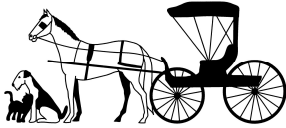


**Janssen Veterinary Reproduction Center**  
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## Pregnant Mare Care:

- The average gestational length in mares is 340 days, however gestational length can range from 320 days to well over one year
- Pregnant mares should maintain a good body condition score
  - Mares easily lose weight during this time and lactation. It can be very difficult to add weight to a late term or lactating mare due to their high energy demands.
  - Underweight mares may struggle with lactation
  - Overweight mares may struggle with foaling
- Late gestation mares should be monitored for physical changes that indicate impending parturition. Keep in mind that each mare may move at a different rate and not all mares will exhibit all signs
  - Pelvic ligament relaxation – area around tailhead will soften
  - Vulva relaxation – Vulva will relax and elongate
  - Mammary development – Udder will gradually fill and teats will point outward
  - Mammary secretions – Secretions may or may not be easily expressed and will change from clear and watery to opaque and sticky. Wax may be observed on teat ends. Secretions can be tested for pH (decreases), calcium (increases), and taste (changes from salty to sweet)
- Ideally mares will foal in a large stall or clean grass pasture. Area should be easily monitored keeping in mind that most mares foal at night.
  - Straw is the ideal bedding for newborn foals.



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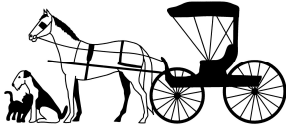
## Foaling process

- Stage one (onset of labor to water breaking)
  - Signs: general discomfort, pacing, rolling, getting up and down, lip curls, pawing, biting/looking/kicking at belly, straining/posturing as if to urinate, frequent urination/defecation, sweating
  - Try not to disturb mare during this time – disturbances may prolong labor in this stage
  - Lasts minutes to hours
- Stage two (water breaking to delivery of foal)
  - White/translucent membrane should be visible
    - Red membrane = “Red Bag” – placenta has detached from uterus and foal may be unable to get adequate oxygen
      - OPEN PLACENTA IMMEDIATELY with blunted scissors. Use care to not cut foal
  - Check position of foal – should be able to palpate two front feet slightly offset and soles down with muzzle between knees (diving position)
  - If assisting with normally presenting foal, may provide traction with mare’s contractions. Foal will need to go over the pelvis and dive downwards. Ensure front legs are slightly offset (one further in front of the other) for passage of the shoulders through the pelvis
  - Some mares get nervous/distracted and will not lay down and push with people in her stall. Sometimes stepping around a corner will allow her to settle.
  - Foal should be out within 30 minutes of water breaking.

### **If birth is not progressing or foal is in inappropriate position – CALL 317-758-5301**

- Stage three (foal birth to placenta expulsion)
  - Foal should be active and mucus membranes pink
  - Allow umbilicus to break naturally and dip immediately with dilute chlorhexidine
  - Placenta should be visible protruding from vulva after foal is delivered. Tie up placenta around hock height to avoid being stepped and to provide gentle weight to assist in passage
    - DO NOT PULL
  - Complete expulsion should occur by 3 hours post foaling
    - Weight from wet towels or water bottles may be used if placenta is not progressing. Foal nursing will also stimulate endogenous oxytocin production

### **If placenta has not passed within 3 hours – CALL 317-758-5301**



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## Post foaling

- Allow mare and foal to bond while observing for maternal behavior and important milestones:
  - 1 hour post foaling: Foal should be standing
    - If foal needs to be held - support by chest and rump/tail – use caution to not hold by ribs or abdomen due to risk of rib fracture or bladder rupture
  - 2 hours post foaling: Foal should nurse
    - Mare may need to be held and/or foal may need to be directed to udder
  - 3 hours post foaling: Placenta should be passed

**If placenta has not passed within 3 hours – CALL 317-758-5301**

- Monitor mare for appropriate maternal behavior
  - Mares should be interested in and can be protective over their new foal. Squealing when nursing is normal. They should not be aggressive towards the foal
- Monitor mare and foal for comfort
  - If either exhibit colicky behavior – CALL
  - Foals should largely sleep laying down
- Monitor foal and mare's udder for evidence of nursing
  - Udder should not be engorged or streaming milk when foal is not actively nursing
- Monitor foal for meconium passage
  - May give enema to facilitate
- Monitor foal for urination

**If urine is observed draining from umbilical stump – CALL 317-758-5301**

- Monitor mare for defecation post foaling
- Deworm mare with ivermectin
  - Protect against *Strongyloides westeri* (intestinal threadworms) passed in mare's milk
- Dip umbilical stump throughout the day with dilute chlorhexidine
- Neonatal exam and IgG test
  - Please call JVC Repro the morning after foaling to schedule
    - If all is well with mare and foal, we will schedule 12 – 24 hours post foaling
  - IgG measures the level of antibodies in the foal's system that have been absorbed from mare's colostrum. If IgG level is too low, a plasma transfusion will be required to ensure an adequate immune system