

# Kittens that need help:



SAVING COMMUNITY CATS

OPERATION CATNIP

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

**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 that 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 can indicate that the kittens need help and aren't being fed.

**Noisy** Orphaned and hungry kittens will cry loudly. **But loud kittens alone does not indicate that they are orphaned.** Mom does not stay with the kittens all day long, and might be on her way back. She might even be watching you in 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.



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.

**They do NOT  
need your help!**

**These kittens DO need your  
help!**