



WHELPING GUIDE

The aim of this guide is to illustrate some of the the normal signs of whelping to clients new to dog breeding; and to explain the signals which should prompt veterinary involvement.

First of all whelping is generally straight forward and a fullfilling experience. **If at any point you are worried we have a 24 hour emergency service manned by experienced vets.** Please contact us if you have and questions or concerns. **Tel: 01324829989**

Pre-whelping Checklist

- Ensure that your bitch has a quiet, warm, draught free area with minimal disturbance. A high sided whelping box is ideal. It is beneficial introduce your bitch to this refuge long before whelping and hopefully she will relax in this environment.
- A heat source for the pups and whelping box.
- Towels for drying the pups
- Notebook, clock & pen for recording time intervals between pups and contractions.
- Scales for weighing puppies at birth and the following weeks.
- Prepare the car in case you need to go to the vets during whelping, i.e. cover the back seat and have hot water bottles in a puppy box so you can keep the puppies warm when you are transporting them.
- Ensure your bitch has been adequately wormed, and in addition should have been wormed in the last trimester (3 weeks) of pregnancy. Consider vaccination for herpes.

General information

The average bitches' pregnancy is 63 days. It can however be normal for whelping to be a few days early and up to 7 days late.

Signs of being in pup:

There are several signs of your bitch being in pup. These include an increase in abdominal

Apex Vets
Apex Veterinary Centre
Winchester Avenue
Denny
FK6 6QE
01324 829989
info@apexvets.com

www.apexvets.com



www.facebook.com/apexvets

size, enlarged teats and altered behaviour. These signs can also be seen in bitches having a false pregnancy. At Apex Vets we advise scanning all bitches to differentiate false and normal pregnancy and to ensure that they are having more than one pup. When bitches have only one puppy, it can be very oversized in the uterus. Knowing this forewarns us about the high possibility of dystocia (difficulty whelping).

Signs of imminent whelping:

A bitches temperature will often decrease by around 1C the 1 or 2 days prior to whelping. Measuring her temperature twice a day can often give you an early warning. You may also notice that she becomes a bit restless, has a decrease in appetite and produces a mild clear vaginal discharge 2-3 days prior to whelping. It is also not uncommon for bitches to have mild vomiting and diarrhea within a day or two of whelping.

Stages of whelping

Stage 1: This can last between 4 and 36 hours. During this time your bitch will become more restless and is likely to shiver and pant. It is common for milk to be released from the teats in stage 1 labour.

Stage 2: Stage 2 is indicated by your bitch starting to have contractions. Please contact us if her first puppy is not whelped within 1 ½ hours of these contractions starting. The normal interval between puppies is usually 30 minutes, but it can vary from 30 seconds to hours. Your bitch is likely to take to her pups well, licking them, feeding them and cleaning them. In the ideal world you should let her do all the hard work! Of course use your own judgment if you feel one of the pups is in difficulty and requires help. For example if a pup has membranes over its head or looks cold and isolated from the rest of the litter.

Stage 3: Placentas are expelled. It is worth counting these to ensure none are remaining within your bitch as this can cause problems. It is very normal for bitches to eat their placentas, this can however predispose them to diarrhea.

If everything went well and you have no concerns, please arrange an appointment with us 48-72 hours after whelping for a post-whelping check. This allows us to ensure both bitch and puppies are healthy.

Contact us promptly in the following circumstances

1. A green vaginal discharge is seen out with normal labour. This indicates placental separation and immediate intervention is often required.
2. Your bitch is in stage 2 labour “straining” for 1 ½ hours and fails to pass any pups. This can indicate that a pup is not able to pass through the birth canal.

Apex Vets
Apex Veterinary Centre
Winchester Avenue
Denny
FK6 6QE
01324 829989
info@apexvets.com

www.apexvets.com



www.facebook.com/apexvets

3. A bit of a puppy or fluid 'bag' is seen at the exit to the birth canal and does not result in birth of a puppy for over 30 minutes.
4. Your bitch is in stage 1 labour for 24 hours and does not progress into stage 2 labour. This can indicate inadequate contractions of the uterus.
5. Signs of excessive discomfort or chewing at her vulva.
6. A foul smelling vaginal discharge or excessive blood.
7. Call **01324 829989** 24 hours per day

Contact us during working hours in the following circumstances

1. For husbandry advice regarding puppy and bitch husbandry.
2. If your bitch has gone for 66 days from the first mating and is showing no signs of whelping.

Important Points

- Stay relaxed and keep the whole process calm. The calmer you keep your bitch the better.
- Count the placentas.
- Keep your bitch fit but not fat during pregnancy, this can be aided by feeding her puppy food for the last third (3 weeks before whelping) of pregnancy and during lactation, right up until the puppies are weaned. Some bitches can require up to 4 times as much food as normal when they are milking.
- Keep your bitch and puppies well wormed.
- If you are concerned or have any questions phone us.

Apex Vets
Apex Veterinary Centre
Winchester Avenue
Denny
FK6 6QE
01324 829989
info@apexvets.com

www.apexvets.com



www.facebook.com/apexvets