

Ravenwood Veterinary Clinic

Whelping Information Sheet

When is my female's due date?

Hopefully, the breeding dates were accurately noted. The normal gestation for a dog is between 58 and 65 days. More accurately it is 59 days from the day the ovaries shed the eggs. If she was bred every other day and you have the first date she refused the male, you can call this the 59th day. Since, however, this is not easily identified and the majority of females ovulate at the end of their fertile week (the middle week), we pick 63 days from the middle breeding.

How do I know if my dog is pregnant?

A majority of the time the embryos can be palpated between 21 and 35 days of pregnancy. Before this they are too small and after this the fluid in the uterus connects together and makes palpation unreliable.

Sonograms can be done from day 28 on and give us an accurate diagnosis of pregnancy as well as a fair indication of number. The whole procedure takes 5 to 10 minutes, but may require a small square of hair to be shaved.

A blood test called Relaxin can be run; it is most accurate if the sample is drawn 30 days after the last breeding. This test is sent out to our lab in Seattle and takes one to three days to get results back.

The bones of the fetuses will start taking calcium up after day 43 of pregnancy. We can X-ray the female after 45 days and give you a fair count of the puppies. If there are five or more feti, however, even x-rays will give variable numbers.

How will my dog act while she is pregnant?

The majority of females will not show any change in behavior. Some may have a clear mucus discharge from the vulva. The important point is that the discharge is clear! Some dogs may have some mild vomiting, equivalent to morning sickness in women. And a few may try to worry you with a decrease in appetite, the important note here is to watch their weight and be sure they do not lose weight. If they are vomiting it is a good idea to monitor their temperature for a few day and have them examined by your veterinarian to make sure a more serious condition is not occurring.

What should my dog be fed while she is pregnant?

This is the area where the most mistakes are made. Your dog should not be bred until her weight is perfect. Nor should you see any signs of weight gain before 30 days of pregnancy. The dog's diet should be strictly commercial dog food, with a high digestibility. High protein type foods for lactating females do not need to be started until the last 2 to 3 weeks of pregnancy. I recommend, gradually over the last three weeks of pregnancy, weaning the female onto the puppy food you plan to feed the puppies. I do not recommend feeding meat mixture during pregnancy. There are a growing number of bacteria/parasites being detected in raw meat diets and pregnant females are a prime target. The important thing to remember is that we are putting her on a high quality diet, but we do not want her to get fat!

The dog's body will not require extra energy until a slow increase starts three weeks from whelping. It does not take much energy to make puppies! A good diet before whelping will play a key roll in preventing milk fever in the bitch and ensure healthy puppies. Never supplement a pregnant dog with one particular mineral or vitamin!! Ratio and balances are essential for normal fetal development.

How should I prepare for the puppies?

If she is having the puppies indoors, 2 to 3 weeks before the due date you should construct a whelping box. There are numerous designs. Mainly, be sure she can stretch out in either direction and that the sides are at least as high as her shoulders. A thick layer of old newspaper makes for good and easy to clean bedding. Indoor/outdoor carpeting, cut to match the box floor, is a great surface for nursing pups. Be prepared to change it every other day until the pups can leave the box.

If she is going to whelp outside, be sure her doghouse is long enough for her to lie flat at least along one of the sides. Be sure you have the fence constructed so she cannot get out, since you will have to remove the chain. Put fresh straw in a week before she is expecting.

When will we see her milk let down?

In first-litter females the milk usually does not drop until 24 to 48 hours before whelping. In females that have had previous litters this can occur up to 10 days before the actual delivery.

How can I tell when it is "time"?

Most female's body temperature will drop 48 to 24 hours before whelping and then return to normal. This, however, can last as short as 12 hours. If you want to monitor this, you should plan on taking the temperature every 12 hours from the first 63-day count. Normal body temperature for a dog is from 100.0° F to 102.5° F. It can drop at this stage to as low as 98.0° F.

Stage 1: This stage can start as early as 24 hours before actual delivery. The mother will usually become restless, pace, rearrange the "nest" constantly, and may not be interested in food.

