



Your bitch will spend much of her time with her puppies during the first 2 weeks, but should be encouraged to visit the garden to stretch her legs and go to the toilet.

Worming with Panacur Suspension needs to be repeated when the puppies are 2 weeks old. Both mum and puppies need to be treated at this stage. The puppies need repeat treatments at 5 weeks and again at 8 weeks. Having accurate weights will make dosing much easier.

The amount of food fed to your bitch during the nursing stage may need to be increased by as much as three times. A good food during lactation is Royal Canin Starter biscuits, you can also try introducing small amounts to the puppies from about 3 weeks.

The biscuits can be soaked in a small amount of warm water initially to make them easier for the puppies to eat. Gradually increase the amount of biscuit feeds over the next 3 weeks. By the age of 6 weeks they should be completely weaned from your bitch.

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Cullompton:

College Road
Cullompton
Devon
EX15 1TG
Telephone: (01884) 35558 (Small Animal)
Telephone: (01884) 32228 (Large Animal)
Facsimile: (01884) 831941
E-mail: valecul@btconnect.com

Tiverton

The Laurels
Tiverton
Devon
EX16 4LF
Telephone: (01884) 258585 (Small Animal)
Telephone: (01884) 253355 (Large Animal)
Facsimile (01884) 257050
E-mail: valereception@btinternet.com

Honiton:

Duchy Road
Heathpark Industrial Estate
Honiton
Devon
EX14 1YD
Telephone: (01404) 44095
Facsimile: (01404) 46243
E-mail: valehoniton@btconnect.com

Uffculme:

7 Fore Street
Uffculme
Devon
EX15 3AN
Telephone: (01884) 841317
E-mail: valeuffculme@btconnect.com



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Labour and Birth



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Signs of whelping (labour)

In the final week of pregnancy begin taking your dogs rectal temperature. The first noticeable sign of labour is a drop in temperature from 38.5 C to 37 C, (this can differ slightly from dog to dog). This usually occurs 12-24 hours before birth.

The bitch may go off her food and may feel nauseous.

You may notice contractions, she will tense up and then relax as they pass.

She may become very restless and unsettled and may pant/shiver.

Discharge from the vagina. This will be clear to start with changing to a pale then dark green. This green discharge is the placentas becoming detached and the puppies are imminent. **If no puppies are born within an hour of this green discharge contact the vet for advice.**

The puppies are normally delivered 20-60 minutes apart. The bitch may have a rest part way through, not straining and not passing any puppies.



If you notice the bitch straining hard, appearing unsettled and restless for over an hour, or taking more than a 2 hour break contact the vet.

As the puppies are born the bitch will lick and clear the sac away from the face allowing the puppy to breathe. She will also bite through the umbilical cord.

If she is having puppies for the first time she may need a little help and reassurance. You may need to remove the membrane from around the puppies face. Using a towel rub the puppy, this can be done quite vigorously but take care not to hurt the puppy. This rubbing will stimulate the puppy to breath, fluid may be expelled from the puppies nose so clear this with the towel too.

After the puppies are born encourage the bitch to eat and drink. She may need to be encouraged to visit the garden to go to the toilet.

Remove the soiled bedding and replace with clean. Now is the time to observe the puppies and bitch.



After whelping

She should be calm, comfortable and relaxed. She should be cleaning the puppies and allowing them to suckle.

In the first few weeks the bitch will provide all the care her puppies need, providing the environment they are kept in is kept clean, warm and dry. The bedding material needs to be easily washed and dried. The bitch will lick the puppy's bottoms to stimulate urination and defaecation. She will do this until the puppies are approximately 3 weeks old.

It is useful to weigh the puppies every day. They should be gaining weight every day. Keep a written record of each puppy's weight so that it can be monitored accurately. (As a rough rule they should gain their birth weight every week during the nursing phase).

It is likely that your bitch will develop diarrhoea if she has eaten the placentas as the puppies were born, this should settle down within a couple of days.