

Fading Kitten Syndrome is a life threatening emergency in which a kitten, sometimes ones that were previously sick, "crashes" and begins to fade away. If not dealt with by a foster parent immediately, it can result in death. If you are fostering kittens 12 weeks or younger, it is a very good idea to familiarize yourself with this handout so you know what to do if it happens.

Symptoms: Extreme Lethargy- not getting up, unable to stand, not responding, when pet, Gasping for breath, Meowing/ Crying out

When this happens, it is vital that you take these immediate steps! FKS is caused by 2 things: Hypothermia (being too cold) and Hypoglycemia (not enough blood sugar). You must combat both of these things or the kitten will die.

Step 1.- Get them warm: Create the "burrito" towel. Immediately wrap the kitten up in a towel like a burrito leaving their face exposed only. Their whole body, tail, ears, and paws should be in the towel, only nose and mouth exposed. **DO NOT TAKE THE KITTEN OUT OF THE TOWEL TO ADJUST THEM, CHECK ON THEM, ETC.- THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT!** Every time you take them out you will make them cold again, even if it is only for a second.

You must apply an extra source of heat (listed below). The kitten's body can't warm itself up with just a towel alone; you have to apply extra heat. Also, your body temperature is much lower than what a kitten should be, so trying to warm them up with your body heat won't work either.

If you have a heating pad- Then wrap a heating pad *turned onto low* around the towel- duct tape it or secure it around the towel so it stays wrapped around them. Don't let the heating pad touch them directly, it can cause burns, make sure the "burrito" towel is between their skin and the heating pad.

If you don't have a heating pad- you can either

A) keep your dryer running full of towels. Grab a new hot one every 5 minutes and wrap this new hot towel around the burrito towel. After 5 minutes, trade that towel out for a new hot one. Don't remove the "burrito" towel.

B) Fill 2 socks full of rice, tie the ends of them 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.

Step 2- Get their blood sugar up: Once you get the heat on them, get a bowl of Tupperware and a few tablespoons sugar syrupy like pancake syrup, but you do want it to be as strong as possible while still pretty runny. Using a syringe or your finger give 3 drops every 3 minutes into the mouth. If they aren't

swallowing, try not to get it down the throat, try to get it on the tongue or gums. Set an egg timer or use the stop watch on your cell phone to make sure you are doing it at least every 3 minutes. Every 5 minutes or 10 minutes will not work; it must be every 3 minutes.

Prognosis

We generally have very good success with these kittens if you follow the above steps. WE DO NOT recommend you rush them 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 many patients it is helping and can't 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, in the hospital, while they try to determine what is wrong, etc. Most kittens won't last long enough for them to start the treatments there.

Most clinics would do the same thing- try to keep them warm and get their blood sugar up. There isn't much else you can do.

Keep in mind, it can sometimes take hours for them to come out of it and start acting normally again.

Also keep in mind, even with all the love and attention and perfect treatment of this condition, some of them still won't make it. Cats get pregnant very easily, and have A LOT of kittens, specifically because they are so fragile and die so easily. Try not to blame yourself during this difficult time and focus on all the kittens you have personally saved by opening your home to foster kittens. Remember, if it wasn't for you, any kitten would have been killed and never give a chance at life.