



Birth process stopped, but more kittens expected

Excessive bleeding, distress or apparent illness in the queen

Any other worries at all

After kitting

It is best to arrange for a vet to check the mother and kittens soon after birth, but in the immediate post-natal period there are checks which you can do yourself. Check that the queen is caring for the kittens and allowing them to feed. The kittens should suckle soon after birth, and should be satisfied after feeding, without excessive crying. Check that the queen's mammary glands are not painful and that she is bright and well in herself.

The kittens eyes will remain closed and they will be quite deaf for about 10 days. Water and a little kitten food may be introduced as well as mum's milk at 3 weeks of age, and they should be weaned at about 6 weeks. Worming treatment should start at 2 weeks: contact your vet for details of the regime. They should also be treated for fleas: you can use Frontline spray from 2 days



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Normal Birth in the Queen



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When cats give birth it is called Kitting.

It is normal for a queen (female cat) to give birth 63 days after the mating at which the litter was received (however, kitting can occur between 58-70 days). There are a few signs which you can look for to give you a clue when it is likely to happen:

Mammary glands: The glands and teats become more swollen and prominent and you may see beads of milk on the end of the teats. However, there may be milk in the teats up to 2 weeks before delivery.

Vulva/vagina: The vulva will become more enlarged and there may be a little clear discharge.

Temperature: The queen's temperature will fall by about 1 degree centigrade about 12-24 hours before labour starts. The normal temperature is approximately 38.5 degrees, so it may fall to approximately 37 degrees.

Behavioural: Reduced appetite, restlessness, pacing and/or making frequent visits to her chosen nesting place.



Once kitting begins, it is usually divided into 3 stages:

Stage 1:

During this stage the cervix starts to dilate and the kittens move towards the birthing canal. There is usually a clear, odourless discharge from the vulva which may become tinged with blood just before delivery.

Stage 2:

This stage lasts a variable length, and begins when the queen starts straining vigorously. She may lie on her side, or get up and wander around between straining. In general, the first kitten should arrive within 1 hour of the beginning of this stage. Thereafter, kittens should arrive at fairly regular intervals of 5-60 minutes, although the interval may increase as kitting goes on. As each kitten is born, the queen will probably lick it and remove the surrounding membranes, and will cut the umbilical cord with her teeth. It is normal for a little dark green discharge to accompany the kittens.



Stage 3:

This stage simply refers to the passage of the remains of the placenta after each kitten. It varies in length, but should be complete within 2 hours of the arrival of the last kitten.

Supervision of kitting

Avoid excessive interference, but keep a close eye on proceedings. Signs of problems to look for include:

- Prolonged pregnancy: if it goes on longer than 63 days, a vet should see the queen to check that all is well.
- Prolonged preparations (i.e. stage 1) with no real progress
- Vigorous straining for 20-30 minutes with no kitten born
- Weak intermittent straining for 30-40 minutes with no kitten born.
- More than 1-2 hours between kittens with no straining
- kitten obviously stuck on the way out
- Greenish discharge but no kittens
- Arrival of dead kittens