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[Home](#) > Trying to Move Heaven & Earth Part 2 of 2

Trying to Move Heaven & Earth Part 2 of 2

Mon, 2012-07-02 17:58 — Robin Olson

When we rescued Tater on June 15th, he'd been very frail. **He was already flea covered and underweight and battling an upper respiratory infection.** After a bath and good food, some eye meds, he began to perk up. A few days later, we took in his sister, Latte and the two of them stayed together in Maria's home.



©2012 Maria S. Tater waiting to see the Vet.

Being concerned about FIP, Maria moved Latte into a separate cage. I told her to take Tater to the Vet right away. I didn't know much about FIP, but I knew it was fatal and I knew diagnosing it isn't clear cut, either.

Since Sunday morning, Maria and I have been working non-stop. I'm doing research, trying to understand what to do, what to test for, if there's new research, anything we can do to save Tater's life. **We just lost two kittens! My rescue group is small. We shouldn't be seeing so much loss, let alone FIP!** I know a few others who have never seen it who have been in rescue longer than I have.



©2012 Maria S. Sunday before his Vet visit.

E-mails poured in, comments on Facebook were all supporting Tater and Maria, saying prayers, wishing us all well, sharing their stories of losing kittens to this unforgiving disease. I hated to keep loading up the bad news. **I know it takes a toll on readers, but I can't lie and pretend everything is ok. From the get-go this has been an unvarnished look a life doing cat rescue.** It's a very gut-wrenching thing to write about. **I want my happy stories back. I want my miracle-rescues! I don't know if I can take this pressure after just having lost two kittens.**

I'm not going to go into a long description of what FIP is other than to say there are two main forms of it: "Wet" and "Dry." One is basically an immune reaction that causes an accumulation of fluid in the belly (wet), though there are more symptoms that I've listed. The other one is neurological in nature (dry). **There is no cure. It's fatal.** There are whisperings of advancements in the treatment or cure of FIP, but so far the only hope is one study says they saved 20% of a small number of FIP cats who had the dry form. **Steve Dale covered this story using Polyprenyl Immunostimulant. You can read more about it [HERE](#)** ^[1]



©2012 Maria S. Back home eating normally.

Some say that if FIP occurred in puppies this would have been cured 20 years ago. Cats have been "second class" animals for far too long. I'm glad that UC Davis is doing a major study and Vets like [Dr. Dianne Addie](#) ^[2], among others, have been working tirelessly to come up with a cure. /

So where does this leave Tater?

Tater is a sweet, lovely little boy. **The Vet felt that he did have FIP but there are no clear diagnostics. Tater's belly is full of fluid-so much so that an xray couldn't even see his organs through the liquid.** The liquid was slightly tacky-another indicator. We were going to run a titer, but after doing more reading, it was clear we didn't have time for the results and it wouldn't really tell us anything. We could run a test on the protein levels in the fluid and that would be a better indicator, but what is the point? **Tater's got a fever, runny eyes and fluid filled abdomen. I couldn't get a clear answer on what ELSE it might be** and I'm not sure other than heart issues, if there would be anything else it could be.

There is an urgent need to figure out what to do next and again, I don't have many answers. I must help Maria, who has to face the difficult question of having to help Tater pass away when he gets too sick. In the meantime I want to move Heaven & Earth and find that needle in the haystack.

It doesn't hurt to try alternative therapies as long as Tater is not suffering badly. **I found out about a rescuer who is using a different method, who swears she is having success turning kittens around who have FIP.** That she has one kitten in her office who is running around, doing fine.

©2012 Maria S. Tater playing less than 24 hours ago.

Yes, I know. **I don't know her but a trusted friend put me in touch with this person. I know it's not traditional western medicine, it's eastern medicine which is based on 4000 years of study.** I can't disregard that and I've had success using different treatments for upper respiratory and skin ailments. **And if it doesn't work, Tater dies. Tater is going to die, anyway, so I want to try.**

The problem is getting the medicine to Maria in time. It will arrive tomorrow at some point. Tater has been to the Vet again today. I asked them to remove some fluid from his abdomen to buy us time. They only got about 1cc out of him-not nearly enough to make a difference.

After another endless number of texts, calls and e-mails, Maria opted to take Tater home. If he continues to be uncomfortable, she'll bring him back to the vet to get a shot of Depo (steroids). It's not ideal, but we have to keep him going until tomorrow. **We have to try. If this person says she's helped quite a few kittens with FIP maybe there is a bizarre chance. Yes, I could be deluding myself. Maybe I'm an idiot. Maybe she didn't have cats with FIP? Maybe we don't?**



©2012 Maria S. No one can tell me why this would happen to such an amazing little guy. No one can tell me IF he truly has FIP or something else. We're doing our best, all we can think of...but it may not be enough.

The problem is **NO ONE KNOWS.** The **stress of not knowing, of trying to make the BEST choice for Tater, has gotten to Maria and myself.** We've both broken down, crying. We both are second-guessing our every move. We have to hurry up and accept what may come to pass. We have to make life or death choices. Death doesn't wait. **We're trying so hard to keep him from coming in the door.**

If we could get Tater to live until tomorrow, perhaps this stuff will work or we'll have to say farewell to a very sweet little guy. I don't know. **All I know is I wish the phone would stop ringing and the questions would stop coming.** I need peace in my heart. I need to get some sleep, real sleep. I hate feeling greedy, but I can barely function. After the stress of two weeks of being sick and stressed out of my mind about flying before I flew to Salt Lake for BlogPaws, then the stress of what to do with Opal's kittens and now the troubles with Tater...**it just feels like way too much, but I can't give up for Tater's sake. No way.**

Maria just called me. She found tapeworm segments in Tater's stool. I do not want to hope that his big belly is the result of one or more parasites. He's been de-wormed as recently as Friday, but no de-wormer kills all worms.

