



## Fading Kitten Emergency Protocol

### What is “Fading Kitten Syndrome”?

Fading kitten syndrome, sometimes referred to as “failure to thrive”, describes a kitten that “crashes”, suddenly becoming ill or unresponsive, even if it was previously healthy. While there are many contributing factors that may cause fading kitten syndrome, two common factors are *hypothermia* (being cold) and *hypoglycemia* (low blood sugar). Many times there are other underlying issues, such as congenital defects, disease, etc. that may not be treatable.

### Symptoms:

- Hypothermia/Low Body Temperature (<99F) – Feeling cool or cold to the touch, particularly in the limbs/extremities.
- Lethargy – Inability to stand or unresponsive to touch.
- Labored Breathing – Exaggerated breathing, often with mouth open.
- Excessive Vocalizing – Particularly loud, pained cries combined with any of the above symptoms.

**Emergency Protocol:** In many instances, a fading kitten will not survive, even with medical intervention, however, taking these steps immediately will give the best prognosis!

1. **PROVIDE WARMTH** – Wrap the kitten in a blanket or towel, leaving only their face exposed. Use a heat source (snuggle safe, heating pad) as an extra source of heat.
  - Make sure the heat source is not directly touching the kitten to prevent burns.
  - Don't have a heat source? Put uncooked rice into a clean sock, knot the end and microwave for 2-3 minutes.
  - No microwave? Put hot (not boiling) water into a doubled-up Ziploc bag.
2. **INCREASE BLOOD SUGAR** – While warming the kitten, apply light Karo corn syrup to the gums. If Karo is not available, use pancake syrup or mix equal parts sugar and warm water until dissolved. Use a syringe or your finger to place a few drops of the sugar source into the kitten's mouth **EVERY 3 MINUTES**. If swallowing, feed the kitten a small amount of the sugar source. You should see improvement in ~20 minutes if low blood sugar is the cause.
3. **DURING NORMAL BUSINESS HOURS** – Bring the animal to the shelter immediately (refer to the Foster Program Emergency Care Protocol). If the kitten has not begun to improve within an hour, their chances of survival is often poor. If the kitten does not survive, please know that you have done everything that you could and most likely there are other underlying, non-treatable issues.