



Found Cats and Kittens

What should I do if I find a kitten/s younger than 8 weeks, with or without a mother in a busy/public location?

Only attempt to rescue kittens and cats if it is safe for you to do so, with minimal risk of being bitten or scratched.

If you are bitten or badly scratched by a cat/kitten always seek medical care immediately as these injuries can cause severe infection and illness in people.

It is essential to phone a vet or Ten Lives immediately for advice on how to care for orphaned kittens.

Kittens found in busy public areas such as shopping centres/industrial areas are at risk of serious injury or death, so ensuring the safety of kittens in these busy areas is essential.

In most cases, the mother cat will be a timid and unsocialised stray that cannot be handled like a pet cat, and a cat trap will be required to capture her. Do not attempt to handle the mother cat unless she is friendly.

Although we regard the best outcome for kittens is to keep them with their mother, in busy public places where the kittens are in danger it is best to remove them, if they are easy to capture, and reunite them with their mother once she is caught.

When rescuing kittens in a busy/public location your own safety is a priority.

- Only rescue kittens if it is safe for you to do so.
- Observe the area for any dangers before approaching.
- Take a photo of the location where you have found the kittens which includes any prominent landmark or signage. This information will assist in being able to capture the mother cat.
- If the mother is present, take a clear photograph of her. This will help Ten Lives identify her once caught and when reuniting her with her kittens.
- When approaching the kittens speak calmly.
- Always continue to reassure the kitten/s as you approach them.
- Avoid any sudden movements, and make sure the kitten/s can always see you.
- If the kitten/kittens are walking, try enticing them to come to you by offering a strong-smelling food such as canned tuna in spring water, if available.
- Carefully pick the kittens up and place them in a carrier with some bedding, such as an old blanket, clothing, or a towel.
- If the kittens are timid, either wear thick gloves or place a towel, small light-weight blanket, or jumper over them to help reduce your chance of being bitten or scratched.
- Once the kittens are in a secure container/box which has ventilation holes (or ventilation holes added) and a lid which can be secured lightly, cover them with clothing/towel/blanket and, if possible, a covered hot water bottle/heat pack. Kittens cannot generate their own body heat, so it is important a source of heat is provided.

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- It is essential to phone a vet or Ten Lives immediately for advice on how to care for orphaned kittens, or to book an appointment as the kittens will require urgent attention.
- Young kittens, without a mother to care for them, are at high risk of not surviving without receiving immediate specialized care.
- When you contact Ten Lives ask for advice on how to catch the mother cat (and the kittens if you were unable to capture them) and contact Ten Lives on 6278 2111 and book an appointment to bring the mother and kittens in.
Visit: tenlives.com.au/factsheets/found-cats-and-kittens for more information on the procedures for bringing a cat and kittens in to Ten Lives.

NOTE:

Do not give kittens cow's milk or supermarket cat milk, it can cause diarrhea. Kittens who are not eating wet food with ease will require a specialized kitten formula called Wombaroo Cat Milk Replacer, available from Ten Lives and some vet clinics and pet stores.

If kitten/s are 4 weeks of age or older, provide canned kitten food, preferably chicken variety, and a bowl of water.

The younger kittens are when socialised with people, the better chance they have at becoming great pets, this becomes increasingly more difficult from 8 weeks of age.

Below is a visual estimation to help you determine the rough age of a found kitten/s so as to determine the best course of action for how you will proceed with the situation.



Transporting Cats & Kittens

- When taking a cat to a vet or Ten Lives ensure it is contained securely in a carrier. If a carrier is not available a large container/box which has ventilation holes (or ventilation holes added) and a lid which can be secured will suffice.
- Temporarily placing a lightweight blanket or towel over the cat/kitten will assist with handling.
- Covering the carrier/box with a light weight blanket or towel will assist in calming the cat/kitten.
- Do not attempt to carry any cat/kitten in your arms, it must be securely contained.
- If you arrive at Ten Lives, and the cat/kitten is not contained, leave it in the car and ask reception for a carrier.
- Containing a cat/kitten when transporting it will make the cat feel safe and prevent it escaping and becoming lost.