



PREPARING FOR A LITTER OF PUPPIES

Expecting newborn puppies in your house can be exciting, but it is imperative that you provide good care to ensure that the mother and her puppies stay healthy and feel secure.

Being Prepared

1. Suitable sized whelping box
 - a. Length and width that allow the mother to lie down with her head and legs extended with space for puppies
 - b. Sides tall enough so the mother can leave but the puppies cannot escape.
 - c. A rail around the inside of the box to prevent the mother accidentally lying on the puppies
2. Lots of newspaper and blankets to line the whelping box. Vetbeds and fleeces are ideal drawing dampness away from puppies. Be prepared to change the bedding on a regular basis
3. Place the whelping box in a quiet area and introduce the bitch to the box at least 2 weeks before parturition.
4. Ensure the area can be kept warm and draft free. Consider how you will monitor and maintain the puppies temperature i.e. thermometer, electric heater, heat lamp, heat pads, water bottles. Always ensure that the heat pads and hot water bottles never directly touch the puppies
5. Ensure you have the Vets number in case of an emergency



CARING FOR A LITTER OF PUPPIES

Week 1

The puppy has four primitive reflexes;

At birth, the nervous system of the puppy is still developing; nevertheless, it already has a certain number of reflexes enabling it to survive, the so-called "primary reflexes":

- The **burrowing reflex** - search for the warm parts of his mother's body
- The **suckling reflex**
- The **perineal reflex** - activates the elimination of urine and stools - the mother stimulates this reflex by vigorously licking her puppies on their belly and under their tail
- The **carrying reflex** - encourages puppies to stiffen when grabbed at the neck.

The puppy is incapable of regulating his own temperature!

- During the first week maintain the temperature at 30° C. Temperature can then be progressively brought down to 25° C during the fourth week.
- Important to keep whelping area draft free.
- The body temperature at birth is 35.5°C ±0.5°C. At 7 days it increases to 37°C

Puppies are born deaf and blind but tactile sensations are well developed

Make sure that the bitch has enough milk and that the puppies suckle on the first day

- During the first hour after birth, **the puppies must suckle the colostrum** - this first milk is rich in maternal antibodies and will protect the puppies from disease
- It is imperative for the puppies to drink this regularly **within the first 24 hours** as they will then no longer be able to absorb it
- Be careful not to get too involved if the puppies are all suckling well
- Initially the puppies may need gentle encouragement – expressing a little milk from the mother can help

Puppies gain weight daily



- This is a sign of vitality. It is advisable to weigh each puppy every day using kitchen scales and write record it. **If no weight gain for two consecutive days then seek veterinary advice**

Week 2

1. The puppy's eyes start opening at 10 days
2. It is important to continue weighing the puppies daily
3. **All puppies should be wormed with Panacur oral suspension.** Please call the practice to purchase product or for more information.

Week 3

1. The puppy's weight can now be borne on his hind legs adopting a sitting position at 15 days
2. Sense of hearing will now be developing
3. Primary burrowing reflexes will begin to disappear as they start to regulate their body temperature
4. **Start to think about introducing food** at the end of week 3 beginning of week 4

Week 4

- Eruption of teeth starts to make suckling painful for mother, who is likely to distance herself and therefore produce less milk.
- **Begin weaning by introducing a diet especially for puppies.** They will start to require more energy as they grow. It is important to still weigh each puppy and ensure each puppy is eating,
- Split the puppy's meals into several bowls to give each puppy a chance to feed. Initially soaking biscuit in hot water (not boiling) makes it easier to eat. If you need further advice please contact the clinic
- Do not leave bowls or remaining food down
- A small amount of water should be made available in a shallow bowl. Remember to keep the mothers bowl of water outside of the whelping box.
- Puppies will start to become more mobile and may even manage to escape from the whelping box. Make sure the room is safe.



- Puppies' minimal rectal temperature: 38°C

Socialising period begins

- All their senses have been roused and the puppies will be able to familiarise themselves with other species and the environment. This period can last up to 3/4 months.
- It is the ideal time to make their world "interesting", by creating various stimulations and situations - introducing different types of people, television, music, early-learning games, hovering, handling their ears and feet etc. This should be progressive. CDs that gradually increase in sound of scary noises are available at the practice to purchase.
- During this environmental adaptation phase, whatever they are confronted with shall remain in their memory and will always appear "familiar".

Week 5

- Puppies' minimal rectal temperature: 38.5°C (adult temperature)
- **The puppies again should be wormed with Panacur worming oral suspension**

Week 6

- **Puppies become more fearful of the "new". Everything new must always be introduced with great care.** This is often difficult while puppies are not vaccinated, however the puppies can be carried and props such as an umbrella can be used

Week 7

- Immunity of the mother starts dwindling. With growth, this protection dwindles.
- It is now time to **think about vaccination and identification by contacting your veterinarian. It is ideal to have your puppies vaccinated at 8 weeks.** Vaccination is an essential tool for combating the main infectious diseases. Your veterinarian will advise you on the vaccinations.
- The puppies should be nearly be fully weaned

Week 8



- The mother should be leaving the puppies more and more. The puppies have now reached an age where they no longer need maternal milk.
- Puppies only very rarely suckle their mother and should be feeding on solid food
- **The puppies again are due for worming and need to be wormed now every month until they are 6 months of age.** The Veterinarian should advise you when you have the puppies first vaccination
- **Flea and tick cover can also be initiated**
- At 8 weeks the puppies should be ready to go to their new home.

IF YOU HAVE ANY CONCERNS PLEASE DO NOT HESITATE TO CALL THE PRACTICE ON

01373 836186

WE PROVIDE 24 HOUR EMERGENCY CARE