

Dog Pregnancy - Signs and Care

Being puppy is the cutest stage of a dog, it's so lovely to see how this little innocent angel moving around, learn to play, eat so well, run around and perform his agilities, and become little cute monster that messes things around. Then we will think about health, petsafe and future. There are still terrible canine over-population problems so it is better to be part of solution rather than to be part of the problem. Responsible owners who want to breed their dogs must pass all required registrations, accreditations, health screening, etc.

A female dog, correctly referred to as a bitch, can only become pregnant if she is bred during her heat cycle. The pregnancy generally lasts about two months or 56 to 69 days from the date of the first breeding, although this period may be slightly shorter or longer. Small breeds may deliver a week earlier while large breeds often deliver later. Over ninety-eight percent of all dogs deliver their puppies without assistance or complications.

For the first three weeks or so of pregnancy, you may not notice any changes in the bitch. Some females will become more demanding for attention, their nipples may enlarge slightly, and some may become hungrier. These are not a guarantee of a pregnancy, but are good signs. Bitches can show the same signs during 'false pregnancy,' a hormonal abnormality, which may occur after a bitch has been in heat. Decreased appetite is usually one of the earliest signs that your bitch might be pregnant. Not all females go through this doggie version of 'morning sickness', but a small percentage will eat less during the first few weeks of gestation, usually making up for it later in the pregnancy. Further indication is a sudden decrease in activity, the nipple growth is noticeable, breast material will develop beneath the nipples, which will also increase slightly in preparation for eventual milk production. Behavioral changes such as increase in affectionate behavior or an expressed desire to be left alone. But beware, don't give any vitamin supplements in the first month of her pregnancy, the birth

defects will be develop from too much vitamins A, D and calcium, all she need is high quality diet. No vaccinations should take place during pregnancy, they may harm the fetus. Vaccinations are prior to breeding. Always visit the vet to consult for her condition, from approximate 21-25 days, endocrinological tests detects pregnant dog hormone, relaxin. Puppies hearth beat can be detected after 25 days using ECG but it's difficult to test their number. X-ray can pick up puppy skeleton from around 49 days and can determine the number of siblings, but X-Ray is not advisable to use because of radiation danger and damage.

In fourth week, the increase in appetite and gaining weight are changes of progress signs of pregnancy, the abdomen will thicken, and gentle examination of the belly will reveal a firm, rather than fat feeling to the area. The bitch should continue to have regular, but not strenuous, exercise to help her maintain her muscle tone and not become overweight. Exercise involves a daily run to make sure all her muscles, including her uterine muscles, are in top condition. She really needs enough sleep on her dog crate, at week 7, it's advised to increase her meal about 25% and another 25 % on 8th week. Closer to the delivery date, your bitch will probably start to express her nesting instincts, scratching at the floor or in her bed, and displaying signs of increasing restlessness.

During the first stage of labor the cervix begins to dilate and uterine contractions begin. These contractions are painful and perplexing to the dog. She will appear quite uncomfortable and restless - pacing, shivering and panting. She probably will not eat and she may even vomit. Some dogs whine persistently. Others occupy themselves building a nest. Take her temperature rectally twice a day, the normal dog temperature is about 100.3F - 101.3F. It will normally drop to about 98 degrees Fahrenheit, 8 - 24 hours before the onset of labor and she will refuse to eat or drink anything.

During the second stage of labor uterine contractions begin in force. As this stage progresses the placental water sacks break and a straw-colored fluid is passed. Placentas are expelled after each puppy or sporadically during labor. Pups usually appear every half-hour or so after ten to thirty minutes of forceful straining. As the pups deliver, the mother will lick the puppy clean and bite off the umbilical cord. It is important to let the mother do this, if she will, because through this process she bonds with her puppies and learns to recognize them as her own. The rough licking of the mother stimulates the puppies to breathe and improves their circulation.

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