

CARE IN PLACE FOR MAMA CAT AND KITTENS

Overview

Despite aggressive and sustained cat overpopulation strategies, cats continue to reproduce. As a result, you may someday find a lactating Mama cat and her baby kittens on your own property or nearby. If the family appears healthy, rather than trap them and bring them to a shelter, we recommend a “Care In Place” strategy to best serve the new cat family and the surrounding community.

Care In Place

If you find newborn kittens without their mother, she is out searching for food. Keep an eye on the kittens and the time. If Mama cat has not returned within eight hours, you can assume she will not and either begin to care for the kittens or surrender them to a local shelter (please be advised, however, that kittens who are unable to care for themselves have a very low survival rate if they enter the shelter system). Otherwise, it is unwise to remove the kittens as they should not be weaned from the mother before they are at least 4-5 weeks of age, if possible. This is why we recommend, “Care In Place.”

If the family is together, leave them together if possible. Provide them food, water and shelter until the kittens can eat on their own. If you feel the new family is at risk, attempt to trap the kittens and mother at the same time. Mama cats will be drawn to the mews of their kittens if the kittens are placed in a covered carrier behind the trap. Or, if Mama cat has been captured, cover her enclosure and place a second trap directly beside it.

Never leave kittens alone once Mama cat has been trapped; you must attempt to trap them. And it is not advisable to trap a Mama with kittens who are younger than 4-6 weeks if you are not able to provide the kittens bottle feeding, as they are far too young to eat independently.

If you trap a female cat and see that she is lactating and you don’t see any kittens, it is best to release her. This will likely save the lives of the kittens.

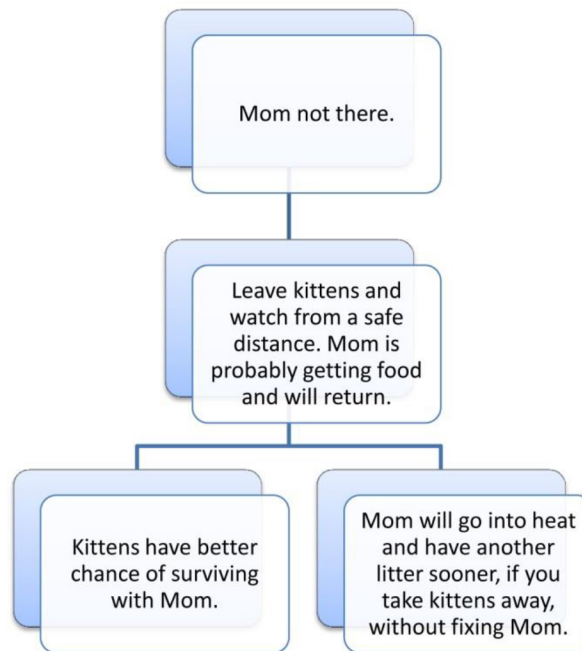
If you agree to foster a mom and her kittens, this is a time commitment and, if you bring them into your home, a space commitment. If you are not able to Care In Place or in your home, please contact us.

Alley Cat Allies, has extensive online resource materials that include information on:

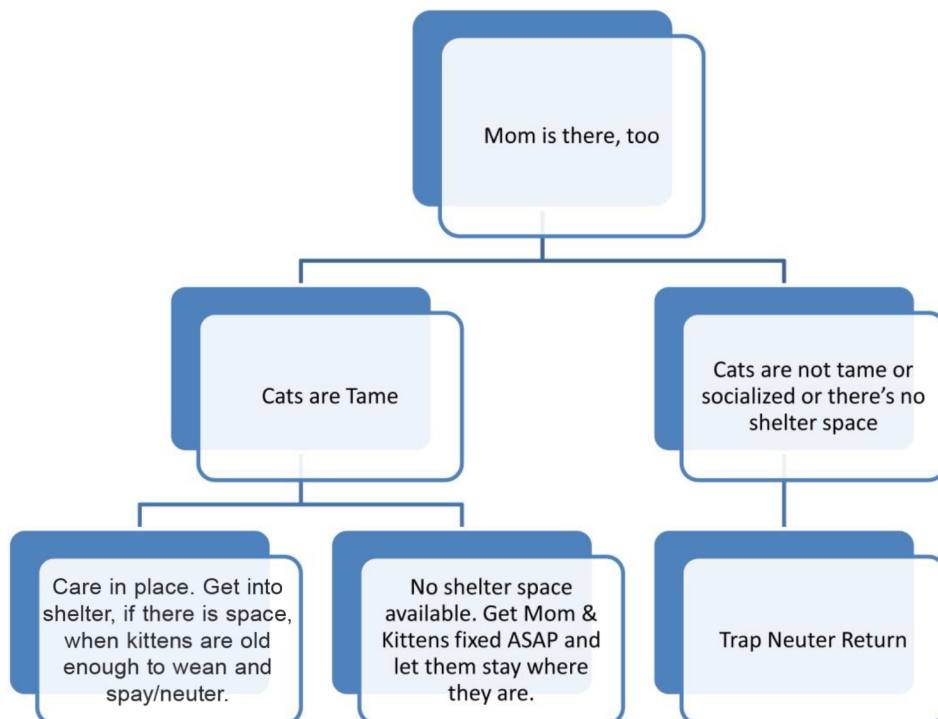
- How and When To Care For and Socialize Feral Kittens - <http://www.alleycat.org/page.aspx?pid=289>
- Kitten and Mom Scenarios and How To Trap <http://www.alleycat.org/page.aspx?pid=977>

You may also wish to contact the Animal Defense League of Arizona’s Spay Neuter Hotline at 602.265.SPAY (7729).

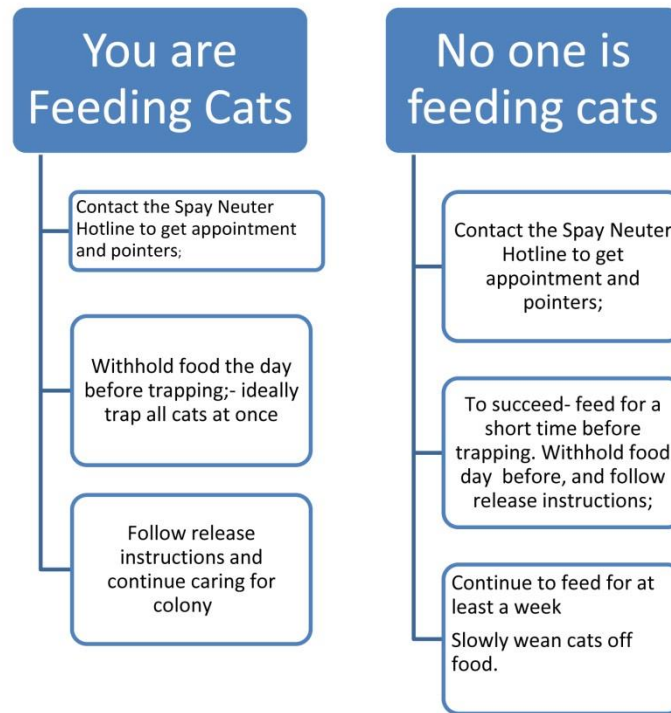
You found kittens in your yard



You found kittens in your yard



You've Decided to TNR the cats



For additional information on outdoor cats, visit somanycats.org or adlaz.org.