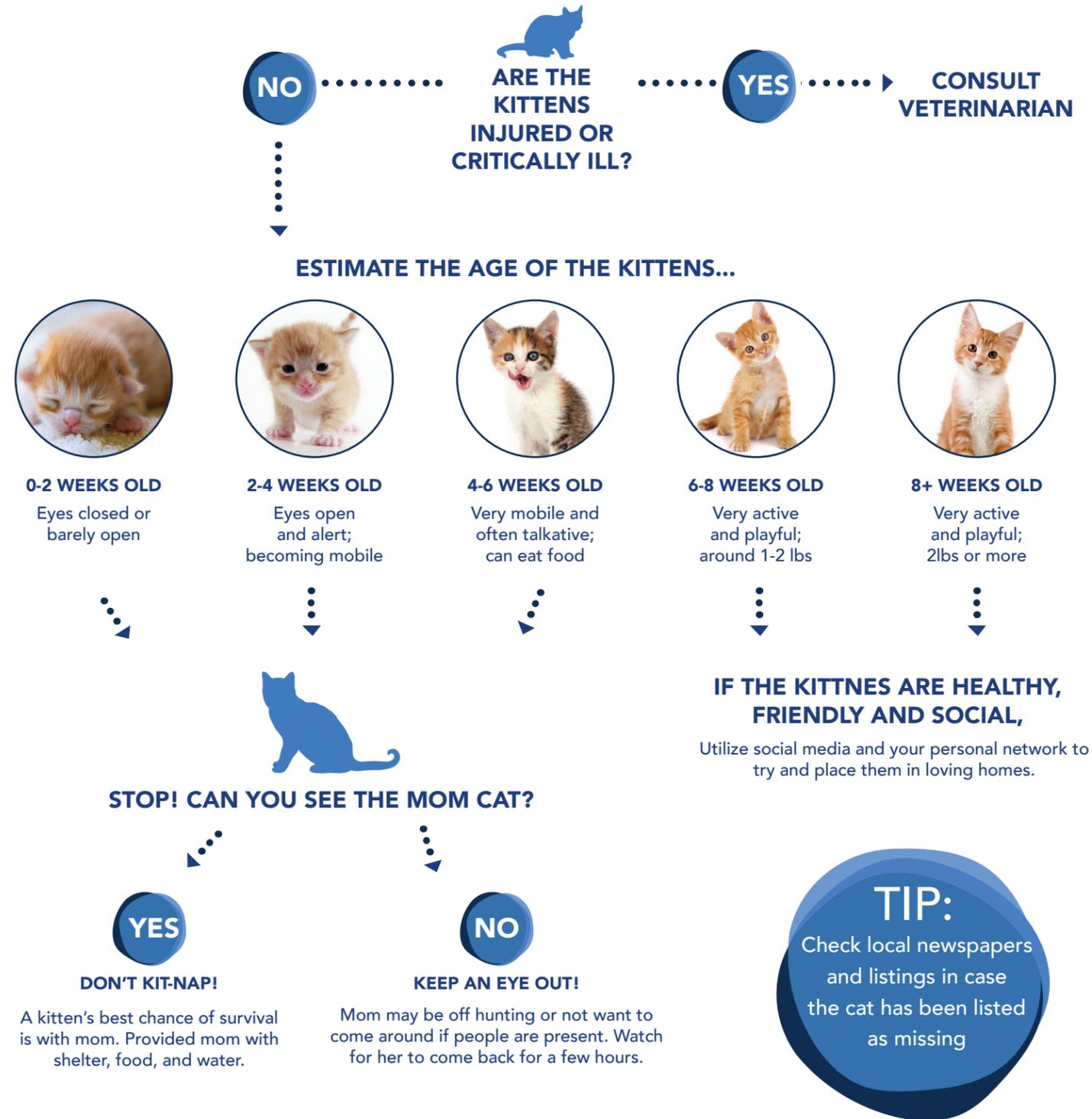


# HELP, I FOUND A KITTEN OUTDOORS!

Found a kitten? Follow North Shore Animal League America's guide to find out what to do next. Before you do anything, it is important to determine if kittens are injured and estimate the age of the kitten.



