



SMALL TALK



THE NEWSLETTER FROM THE SMALL ANIMAL TEAM - ISSUE # 41

MARCH 2017

Pet Pregnancies

Dogs

Your dog will be pregnant for 63 days (this is an average, so it can be between 58-68 days). We can confirm pregnancy using x-ray any time after 45 days; this can also give an *idea* of how many puppies to expect. We can never be 100% sure how many there are, as in an x-ray full of puppies it can be very tricky to be sure which head and spine belongs to which puppy.

As the time for birth gets nearer you may notice your dog "nesting" it is a good idea to set up an area for her to have her puppies. This area should be isolated from other dogs and allow her to move around and come and go as needed once the puppies arrive.

6-12 hours prior to giving birth your dog's temperature will drop by approximately 1 degree. It is a good idea to monitor your dog's temperature early in the pregnancy to get a "resting" or normal temperature. The normal temperature for a dog is around 38.5 but this can be between 38.1-38.8. When labour begins your dog will begin to undergo uterine contractions. She will also become very restless and may pant, shiver, pace or vomit.

Cats

Your cat will be pregnant for 61-63 days (very similar to dogs). As in dogs we can confirm your cat is pregnant after day 45 using x-ray and give you an educated estimate of how many kittens to expect.

Most cats will make their own nesting area in the last week of pregnancy. This is usually in an area with low human traffic and a nice soft bed.

12-24 hours prior to giving birth your cat will become very restless, she will begin grooming more, pacing, panting, vomiting and crying. Her temperature will also drop a degree (a cats temperature is the same as a dogs) but this is not as reliable as in dogs. Your cat will also retire herself to her nesting area and begin to purr.

The next stage of labour is contractions and actual expulsion of the kittens, this can take up to 6 hours with a kitten born every 30-60 minutes. If your cat become distracted or stressed she is able to stop labour and start again the next day. Do not attempt to move her once labour has started.

CALL THE VET IF...

- > After 30-60 minutes of contractions there is no puppy produced
- > Strong contractions for more than 60 minutes with no kitten produced
- > More than 4 hours has passed since the last pup was born and you know there is more to come, cats can post-pone labour for up to 24 hours if stressed part way through
- > No signs of labour 24 hours after her temperature drop (more reliable in dogs)
- > Signs of obvious pain
- > She has been pregnant for more than 70 days

Socialisation of new pets

Proper socialisation of your puppy is crucially important as it will help prevent aggressive behaviour towards people and other animals later in life. This will make coming to the vet a much more pleasant experience for everyone involved.

For puppies, the key period for socialisation to other dogs is from 3-8 weeks of age, to people from 6-12 weeks of age and to novel stimuli from 12-16 weeks of age. Puppies from homes that have plenty of other animals around them are great as it ensures that they have plenty of exposure to other animals from a very young age.

The issue is, during this period your dog won't be fully vaccinated so the park is not a great option for socialisation.

Pet play dates with friends and their pets is also a great idea. A good way of ensuring your puppy is comfortable at the vets is to come in and just have it walk around the clinic any day (puppies are always welcome here) or to come early or stay for a while after any appointments. This way they will learn that the vet isn't always a bad place to go.

Case of the Month - Gabby the Aborting dog

Gabby was unfortunately the victim of an accidental mating approximately 2 months prior to coming to see us. Her owner was 90% sure she was pregnant but as it was an accidental mating they were not sure of exact dates of the mating.

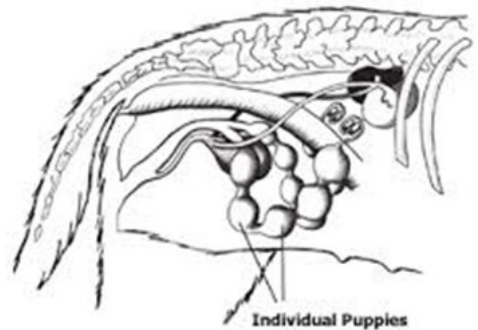
Gabby was showing signs that she was not well. She seemed restless and uncomfortable and kept watching her back end. She was producing milk and very large in her belly. There were no signs of straining or discharge from her back end and she ate her dinner so she was put to bed in the hope that she would settle overnight and have her puppies. The next morning she was still very unsettled and had started showing signs of weakness in her back end. Her vulva had become very swollen in appearance and she was not very interested in her breakfast. There was still no sign of straining or discharge. So the vet was called and suggested we see Gabby to be sure everything was OK.

On clinical exam Gabby seemed very unsettled. She was not able to bear weight on her hindlimbs for very long and her vulva appeared very swollen. She was producing a good amount of milk. She also had a fast heart rate and her temperature had dropped which was a strong sign of imminent labour. There was still no sign of any discharge coming from her back end or straining. Ultra sound confirmed the presence of live puppies.

It was decided that Gabby would need a C-section that day to get the puppies out as she was showing signs of being ready to whelp and was obviously stressed about the situation.

At surgery we found Gabby was pregnant with 8 puppies! However as soon as the first puppy had been taken out we discovered a problem; the puppy was too premature to survive. Sadly, all 8 of the puppies were the same. The placentas were unhealthy in appearance leading us to believe that poor Gabby was aborting her puppies.

Gabby survived the surgery and recovered very well. We did not take her uterus out as she is hoping to have more puppies in the future (planned this time!!)



Rabbit Vaccination

Recently the government has been granted permission to release a new strain of the rabbit Calicivirus, this release is scheduled between March and June this year. The wild rabbit population in New Zealand currently carries a different strain of the virus, with a large percentage of the wild population being immune. It is a deadly virus that causes fever, depression, weight loss, diarrhoea, and bleeding from the nose or ears.

Luckily we are able to vaccinate against the disease and we have been advised that the current vaccine we are using covers the strain of Calicivirus. Therefore as long as your rabbit is up to date with his or her yearly vaccinations you have nothing to worry about. If your pet rabbit has not been vaccinated or has missed the yearly booster we would advise you to call the clinic and book them in for the next vaccination day. It might also be wise to keep unvaccinated rabbits inside where they are unable to have contact with wild rabbits until they have been vaccinated.

Our recommended vaccination protocol is:

First vaccination to be done at 10-12 weeks of age and then a yearly vaccination.



Did you know.....

- * A Woodpecker can peck 20 times per second.
- * Emus and kangaroos cannot walk backwards.
- * Elephants are the only animal that can't jump.
- * Giraffes and humans have the same number of bones in their necks: 7
- * The tongue of a Giraffe is so long it can lick inside its own ear.
- * Baby dolphins have spines on the sides of their tongue. The spines zip up to make a straw so that they can drink the mother's milk without getting salt water in it.
- * The slowest fish is the seahorse, which moves along at about 0.01 mph.



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