

# Fading Kitten Syndrome

---

Fading Kitten Syndrome (FKS) is a condition where young kittens (typically under 5 weeks) decline rapidly, sometimes with very subtle early signs.

Because neonatal kittens are so fragile, small issues can quickly snowball into a crisis.

The key to trying to reduce fatality from fading kitten syndrome is early detection of subtle problems before a crisis/crash occurs!

Familiarize yourself with these early warning signs so you can know when to contact the foster team for help and advice!

## Factors that can contribute to FKS

- poor nutrition of pregnant/nursing mothers and their kittens
- congenital abnormalities
- untreated medical issues
- infections
- hypoglycemia (low blood sugar)
- hypothermia and hyperthermia (low or high body temperatures)

Sadly, some cases of fading kitten syndrome can't be reversed even with the best care. Some kittens do not develop correctly from birth, and as they grow their bodies can't keep up with those developmental defects.

## If your kitten is actively crashing, contact ASAP

### Crashing looks like:

- **Gasping for air**
- **Nonresponsive or extremely lethargic**
- **Cold to the touch**
- **Repeated crying/vocalizing**

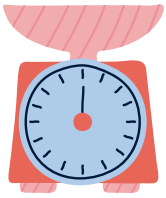
Keep the kitten warm by using a heating pad or snugglesafe disc rather than your body heat and apply a small amount of Karo syrup or suppicall to the gums every ~5 minutes while seeking help.

- During hours (Monday thru Saturday 9am to 6pm)- call 828-776-1203
- After hours (6pm to 9am and Sunday all day)- use Vidaah



# Early Warning Signs

## Lack of appetite and weight loss



Weight loss is one of the most common early signs of FKS. Kittens under 5 weeks of age should be weighed **every day**, and you should always write down weights to track any differences! **Any weight loss or failure to gain for two or more consecutive days should be reported to the foster team.** Any significant lack of appetite in kittens under 5 weeks of age should also be monitored very closely.

## Dehydration

Kittens under 5 weeks get most of their hydration from food or formula. If they are not eating well, dehydration can happen quickly and become dangerous.

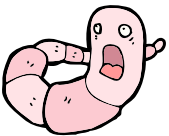


Signs:

- Dry or pale gums
- Skin that does not snap back quickly

## Diarrhea

Diarrhea can be caused by many things including food changes, parasites, and bacterial infections. If your foster is under 5wks old and has diarrhea for more than 24 hours, or diarrhea so bad that it is leaking they are at risk of becoming dehydrated. Always report severe, liquid diarrhea to the foster team ASAP so we can help intervene!



## Lethargy

Lethargy is more than just tiredness. While kittens require a lot of sleep, there's a noticeable difference between a kitten who is tired, and one that is lethargic. In addition to sleeping the day away, they're also disinterested in normal kitten activities like eating and playing. They may be slower to respond to stimuli, acting withdrawn, or seem weak.



**If you see any of these, contact ASAP!**

**When in doubt, we would **always** prefer you reach out early rather than wait!  
Small concerns can become serious quickly in young kittens.**



[ashevillehumane.org/get-involved/foster/resources](https://ashevillehumane.org/get-involved/foster/resources)