## I HAVE KITTENS IN MY YARD!

### WHAT DO I DO IF THERE IS A FERAL MOTHER CAT WITH KITTENS IN MY YARD?

- 1. Give them space,** mom doesn't want you near her newborns. If you try to help, she may move the babies or abandon them if she feels threatened.
- 2. Make any interaction positive!** Speak softly to her, never tower over her, use treats but always remember some moms are very protective so beware. If she feels threatened, she may lunge to protect herself and her babies.
- 3. Make sure the feline family has a safe and comfortable place to sleep,** and where the little ones can grow up. A low traffic area is best where nothing can threaten them such as other animals and people.
- 4. Provide mom with nutritious food** so she doesn't have to leave her babies to hunt for it. Mom should receive kitten food while she is nursing and be switched to cat food once the kittens are weaned. Please make sure to place the food away from mom and her little ones; food will attract other animals and this will put them in danger. Food should be set down during the day with fresh water but picked up at dusk, or you will soon have neighborhood wildlife showing up for a free meal.
- 5. Do not attempt to handle the kittens within the first few weeks of life.** Again, you don't want to do anything to make mom feel uncomfortable and leave or move her family.
- 6. Once the kittens are older,** walking around and eating on their own, you can interact with them. It is very important for the kittens to get used to being handled, or else they will quickly learn to mimic mom's feral behavior and avoid people.



7. **As the kittens grow, it's important to think about finding homes for these bundles of fur.** Speak with friends and family about adopting. You can also talk to your local shelter and/or rescue organization. Try to find placement for your little family even before they are old enough because during kitten season many shelters become overcrowded. And never post your kittens on web-based platforms such as Craig's List. Screen potential adopters and speak to your local shelter or rescue organization if you are unsure how to do that.
8. **The kittens can be taken from their mom at about 6 weeks.** Please do not take the kittens away earlier unless it's for health reasons or they are in danger. It's important for kittens to stay with their mother and nurse so they get nutrients only mom can provide. It is equally important for the kittens to stay with the mother and siblings so they socialize properly.
9. **Once the kittens are away from mom, she can be spayed!** Contact SpayUSA® to find a veterinarian or spay/neuter clinic in your area.



North Shore Animal League America's SpayUSA® is a nationwide referral network for affordable spay and neuter services. For over 20 years SpayUSA has helped hundreds of thousands of people nationwide obtain low cost, quality spay and neuter services for their cats. Our goal is to make spay/neuter services affordable to those who might not otherwise spay/neuter their pets. By working together, we hope to popularize and facilitate spay/neuter services throughout the country and end pet overpopulation.

The Community Outreach Resource Center provides equipment rental packages that include a trap and divider, please contact us for more information at [communityoutreach@animalleague.org](mailto:communityoutreach@animalleague.org)



**SCAN QR CODE**  
to help us end  
pet overpopulation!



## WHERE IS MOM?

Many times people find kittens in their yard, usually in a secluded place such as behind the garage, an unused garden or even in a basement window well. Don't panic! Most likely mom is out hunting for food or nearby just taking a short break. Remember it's a lot of work to care for a litter of kittens!

If you find kittens unattended:

1. **Observe from far away.** Often mom is nearby but won't approach if you are there; you are unfamiliar and threatening to her!
2. **Kittens who are robust and sleeping soundly are kittens who are being cared for.** If they're crying, wet, or trying to wiggle away, then it might be a sign mom is not coming back.
3. **If there is only one kitten,** observe before you intervene. Mom might be moving her litter to a safer location.
4. **Continue to observe the nest from a distance.** Kittens under 4 weeks old should not be alone for longer than 5 hours, kittens 5+ weeks old shouldn't be left alone more than 7 hours. If you're not sure whether mom has been coming back to the nest, sprinkle flour on the ground and check for prints.
5. **Please be absolutely certain mom is not returning before removing the kittens.** A kitten's best chance of survival is with their mom and their mom's milk. So please wait and observe!
6. **If you determine mom is not coming back,** it's time for you to step in!
7. **Call your local veterinarian so the kittens can receive a check up** and so you can learn more about how to care for the little ones.
8. **The kittens should be kept warm** and placed in a box with blankets. If it's a hot summer day, keep them out of air-conditioning; kittens have a hard time regulating their body temperature.
9. **Supplies you'll need** include kitten formula (do not give kittens any type of milk, which can make them sick, cause diarrhea and dehydrate them), kitten baby bottles, nipples, blankets, and natural, pet-safe cleaning items. Also, a large dog crate works well to keep them contained.
10. **Under 2 weeks old** kittens should be fed every 2 hours. After feeding, gently rub their genital area with a damp paper towel to stimulate them to urinate and defecate. At 4 weeks old, they can eat every 4 hours. Kittens must always be belly down when feeding, then burped afterwards. These are just a few tips. It's important to speak with your veterinarian or local shelter/rescue organization to learn more about caring for the orphaned family.

