



# CEDAR RUN VETERINARY SERVICES

CARING FOR HORSES DOGS AND CATS

## **First time attending a foaling? Know what to do.**

### **Normal Foaling**

1. Normal gestation length is about 330 days (11 months).
2. About 2 weeks prior to foaling the pelvic ligaments markedly relax making the structures of the tailhead more pronounced.
3. Teats on the udder begin to wax anywhere from 6 days to 6 hours before delivery.
4. Foaling usually occurs between 10 PM and 6 AM.
5. The first sign of labor is restlessness (pacing, tail raising, frequent urination, flank watching). This usually lasts between 15 minutes and 2 hours. If disturbed during this time, the mare may delay giving birth for up to 48 hours.
6. The next stage of labor is rupture of the fetal placenta (water breaking). The rest of delivery should proceed rapidly after this.
7. Within 5 minutes, 1 foot should present to the vulva lips.
8. The second foot and the nose should present about 10 to 15 centimeters behind the first foot. This should occur within the next 5 minutes.
9. The rest of the delivery occurs within 5 to 35 minutes. The mare usually lies on her side for this part of the delivery.
10. The placenta should pass within 4 to 6 hours of the delivery of the foal. Save the placenta for examination by your veterinarian.
11. The foal should stand and nurse within 2 hours of delivery.
12. Abdominal discomfort from the delivery should subside within 1 to 2 hours of delivery.

### **Call Your Veterinarian if:**

1. The foal doesn't present one foot to the vulva lips within 5 minutes of placental rupture.
2. One or both feet appear, but the head does not within 5 minutes of placental rupture.
3. The mare exhibits abdominal pain, depression or decreased appetite after delivery.
4. The foal is not standing and nursing within 2 hours of birth.
5. The placenta is not passed within 6 hours of delivery.

### **Act first and then call your veterinarian immediately if:**

1. The placenta is delivered before the foal. You will recognize this by the red velvety membrane appearing at the vulva lips before the delivery of the foal. If this occurs, cut the velvety membrane and pull the foal out of the mare as quickly as you can.

### **Suggested Reading:**

Jones, Theresa. **The Complete Foaling Manual**. 1996

King, Marcia. *Foaling Problems*. **The Horse**. December 2001, pp.28-36.

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