

## Should You Help Baby Animals?

Most baby animals are born in spring. Sometimes they get separated from their parents. If you find a baby animal, should you help it? See if you can choose the best answers to this quiz. 1. You see a baby bird hopping along the ground. When the bird tries to fly, it can flutter just a few feet. You should  
a. Leave the bird alone. Put it in a cozy box and feed it worms.  
b. Take the young bird to an animal shelter.

2. You find a very tiny baby bird under a tree. It has few feathers and seems weak. You should  
a. Put it in a box full of grass, keep it in a warm place.  
b. Wrap it in tissue and take it to an animal shelter.  
c. Leave it alone (or put the baby back in its nest if you can easily reach it).

3. Your big brother discovered a nest of baby rabbits while mowing the lawn. You watch for the mother to come along, but you never see her. You should  
a. Put a box over the babies to protect them.  
b. Leave them alone.  
c. Take the babies to an animal shelter.

4. While walking through the woods, you spot a fawn under a bush. The mother deer is nowhere in sight. You should  
a. Leave the fawn alone.  
b. Ask the people at the animal shelter to come get it.  
c. Take it some food.

Answers: 1A Some baby birds leave the nest before they can fly well. They're called fledglings. The parents watch over their fledglings and feed them often. Mom or Dad may be waiting just out of sight for you to go away. 2-C Sometimes very young birds, called nestlings, fall out of their nests. And sometimes bird parents may even push out a weak or sick baby. If you can easily reach the nest, it's OK to put the baby

back into it. Adult birds will not reject a baby because it has been handled by humans. But if you find the baby on the ground again, just leave it—the parents probably think it's too weak to survive 3-B A mother rabbit will feed her babies for only a few minutes each day. The rest of the time she may be nowhere in sight. And if she senses danger, she may stay away for as long as a day and a half. So don't worry about the babies—they'll be fine. Just stay away and let their mother return to them. 4-A like many other animals, a mother deer will leave her baby in a protected area while she goes off to find food. So it's perfectly natural to find the fawn by itself. Again, just leave it alone.

More About Helping Wild Animals Who can you talk to if you have a question about a baby animal you've found? What if you need to know something about a wild animal that is sick or hurt? The best person to call is an animal rehabilitator. That's a person who has a permit to take care of wild animals in need of help. How can you find a rehabilitator near you? Call a veterinarian, your town's animal shelter, or a nature center. They can usually give you a phone number. You should never try to take care of a baby animal or one that's sick or hurt. It's against the law in many places. And it can be harmful to the animal and dangerous for you. People can help protect songbirds and other small animals by keeping their house cats indoors.

Don't forget that baby animals usually have parents nearby. Those parents will be glad when you leave. And remember that injured animals get better on their own. Of course, sometimes they do die. That may make you feel sad. But even death is part of life in the natural world.

How Did You Score? Give yourself one point for each correct answer. 0-1 Looks like you were still at the nestling stage when you took this quiz. Keep the quiz handy to remind you that usually the best way to help a, baby animal is to leave it alone. 2-3 You're doing quite well, fledgling. 4 Congratulations! You're "flying high" because you know what to do when you find a baby animal.