

Esk Veterinary Services Fernvale Vet Surgery



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WHELPING

Prior to Mating

- Health check
- Up to date with vaccinations
- Up to date with worming (before breeding, 10 days before whelping, 2 weeks after whelping and then every 3 months)

After Mating

- She will require a nutritionally balanced diet, preferably a puppy food. She will eat more during the pregnancy. Towards the end of the pregnancy she will eat small frequent meals
- We do not recommend calcium supplementation before whelping
- Calcium supplementation may be required after whelping, if you have any queries please consult with a veterinarian

Pregnancy

- Pregnancy lasts 63-65 days
- Her mammary glands will enlarge in the last weeks of pregnancy
- She will usually start nesting behaviour in the last 12-24 hours

The Whelping Process

- Her body temperature will drop 0.5-1.0 of a degrees in the last 24 hours prior to whelping
- When in labour, she will be making straining movements (this may even look like she is trying to urinate) as the puppy moves towards the vulva
- The afterbirth will often be dark green/black. There should be one for each puppy.
- It is okay to watch the birthing process, but interference should be kept to a minimum as it can be detrimental.
- Once she is actively pushing she should produce a puppy within 60-90 minutes, if a bitch has been straining for longer than this she and you cannot see any signs of a pup, please contact a veterinarian for advice.
- As whelping advances and the bitch tires, she will rest between puppies. During this time she should be relaxed and not actively straining. An interval of 2 to 2.5hours is not unusual
- Should the intervals between puppies be longer and/or your bitch is becoming weak or distressed please seek consult with a veterinarian
- Any discharge during pregnancy may be cause for concern unless in the last hours prior to whelping
- Blood or very dark discharge may indicate failing pregnancy. Yellow or smelly discharge may indicate infection. Both circumstance require veterinary intervention.

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After Whelping

- Bitches will usually want to clean the puppies. She will bite through the umbilical cord. So long as the puppies head is clear of the membranes and can breathe easily, there is no problem with the bitch taking her time to do this.
- It is NOT necessary (or encouraged) for you to break the cord.
- The main requirement for new born puppies is warmth
- Puppies gain short term protection against infections from their mother while they were in her uterus (unlike other animals) so they may have their first suckle within 3-4 hours of birth.
- It is normal for a bitch to have vaginal discharge for some days after whelping (sometimes up to a week)
- Thick smelly discharges are not normal.
- A bitch with smelly discharge, inappetance or depression should be examined by a veterinarian.
- A bitch should be bright and eating well within 24 hours of whelping.

Puppies

- The puppies should be check daily
- Are they suckling?
- Are they growing?
- Do any have obvious problems?
- Do they appear content between feeding?

Worming

- Worming should begin at 3 weeks of age and be continued every 2 weeks until 3 months of age, then once monthly until 6 months of age. Adult worming is once every three months
- Roundworms are the biggest problem for new born puppies

Weaning & Vaccination

- Puppies can generally start the weaning process between 4-6 weeks of age
- They will be ready for their 1st vaccination at 6-8 weeks of age and will require a booster vaccination at 12-14 weeks of age.
- Once they have had a full course of puppy vaccinations, they will only require a yearly booster vaccination

If you have any further questions, please call our office