Stage 2: This stage is the state where the actual contractions start. The female starts straining and pushing with her abdominal muscles. Within 20 minutes of actual contractions she should deliver a pup. First thing visible will be the "water sac" (amniotic sac). This will usually break as the puppy is expelled. Puppies are easily born head or feet first. Once in the birth canal the puppy is usually quickly expelled and the mother starts immediately to remove the membranes and stimulate it to breath. The female usually chews the umbilical cord and cleans the puppy.

Stage 3: This is when she passes the placenta and the uterus contracts to clean itself out. Most females actually eat the placentas as they come down the vaginal canal. She may have two puppies before she passes two placentas. Normally, the puppies will come within 15 minutes to an hour between each other. After the last puppy, the female should settle down and nurse quietly. Offer her water or broth in the box often. After 24 hours the appetite should return for the female, but it is good idea to leave lots of fresh water close to the box.

What are danger signs I should watch for?

1. If the female goes beyond 63 days from the last breeding date.
 2. If you notice a vaginal discharge which is "milky", yellow or green in color.
 3. If the female has been having contractions for over an hour with no results.
 4. If you see the "water break" and do not have a puppy within 30 minutes.
 5. If the female is contracting and it has been longer than 2 hours between puppies.
 6. When the whelping is over, if the puppies do not feed and sleep contentedly. Healthy puppies will be relatively quiet and have plump abdomens.
 7. If the mother does not clean the membranes off of the puppy as soon as it is born, you will have to. Clean the puppy off with a dry towel. Do not be afraid to rub briskly to induce breathing.
 8. If the mother does not chew the umbilical cord, DO NOT PULL! Tie off the cord with a little thread, 2 to 3 inches from the body and cut with a pair of scissors. It is best to dip the cord attached to the puppy in iodine.
 9. The mammary glands on the female will change in size as the pups nurse. You should always be able to express some milk from all glands. If you cannot or if the gland is hard, or red, she needs to be seen immediately.
- It is a good idea to have the female and puppies examined 24 to 48 hours after whelping to check their well-being.
 - If you want tails docked or dewclaws removed, then this needs to be done 3 to 5 days after whelping.
 - The female may have a bloody/greenish discharge for up to 6 weeks after having the puppies.
 - Most females can have plain dry commercial puppy food left in their pens for free choice feeding if this is started while they are whelping.
 - It is not recommended to change diets once the puppies are born, until after weaning.

Ravenwood Veterinary Clinic Kennel Management 2015

Litter Management Chart

(Year and Dam for title)

Dam _____ Sire _____ Whelping Date _____

Number in Litter _____ Number of females _____ Number of males _____

<u>Date due</u>	<u>Date done</u>	<u>Timing</u>	<u>Activity</u>
_____	<input type="text"/>	45 days pregnant	Panacur dam
_____	<input type="text"/>	3 to 5 days old	Dewclaw removal on pups
_____	<input type="text"/>	2 weeks old	Panacur dam and pups
_____	<input type="text"/>	3 weeks old	Fecal _____
_____	<input type="text"/>	5 weeks old	Pyrantel P. pups and dam
_____	<input type="text"/>	6 weeks old	DA ₂ PV-CPV-CV vaccination
_____	<input type="text"/>		Fecal _____
_____	<input type="text"/>	7 weeks old	Pyrantel P. pups and dam
_____	<input type="text"/>	9 weeks old	Pyrantel P. pups and dam
_____	<input type="text"/>	10 weeks old	DA ₂ PV-CPV-CV vaccination
_____	<input type="text"/>	11 weeks old	Pyrantel P. pups and dam
_____	<input type="text"/>	13 weeks old	Pyrantel P. pups
_____	<input type="text"/>	14 weeks old	DA ₂ PV-CPV-CV Rabies vaccs
_____	<input type="text"/>	15 weeks old	Pyrantel P. pups
_____	<input type="text"/>	21 weeks old	Fecal _____

Date weaning complete _____ Panacur three days

Date put out _____

Any pups lost by six months? _____ Why? _____

Ravenwood Veterinary Clinic

Kennel Management 2015

Puppy Weight Chart

_____ (Year and dam for title)

_____ (Whelping date)

Description	Birth	2 weeks	4 weeks	6 weeks	8 weeks	12 weeks	6 months
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							
7							
8							
9							
10							