



FADING KITTEN PROTOCOL

Fading Kitten Syndrome is not a specific disease but a combination of symptoms that can be fatal in young kittens (usually 5 weeks and under). They are not common but can occur even in kittens that seemed normal and healthy an hour beforehand. If you believe your foster kitten is fading YOU will need to act IMMEDIATELY. Paradoxically, taking a fading kitten to a vet clinic is not advised as most kittens will not survive the car ride. A fading kitten's best chance at making it is YOU!

The most common kittens to experience Fading Kitten Syndrome are:

- Under 3 weeks
- Recently sick
- Eating poorly
- Losing or not gaining weight
- Although rare, FKS can occur in healthy kittens at any age.

Fading Kitten Syndrome is a life-threatening emergency in which a kitten “crashes” and shows the following signs:

- Extreme lethargy — not able to stand or hold head up, not responding when touched
- Body feels cool to the touch
- Gasping for breath or trouble breathing
- Meowing/crying out, inconsolable

If you see these symptoms, it is crucial that you take the following steps NOW:

Step 1: GET KITTEN WARM

Make a kitten burrito: Turn a heating pad to **low**, cover with a towel, place kitten on towel, roll heating pad and towel around kitten. Place the towel over the heating pad, and place the kitten on top of the towel. Leave the kitten's face exposed, and do not remove the kitten from the burrito even if he/she struggles and cries to get out!

Fosters should have a heating pad, however if you don't not have one available, you can either:

- Keep your dryer running full of towels. Grab a new hot one every 5 minutes and wrap it around the "burrito" towel. After 5 minutes, trade that towel out for a new hot one. Don't remove the "burrito" towel.
- Fill 2 socks full of rice, tie the ends so it doesn't spill out. Throw them in the microwave for 3 minutes. Keep them next to the kitten on the outside of the burrito towel. Every 30 minutes reheat one sock and leave the other next to the kitten, so she doesn't cool off.
- Don't use your body heat to warm up the kitten, their body temperature is warmer than a persons!

IF YOU FEEL COMFORTABLE CHECK THE KITTEN'S TEMPERATURE OFTEN THROUGHOUT THIS PROCESS. Normal rectal temperatures will range from 99-102F.

Step 2: RAISE KITTEN'S BLOOD SUGAR

Pour either corn syrup (Karo, etc), honey, NutriCal, or warm sugar water into a small bowl. You will need to administer this sugar substance with a syringe to the kitten while he/she is warming up in the burrito. Do not remove from warmth to give sugar! **Give the kitten about 1 drop (.05-.1ml) every 3 minutes.**

Step 3: ALERT SICK MEDICAL that you have a fading kitten

It can sometimes take hours for kittens to recover and start acting normally again.

We DO NOT advise taking your foster kitten to the vet for many reasons:

You have the motivation to sit right there with them and make them your top priority. A vet clinic has multiple patients who need help and won't be able to give your kitten the 100% undivided attention you can give them.

Your kitten will continue to be cold/hypoglycemic on the way to the vet, in the waiting room, and in the hospital while they try to determine what is wrong, etc. Most kittens won't last long enough for them to begin treatment. Most of the time, these kittens will end up euthanized if brought to the vet clinic. Their best chance at survival is YOU!

Unfortunately, even if you've employed all of the steps outlined above, some kittens just won't make it. Young kittens are fragile. If a kitten passes in your care, don't blame yourself — these kittens would have had a slim chance of surviving if it wasn't for you. Send us an email if your kitten has passed and focus on taking the best care of his/her littermates.