



# DUPAGECOUNTY

ANIMAL SERVICES



## Help, I Found Kittens Outside!

# When Is Kitten Season?



## APRIL THROUGH OCTOBER

- Kitten season takes place during the warmer months and correlates to their breeding season but can vary across the country.
- During this time, shelters experience an increase in kitten intake.



# What To Consider If You Find Kittens



- Is mom around?
- Is mom friendly or feral?
- Should you leave mom with her kittens?
- How old are the kittens?
- What is the best way to help the whole family?



# How To Help



- Kittens should stay with mom for their best chances of survival
- Monitor the family from a distance
- Provide food, water, and shelter outside for them if feral
- Keep safe by keeping your pets away from the family
- Call DuPage County Animal Services or your local animal shelter for Trap/Neuter/Return or rehoming resources





# Determine Age

- Use the following chart to determine how old a kitten is. That will help you know the next steps.
- Kittens younger than 8 weeks should stay with their mother.
- Unsocialized kittens over 4 months of age should be left where there are and contact an organization to perform trap/neuter/release.



# HOW OLD IS THAT KITTEN?



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!



so fragile!

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!



ONE WEEK

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.



TWO WEEKS

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.



a little wobbly!

THREE WEEKS

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**.



FOUR WEEKS

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



let's play!

FIVE WEEKS

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!



SIX WEEKS

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.



SEVEN WEEKS

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.



so grown up!

EIGHT WEEKS

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.



NINE WEEKS

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.



ready to take on the world!

TEN WEEKS

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](https://alleycat.org/KittenProgression)



# Is Mom Around?



- Mother cats will take a break away from the kittens for up to a few hours at a time.
- If you find a single kitten or two by themselves, mom could be in the process of moving them.
- Wait and watch from a distance before you make the decision to remove them.
- Remember, it is best for kittens younger than 8 weeks to stay with mom.



# Resources

- If you have feral cats in your neighborhood, consider contacting a local trap-neuter-return organization to help you reduce the overpopulation of cats. Feral Fixer is a local group working in DuPage County. [www.feralfixers.org](http://www.feralfixers.org)
- Want to care for kittens you've found? Contact us for information on how to care for kittens and how to socialize them. 630-407-2800
- Join our Foster Program to help kittens already in our care. [www.dupagecounty.gov/animalservices](http://www.dupagecounty.gov/animalservices)



**DUPAGECOUNTY**



ANIMAL SERVICES



# HELP, I FOUND A KITTEN!

## Found kittens outside and don't know what to do?

This flowchart will help you take steps to make the best decisions for their care!

**ARE THE KITTENS  
8 WEEKS OR OLDER?**

Visit [alleycat.org/KittenProgression](http://alleycat.org/KittenProgression) to help determine how old the kittens are.

NO

YES

**ARE THE KITTENS  
WITH MOM?**

NO

YES

**DID MOM COME  
BACK A FEW  
HOURS LATER?**

NO

YES

**TIP:**

Newborn, or "neonatal," kittens have closed eyes, folded ears, and can't walk. Be extra careful with these fragile babies.

**TIP:**

Eight-week-old kittens play, behave, and look like adult cats. They should weigh at least 2 pounds and can be spayed or neutered!

**ARE THE KITTENS  
FRIENDLY?**

NO

YES

### KITTEN CARE



Without mom to care for them, these kittens need your help! Neonatal kittens especially require round-the-clock care including bottle-feedings.

Go here for more help:  
[alleycat.org/Neonatal](http://alleycat.org/Neonatal)

### KEEP WITH MOM



If they are doing well, let kittens stay with mom outdoors. When they are ready for spay and neuter, TNR all of them. (Or, foster then adopt kittens.)

Go here for more help:  
[alleycat.org/MomAndKittens](http://alleycat.org/MomAndKittens)

### FIND NEW HOME



Ask a veterinarian to examine and spay or neuter the kittens. Then find homes where the kittens can be socialized to people.

Go here for more help:  
[alleycat.org/Socialization](http://alleycat.org/Socialization)

### TRAP-NEUTER-RETURN



Kittens over 4 months old cannot be socialized, but will live long, healthy outdoor lives. Neuter and vaccinate before returning them to their colony.

