

gap between births. Mum usually rests a little during this time and may clean and nurse any pups/kittens that have been delivered. If mum is straining unproductively for more than 30 minutes, it is wise to contact your vet.

Pups and kittens are usually delivered feet and head first, but it is also normal for the back legs and tail to come out first. The newborns are usually covered in a membrane that mum will bite away before she vigorously licks them to stimulate breathing.

A first time mother, or a mother who is disturbed by too much attention of activity in the birthing area, may not release the newborn from these membranes. If this happens, it is important that you intervene and do this for her. Gently tear away the membrane and rub the baby vigorously with a warm, clean towel to stimulate them to breathe. Once the baby is breathing, the umbilical cord can be knotted or tied off about 1cm from the newborn, then cut and disinfected. The newborn should be returned to mum as soon as possible.

There should be a placenta or "afterbirth" for each baby, though it may not immediately follow each birth. Sometimes a placenta will be delivered after each newborn, i.e., baby, placenta, baby, placenta, etc. However, it is also normal to have multiple newborns delivered before the placentas, i.e., baby, baby, placenta, baby, placenta, placenta, etc. Sometimes mum may eat the placentas immediately after they are expelled, so it may be difficult to accurately know how many have been passed.

When to call the vet

If there are problems during the birthing process early intervention can make a life or death difference for the mum and babies. Call the vet if:

- There is no pup/kitten produced after 30 minutes of straining, especially if there is a bloody, dark green or black discharge.
- It has been more than four hours between births, especially if the mother seems restless or lethargic.
- The mother is apathetic, seems ill or is restless after delivery.
- The mother is not interested in the babies and they are not suckling.
- The mother is past her "due date" or she has not started labour 24 hours after her temperature has dropped.

After the birth

It is always a good idea to have the mother and babies checked by the vet within three days after birth. This will help to ensure that the babies haven't been born with any major abnormalities (heart murmurs, deformities), that the mother is fit after giving birth and that nothing has gone wrong (like having a retained puppy).

It is normal for the mother to have a green, dark red or brown discharge for up to eight weeks after giving birth, but if it becomes foul smelling or an abnormal colour it should be checked by your veterinarian.

It's always useful to have Rescue Remedy or Emergency Essence on hand to help ease stress and anxiety for the expecting mother (and owner!).

Liza Schneider

www.holisticvets.co.nz

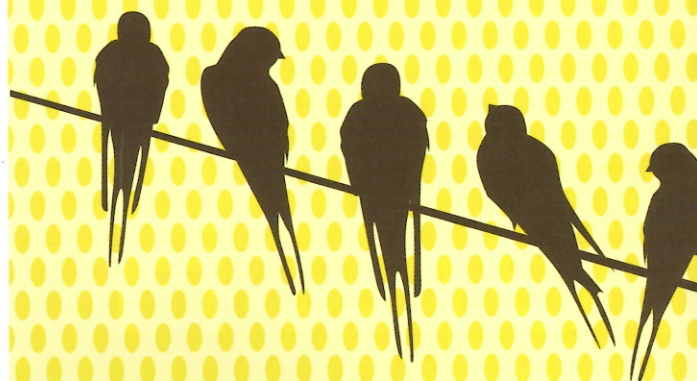
Annah Stretton

New concept store

We are piloting a new
concept in retail,
under the brand

Annah Stretton

birds
of a feather



Five retailers working together
provide everything a girl needs
under one roof: Frocks, Shoes, Make
Accessories, Coffee and Even

Open Now

299 Barton Street, Hamilton
07 839 4741

57 Grey Street, Tauranga
07 577 1470

Annah Stretton

Minx

PHOENIX
HOUSE OF MAKEUP

Molly Deely