



## TIPS FOR PREGNANT DOG CARE

### **BEFORE DELIVERY:**

Your dog may require regular de-wormings, Heartworm prevention, and flea control. Plenty of regular exercise is important for the pregnant dog, any exercise that your dog is accustomed to (i.e.: walks, or playing ball) should be safe.

Delivery problems are seen in overweight dogs, therefore, weight control is important during pregnancy. However, weight loss is not advised.

Your dog should be eating a high-quality, balanced dog food.

Feed your dog normally during the first six weeks then gradually increase her food over the last few weeks of pregnancy so that your dog is receiving 1.5 times her normal caloric intake.

Over the last few weeks, your dog may need several small meals since her uterus enlarges and reduces the size of her stomach.

Feeding vitamin or mineral supplements (esp. calcium) is not advised.

Vaginal discharges may be noticed. Occasional mucus discharge is normal, even if the discharge is pink tinged. However, if the discharge appears to contain blood or pus, see your veterinarian immediately as this could indicate complications.

Isolate your dog from other dogs starting three weeks prior to delivery and ending three weeks after delivery. This isolation will reduce possible exposure to diseases.

Choose a safe, secluded, draft free area in which to provide your dog a box where she can deliver her puppies. The box should have a rail around it so the puppies can move under to prevent their mother from crushing them. Line the box with washable rugs or blankets. Introduce your dog to the box a week before delivery so she has time to adjust.

### **DURING DELIVERY:**

The first stage of labor lasts 2 to 12 hours. The uterus contracts regularly and the cervix dilates. Your dog may show signs of nesting, nervousness, panting, shivering, loss of appetite, and vomiting.

The second stage of labor is characterized by stronger contractions, and your dog will expel a watery fluid. The first puppy will enter the pelvic canal and your dog will push more aggressively. The puppies are delivered 30 to 60 minutes apart. Rest periods are normal.

As each puppy is delivered, your dog will usually break the thin, white membrane around the puppy. If this membrane is not removed from the puppy's nostrils shortly after birth, the puppy could suffocate.

A greenish-black uterine discharge may be noticed; this is normal. However, if you see a black, thick discharge and your dog has not shown signs of labor, call your vet immediately. If contractions last longer than an hour, or rest periods last longer than four hours, or if your dog has not delivered a puppy an hour and a half after the watery fluid is expelled, your vet may need to help.

During the third stage of labor, your dog will expel the placentas.

### **AFTER DELIVERY:**

Vaginal discharge will normally be seen after delivery. Monitor this discharge daily. Look for a decreasing amount of discharge, change in color from red to brown, and a change in consistency from watery to mucousy. Blood in the discharge is abnormal – if blood is seen, call your vet. The discharge should not have an odor.

Examine your dog's mammary glands daily. Firm and painful mammary glands could indicate mastitis (an inflammation of the mammary gland, which can be treated, with the help of your vet, if caught early.)

Have your vet examine the puppies soon after delivery.

The puppies need to ingest their mother's colostrum within the first 24 hours after birth.

Weigh the puppies daily to keep track of weight gain. Puppies should gain weight daily. If the puppies are not gaining weight and/or are losing weight, consult your veterinarian.

Keep the puppies warm for the first two weeks after birth, as they can't regulate their own body temperature. Keep puppies away from drafts. You can provide additional heat by using heating lamps/heating pads on low heat. Just make sure the puppies can leave the heat source if they get too hot.

Keep the puppies with their mother for the first few weeks after birth, she will take care of them, feed them, teach them how to interact with other dogs, and stimulate them to urinate/defecate.