



VETLAND
Animal Hospital



The birth process in your dog

The below is a guidelines on what to expect from your pregnant dog during the birthing process, this is only a guideline so please do contact your veterinarian if there are any problems or if you would like us to explain any of the points.

- Dogs are pregnant for about 2 months, so you should expect the arrival of the puppies +/- 2 months after she was mated.
- Pregnancy can be determined about 3 weeks after mating with a sensitive ultrasound machine.
- One can also have radiographs (x-rays) taken during the last 2 week of pregnancy to determine the number of puppies that are to be expected so one knows when the birthing process is finished.
- When the female dog is ready give birth she will display nesting behaviour i:e looking for a place that is quiet and safe to have her puppies, try not to disturb her but allow her to find her suitable spot.

The points that follow explain when the birthing process is a problem and veterinary care should be sought. These are a guideline only and if anything is unclear please do contact your veterinarian.

- Firstly one should never see any greenish or black discharge before the first puppy is born, this discharge usually occurs after the birth of a puppy and is normal between puppies too.
- The dog should never strain **continuously** for longer than half an hour before the first puppy or between individual puppies as this could indicate one puppy may be stuck in the birth canal.
- The dog should never strain **intermittently** for longer than 3hours between puppies, it is normal for the dog to “have a break” between puppies but not longer than 3 hours.

Once the puppy has been born the mother will break the bag and start to lick the puppy and eat the afterbirth she will also chew or bite off the umbilical cord from the puppy these are all normal, if she takes time to pull off the “sac” that covers the head and body of the puppy one may gently remove it from the head and present the puppy to the mom for cleaning, but is seldom necessary as most mothers will do this part.

The most important thing to keep in mind is that the mom will know what to do during the birthing process and will seldom need help from the owner, it is sometimes better to leave her peacefully and to interfere as little as possible unless she rarely struggles but then veterinary care is most likely needed and a vet should be contacted.

General Care of Puppies after birth

The most common reason for the death of puppies after birth is either hypothermia or lack of nutrition. Therefore make sure your puppies are kept warm and everyone is well nourished.

FEEDING: In the case where there are too many puppies and you notice the mother is struggling to maintain all of them, extra feeding is advised (puppy milk can be obtained at your nearest vet). Make sure not to feed the same puppies the whole time, rotate them as the suckling on the mother is of the utmost importance for social skills.

When they reach the age of about 4 weeks, their teeth will start showing, ideal time to start introducing soft food like: soften puppy pellets (always use luke warm water, never boiling hot), puppy mousse, ideally not proutro.

MUST KNOWS: it is advised to *deworm* your pregnant bitch before the birthing process and then to do so after birth every 2 weeks (bitch and puppies), as worms can cause many unseen problems. *Vaccinations* should be done @ 6 weeks and the boosters following 4 weeks. This is of utmost importance as their immunity starts to decline after they stop suckling on the mother for milk.

Please consult your nearest vet for more information or any queries.

Friendly paw greetings and happy Mothering