Please, please, please...let this be some freakish or just "normal" parasitic infection combined with an upper respiratory infection that we can CURE!!!!Please let Tater Tot live a full and happy life.

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[Kitten](#) ^[6]

[Vets](#) ^[7]

[Weird](#) ^[8]

[Georgia Rescue](#) ^[9]

[FIP](#) ^[10]

[Kitten Associates](#) ^[11]

[Foster Mom](#) ^[12]

[Maria](#) ^[13]

Comments

Mon, 2012-07-02 18:16 — [Bobbie](#) ^[14]

Praying for ^[15]

a miracle for you and Maria and sweet Tater.

Mon, 2012-07-02 18:30 — [Tamar \(not verified\)](#) ^[16]

I've never HOPED for worms until now! ^[17]

Fingers crossed!

Mon, 2012-07-02 20:30 — Tereza and Larry (not verified)

Hugs and love for Tater (and you and Maria) ^[18]

You're doing the right thing. You're giving him every shot possible. Our new vet told me that there is way too much hype and knee jerk reactions to FIP and that it's rarer than most think. When I told him that our Churchy had been suspected of that, he said that as soon as he lived past three days, the answer was clear -- not FIP. And, he said, there is a rapid decline in the clinical health of teh cat. Hugs, T and L

Mon, 2012-07-02 21:45 — [Caroline \(not verified\)](#) ^[19]

Tater Tot ^[20]

When I read Tater Tot's story I started doing some internet research myself on FIP. I am a pharmacist for humans but also have experience with sick cats, as well as having several autoimmune diseases myself. Here is the website I found with the best explanation/advice for alternative treatment of FIP so far, <http://www.angelfire.com/fl/furryboots/fip.html> ^[21]

I would imagine it would be difficult for a layperson to understand the all medical terminology concerning the immune system in this article, but I do and it makes sense to me. From what the author (a homeopathic veterinarian) says it would be a huge mistake to give him steroids and I would agree. Suppressing his immune system when he is sick with so many infections would be a huge mistake, especially since, as a kitten he has an underdeveloped immune system to start with. I would hate to give you advice like this and have him die anyway, but I have a very strong feeling what this vet says is credible and that further suppression of his immune system will bring a certain death. I have seen this happen so many times with human cancer patients with suppressed immune systems. Please read this and contact me via email if I could help you understand the issues this article is discussing. Though I am not a rescuer, I recently adopted a mama and her kitten and have seen great improvements in their chronic respiratory conditions with a half raw (prepared by a company, not me, but you could do it yourself) and half meat only/no grain diet and twice daily supplement with KMR. Lysine treats chopped small for kittens at

250 mg per day may also help with their respiratory/eye infections if the primary infection is caused by herpes virus and the bacterial infection is secondary to that. I also had success with changing my former cat's diet when he was diagnosed with cancer and getting a good response in that situation.

I know you have much on your plate so I won't go into more details about that experience. My advice to you would be to go with the alternative treatment in this situation because the standard treatment always results in death. That speaks volumes in and of itself.

Mon, 2012-07-02 22:30 — [Robin Olson](#) [22]

No steroids [23]

We didn't give Tater the steroids. We were both too concerned it would make him worse. Tomorrow, I hope, a shipment is arriving at Maria's and in it is a chinese treatment that another rescuer swears by. Tater got de-wormed and is on some antibiotics for his lungs. Right now it could go either way..Tater could die soon or we may find something that proves we were on the right track and he will get better. WE all know it's a long shot for him to survive, but any chance is a chance. Tater is so beloved in the short time he's been with us that we just can't bear to let him go, but we will do what is right for him, whatever that ends up being. Right now we have to hope that Tater can get through this...Thank you for your comments. Oh and we feed grain free..I would prefer feeding raw to tater, but he's not even eating for us today. Hopefully he will feel perkier by morning.

Tue, 2012-07-03 07:01 — mk (not verified)

Tater [24]

Lots of prayers for Tater...hopefully it is just parasites and this darling boy will feel better soon!

Tue, 2012-07-03 09:58 — [Random Felines \(not verified\)](#) [25]

so sorry..... [26]

we agree with the other poster - sometimes it is weird but ok to pray for parasites. :)

We are praying for all of you....mom says there is nothing worse than losing kittens when you aren't ready for it - and how can you be ready for it? They have so much potential.

THANK YOU for rescuing and making the hard decisions - it can cause loss of sleep but sometimes the cute face making a recovery is all worth it.

Tue, 2012-07-03 15:51 — Barbara UK (not verified)

Fight, fight, fight little Tater Tot! [27]

I'm so sad that you have to go through so much heartbreak when you are trying to do such good work. It must be so distressing and take such a toll on your spirit. But you are very wise and your decisions are always careful and measured - you are thinking it all through and I'm wishing Tater Tot all the luck in world and bless you and Maria for all your efforts.

Fri, 2012-07-06 11:02 — Catnymouse (not verified)

A FB friend posted about your [28]

A FB friend posted about your blog, so I thought I would take a look. I see a cat hoarder with disease spreading through the population and a lot of Vet bashing. Good luck with your sick cats, because if you don't treat them properly, they are going to die and you will probably blame the veterinarians and their staff. But you are much more knowledgeable about veterinary medicine because of..... oh yeah, you have no veterinary medical education, you are just a hoarder. Good luck little Tator, you're going to need it.

From a concerned citizen and CVT.

CICH @ [Google+](#)
Robin @ [Google+](#)

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- [5] <https://coveredincathair.com/taxonomy/term/51>
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