



Preparation for the birth (Whelping)

The bitch will want a warm, safe and comfortable area to give birth in. You can buy a whelping box or create an enclosed area. This should be in a quiet area where she won't be disturbed. Give plenty of bedding—blankets and towels are ideal.

The ideal room temperature is between 25 -30 C for the first few days after the puppies are born. This can be reduced to 22 C as long as it is draught free.

Whelping

The first thing to remember is:

do not panic!

Be prepared, have the vets telephone number just in case you need help or advice.

Have a supply of clean dry towels and the whelping area is clean, dry and warm.

Please refer to our labour and birth leaflet for signs of labour and how you can help your bitch during birth and caring for the puppies as they grow.

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Caring for your Pregnant Bitch



Where your animal's health is our top priority.

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At first it can be difficult to tell if your bitch is pregnant. There are a number of signs you can look out for but most are not apparent until the bitch is well into her pregnancy, which on average lasts between 61 & 65 days.

- Teats become more prominent (25-30 days after mating).
- Abdominal enlargement (occurs 45-50 days after mating).
- Behavioural changes, your bitch may seem slightly depressed.

Close to delivery your bitch may start to display nesting behaviour (scratching at bedding/restlessness).

The vet can perform an ultrasound scan from day 28. This can tell us if there are puppies there but not give us an accurate number. The vet can feel the abdomen from about day 21 to see if a bitch is pregnant— this can be made more difficult if the dog is overweight or nervous and tense.

Pregnancy puts a huge stress on the pregnant animal. The body goes under many changes so your bitch will need lots of extra care and attention.



Feeding

As the pregnancy progresses the bitch will require increased amounts of food to nourish her and the puppies. We would recommend starting to increase feeding from about the 6th week of pregnancy. A high energy food such as Royal Canin Starter puppy food will provide these additional calories.

Feeding your bitch a little & often, especially in the later stages of pregnancy is recommended due to the lack of room in her tummy!

Obesity can be dangerous for the pregnant bitch and may cause problems during the delivery of the puppies so care must be taken to avoid this. Before mating is the best time to take action if your dog is overweight.

Immunity

Whilst we are able to vaccinate dogs during pregnancy, it is far better to make sure your dog is up-to-date before mating. Healthy mums pass on their immunity to the puppies in the colostrum ('first milk'), so it's good to make sure the antibody levels are at their peak.



Flea and worm control

Roundworm and hookworm can be passed from the bitch to the unborn puppies. We recommend worming your bitch with Drontal Plus before mating. During pregnancy we recommend using Panacur Suspension, this is given by mouth (or in the food), once a day, from day 40 of the pregnancy until 2 days after giving birth. Repeat treatment with Panacur Suspension of the bitch and puppies at 2 weeks post whelping too.



We recommend treating your bitch for fleas prior to mating. There are several products that are safe to use during pregnancy just ask us for advice

Exercise

Your dog will still need to be walked and kept fit. Short regular walks are better than long strenuous ones.