

# Fading Kitten Protocol

Supplies needed: Light Karo (corn) syrup, 1cc slip tip syringe, timer, examination gloves.

## What is fading kitten syndrome?:

Fading kitten syndrome (FKS) also known as “failure to thrive” is the cause of up to 90% of neonatal fatalities. There are many causes of FKS. However, the most common are hypothermia (extreme drop in body temperature) and hypoglycemia (extreme drop in blood sugar levels). FKS can also be caused by genetic abnormalities, in these cases successful treatment is unlikely. FKS causes kittens (and sometimes cats) to “fade” or pass away suddenly. So, it is important to act fast once signs have presented themselves.

## Symptoms include:

- White gums
- “Triangular” looking face
- Listlessness
- Lethargy
- Paleness (ears,nose,paw pads,etc)
- Low body temperature
- No desire to eat
- Crying incessantly
- Dehydration (“tenting”)
- Open mouth breathing/gasping

## Common Causes:

- Anemia
- Dehydration
- Hypoglycemia
- Genetic abnormalities
- Inbreeding
- Hypothermia
- Respiratory related illness (aspiration pneumonia, upper respiratory Infection, etc.)
- Intestinal parasites (primarily single celled parasites such as giardia/coccidia)

## Initiating Fading Kitten Protocol:

The first step of fading kitten protocol should always include checking the color of the animal's gums and investigating the capillary refill time (how long it takes for color to return to the gums after applying gentle pressure). You should also note the animal's turgor time (how quickly the skin returns to its normal posture after being gently pinched and pulled up. This shows the animal's level of hydration). After you have determined the capillary refill and turgor time and have determined based off of symptoms that the animal is fading you may initiate fading kitten protocol.

During this time the animal is unable to maintain their core temperature. They will need your assistance. Gently wrap the animal from the top of their head to the tip of their tail in a heating pad with a towel wrapped around it, this will limit the level of heat and decrease the chances of

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burning the animal. **Make sure the animal is able to breathe.** Turn the heating pad onto the lowest setting. Heating of a fading animal should be steady yet gradual, you don't want to send them into shock. Next, apply a miniscule amount of light Karo syrup directly to the animal's gums. This can either be done with a 1 cc slip tip syringe (one singular drop will be more than enough) or with the tip of your finger. Be sure to wear examination gloves while handling the animal as FKS can sometimes signify illness and light Karo syrup is very sticky. Apply Light Karo syrup to the gums in very small amounts every 3 minutes until either symptoms resolve or the animal passes away. It is important that this is done no more or less than every 3 minutes as that is the recommended amount of time to gradually elevate the animal's blood sugar levels, set a timer. **When administering light Karo syrup be sure that the animal is in a belly-down position.** Any amount of liquid administered to an animal's mouth manually increases the chances of aspiration pneumonia. To ensure the safety of the animal make sure the amount of light Karo syrup is miniscule so that they do not choke or aspirate. Aspiration pneumonia can be life threatening. **Please note that it is not safe to feed an animal experiencing hypothermia or hypoglycemia.**

External resources:

[Understanding and Defeating Fading Kitten Syndrome - National Kitten Coalition](#)

[Fading Kitten Syndrome: Causes, Symptoms, & Treatment - Cats.com](#)

[How To Save A Fading Kitten - Treatment Instructions, Supply List, Support - Fading Kitten Syndrome](#)