

Fading Puppy Protocol

Fading Puppy Syndrome (FPS) is a life threatening emergency in which a puppy, sometimes one that was previously healthy, “crashes” and begins to fade away. The signs can be very subtle, and the Fading Puppy Protocol (FPP) should be started at the first indication of FPS. If not dealt with immediately, even mild symptoms of FPS can progress and cause death quickly.

If you need support while dealing with FPP during business hours Monday-Sunday (12-6pm; closed to the public on Wednesdays), call 601-544-6632 or come to the shelter. If you need support outside of those hours, please call the **emergency foster phone at 601-310-8248**. However, if it is after hours and you are comfortable completing the FPP, you can wait to contact us until business hours. For a fading puppy, there is nothing we can do beyond this protocol until they perk back up. They will get far better care in a home with a loving foster than at the shelter where we are focused on hundreds of animals at a time and cannot possibly give them our full attention. If you feel comfortable completing FPP on your own, please do notify us once the puppy is recovered or if it is still fading after 6 hours.

Causes:

FPS is typically caused by two things:

- Hypothermia (being too cold)
- Hypoglycemia (not enough blood sugar)

Symptoms:

- Low Body Temperature – the puppy’s paws, gums, nose, or belly feels cool or cold to the touch
- Extreme Lethargy - not getting up, unable to stand, not responding when pet
- Gasping for breath
- Meowing/Crying out

When any of these symptoms occur, it is vital that you take these immediate steps!

Step 1- Get them warm: Create the “burrito” towel. Immediately wrap the puppy 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 puppy 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. - Wrap a HEATING PAD turned onto *low* around the burrito towel (to avoid burns) as an EXTRA source of heat. Secure it around the towel so it stays in place.

Step 2- Get their blood sugar up: Once you get the heat on them, give them sugar! You have a few options here.

- Sugar water: Mix a few tablespoons of sugar in hot water. Stir it up so you get a sugar water solution; you want it as strong as possible while still pretty runny.
- Karo syrup
- If you don’t have either of these get creative! Honey and maple syrup with no artificial sweeteners can be used as a substitute in a pinch until you can get karo or sugar water

Whichever sugar mixture you’re using, use a syringe, your finger, a Q tip or whatever you have available to give the puppy 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 your cell phone timer 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. Keep the puppy with you during this process. Sometimes it can take hours for them to come out of FPS. If your puppy has been in FPS for more than 6 hours, please contact us for further support.

Step 3- Once the puppy has perked up, wait at least 30 minutes before attempting to feed the puppy a fresh, warm meal. If you feed them too soon, their organs may not be prepared and it could shock the system and send them back into FPS. If they still won’t eat, offer a high calorie supplement like Nutrical and an electrolyte mixture (Pedialyte, Gatorade, etc.) until you can get them to accept a meal. The days after FPS are often touch and go; please keep an extra vigilant eye on your fragile puppies during this time.

REMEMBER, even with all the love and attention and perfect treatment of this condition, some fading puppies still won’t make it. Try not to blame yourself during this difficult time. This puppy was given a second chance at life because of YOU!