

Litter Logistics



What to expect when your pet is expecting

BREEDING DOGS AND CATS can be incredibly rewarding, but it can also be an agonizing process involving much heartache when things go wrong. Most pregnancies and deliveries proceed normally; but sometimes emergency veterinary intervention is necessary to save the lives of the mother, the babies or both.

Deciding to breed your dog or cat is a big decision, and places a lot of responsibility on you. Also, when deciding whether or not to breed your pet it is important to plan ahead financially. You'll need to set aside funds for health checks as well as for any unexpected emergencies that may arise.

It is important that you have some basic knowledge of what to expect with a normal pregnancy, so you'll know when to leave things alone and when to involve your vet.

FAQ's

How long is a dog/cat pregnancy?

Once bred, the average pregnancy lasts 63 days (9 weeks) but this can sometimes vary between 59-72 days.

What if I'm not sure that she is pregnant?

Counting from the day breeding was likely to have taken place, pregnancy can be confirmed;

- After day 18 – via ultrasound
- After day 26 – by a blood test or sometimes by a hands-on vet examination
- After day 47 – X-rays can be taken to determine how many pups/kittens are present, but this is best left until day 55 to limit potential harm to the young from x-rays.

Does Mum need any special care while she's pregnant?

The most important need for any pregnant female is top-quality food. She has to support her own body, the growing litter inside her and make enough milk to feed her litter once they are born. As the pregnancy progresses, and especially while she's nursing, mum will also need to eat a good deal more than she did before she was pregnant.

How can we tell when she's getting close to giving birth?

Usually, around 24 hours before giving birth, cats and dogs will make a "nest" in a place they feel will be safe, quiet and comfortable for delivering and nursing a new family. If there is a place you would prefer mum to deliver, it is best to create this space a week or so before delivery so she has some time to get used to it.

You can also take your dog's temperature twice a day for the last two weeks of her pregnancy. The normal temperature can be anywhere from 37-39 degrees, so keeping a record of your dog's temperature will give you an idea of what her normal temperature is. When this temperature suddenly drops by a whole degree, she will probably give birth within 12-24 hours.

What is normal labour?

Labour begins when the mother starts having contractions. During this time the mother may appear restless; sometimes she will pace, pant, shiver or even vomit. This can last 6-12 hours.

After this the contractions become more intense, and a puppy or kitten will be delivered. Once delivery starts there is usually a birth every hour or so, though it is not uncommon to have a 2-4 hour