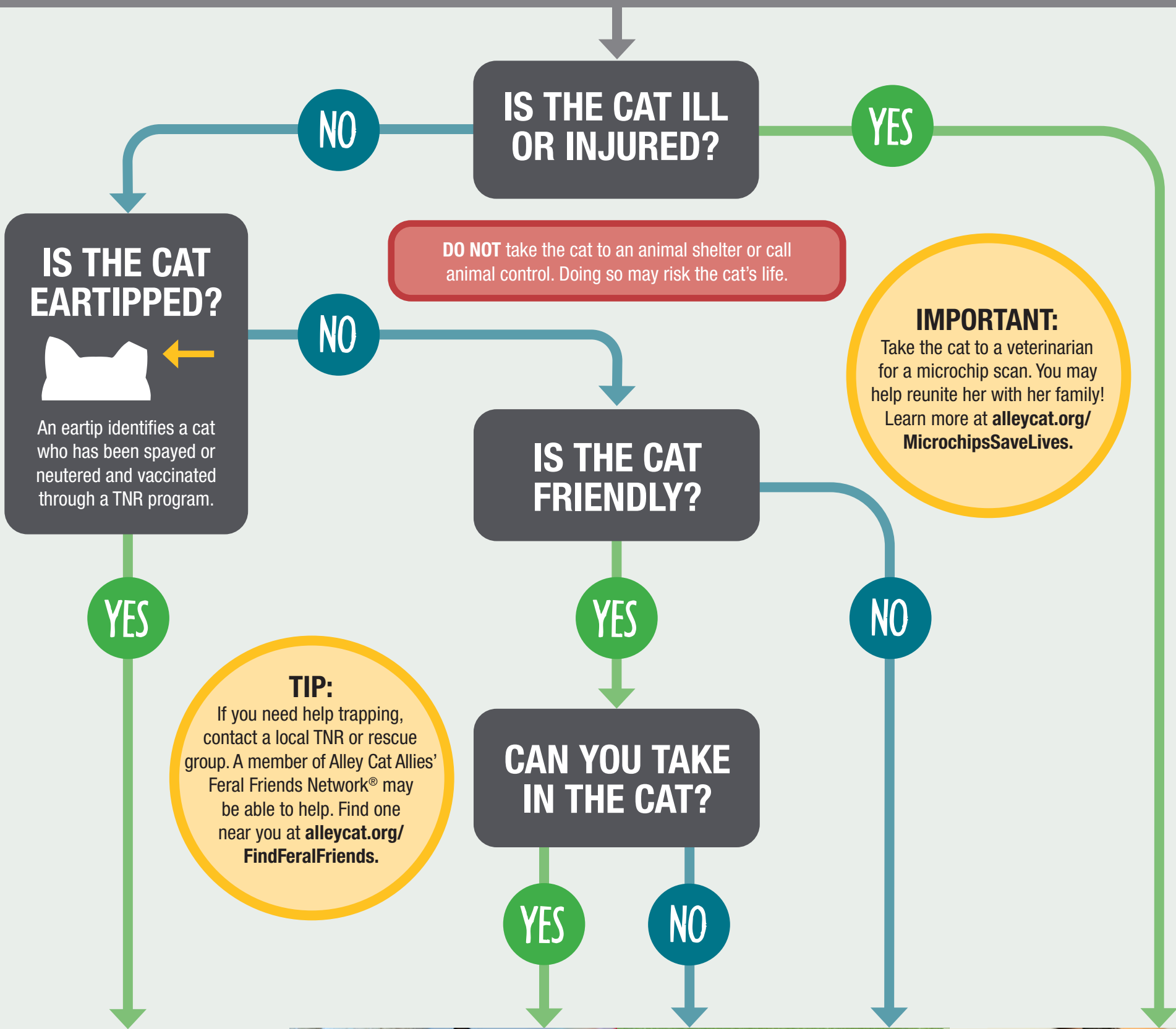
Go here for more help:  
[alleycat.org/TNR](http://alleycat.org/TNR)



# HELP, I FOUND A CAT OUTDOORS!



This chart will help you make the right decisions in the cat's best interest  
Keep in mind: not all cats outdoors need to be “rescued.”



**NO ACTION NEEDED**

No need to take further action. A community cat's home is outdoors, and an eartip means she has been spayed and vaccinated through TNR. If you'd like to become the cat's caregiver, we have best practices to help at [alleycat.org/ColonyCare](https://alleycat.org/ColonyCare)



**FOSTER OR ADOPT**

It isn't necessary to bring a friendly community cat inside if she is thriving in her outdoor home. But if you have the time and resources, you can choose to foster her, adopt her, or find her a new family! Get help at [alleycat.org/AdoptionTips](https://alleycat.org/AdoptionTips)



**TRAP-NEUTER-RETURN (TNR)**

Through TNR, community cats (unowned cats who live outdoors) are humanely trapped to be spayed or neutered, vaccinated, eartipped, and then returned to their outdoor homes to thrive. Learn more at [alleycat.org/TNRGuide](https://alleycat.org/TNRGuide)



**CONSULT WITH VETERINARIAN**

An ill or injured cat may need veterinary attention right away. Before doing anything, consult a community cat-friendly veterinarian. Once the cat is well, you can start again from the top of the chart. [alleycat.org/InjuredCat](https://alleycat.org/InjuredCat)