

# Fading Kitten Syndrome: Fosters

## Overview

Fading Kitten Syndrome is a life-threatening emergency in which a kitten goes into a crisis, crashes and starts to fade. In some cases, these kittens were completely healthy and this condition happens rapidly and unexpectedly. In some cases, this occurs with kittens that have been struggling from the beginning. This occurs with both orphan/bottle babies and will kittens being cared for by a mom cat. Watch for mother cats pushing away a kitten and not caring for it. This may be the first and only clue that a kitten is about to crash.

If not dealt with immediately, this can result in death. There is not always a clear reason for this condition. Early detection and rapid and aggressive treatment are imperative, but some of these kittens will still die.

## Symptoms

- Low body temperature; the kitten feels cool or cold to the touch
  - Kittens should always feel warm to the touch. A cold kitten is in crisis
- Extreme lethargy; not getting up, unable to stand, not responding when pet, can't hold its head up
  - Kittens should be responsive and rooting around or moving
- Gasping for breath; mouth breathing
- Meowing loudly, crying out; distress meowing
- Mother has pushed kitten out of nest and is no longer feeding, grooming or caring for kitten

When a kitten is fading, two things are happening: hypothermia (being too cold) and hypoglycemia (low blood sugar). You must get the kitten's body temperature up and raise its blood sugar, or it will die.

## ***Act Immediately!***

*Call 919-630-9680 & Follow below steps.*

## Process

1. Get the kitten warm
  - a. Put a rice/bean bag in the microwave and heat for 45 seconds (do not use rice socks)
    - i. Wrap bean bag in hand towel and place kitten directly on top of hand towel
    - ii. The kitten's body cannot warm itself with only a towel. The warm bean bag is essential!
    - iii. Snuggle Safe take too long to heat. Always start warming process with warm bean bag
    - iv. Your own body heat won't work so do not try warming kitten by holding against you
      1. Our body temperature is not warm enough to warm a kitten
  - b. Immediately wrap kitten and wrapped bean bag up in a bath towel like a burrito (leave face exposed but towel pushed up around head/ears)
    - i. Do not use beach towels (too thin), pillowcase or thin fleece
    - ii. The kitten's entire body (tail, ears, and paws) must be tucked in the towel
  - c. **\*\*Do not take the kitten out of the towel to adjust it or check on it\*\***
    - i. Even if you only unwrap or take out kitten for a few seconds, you will make it cold again

2. As soon as the kitten is warmed, work on raising its blood sugar
  - a. Start the warming process and get fully wrapped before starting this step
  - b. Put some sugar or Karo syrup in warm water at a ratio of 1:1
    - i. You should have a pill bottle of Karo syrup in your foster supply bag from Alyssa
    - ii. Put this solution in a syringe and give the kitten three drops every three minutes.
  - c. If the kitten is not swallowing, try rubbing Karo syrup on its gums and tongue.
    - i. Only use syrup if they kitten cannot swallow.
    - ii. Do not put liquid drops in mouth if kittens are not able to swallow
  - d. Whatever sugar source you use, make sure you do not contaminate anything
    - i. No double-dipping syringes. If you need another dose, get a new syringe
  - e. Be sure you are administering the sugar source every three minutes
  
3. Once the warming process and blood sugar are being addressed, contact your foster coordinator and get the kitten in for medical care

It may seem like you are not doing enough to help the kitten, but this is the only treatment for a fading kitten. Be sure to start getting the kitten warm and treat hypoglycemia before transporting them to the Adoption Center or Admission Center for a medical exam. Transport the kitten as warmly as possible by keeping them wrapped up in the towel.

If the above steps are followed, we have the best chance at success with these kittens. Keep in mind that it can sometimes take hours for them to come out of it and start acting normal again. Know that even with love, attention, and the perfect treatment, some fading kittens still won't make it.