

LHS Dog Pregnancy and Labor Quick Sheet



Early pregnancy:

- Average dog gestation period is 62 days (2 months)
- Provide mom dog with puppy chow as only diet throughout the pregnancy (increased calories and nutrients)
- Mom can run and play as much as she normally does, but may be more tired than usual
- Mom may urinate more frequently, so increasing daily walks might be necessary
- Belly will start to swell and mammary glands will start to feel full

1 Week Before Labor:

- Provide mom with a comfortable indoor area that she can nest in
- Mom will use blankets and other soft things to build a comfortable environment. A kiddie pool or whelping box lined with puppy pads, sheets and blankets may be good tools to provide her with a safe space
- Labor is messy so make sure the room you help her settle in is cleanable and has plenty of towels, puppy pads, and sheets available

24(ish) Hours Before Labor:

- Mom's temperature will drop 2°F or more to 99°F or lower
- She may begin panting and laying on her side
- Make sure she has plenty of water and access to food and that she is in her nesting area where you are keeping supplies:
 - Sheets, towels, blankets
 - Rectal thermometer
 - Bulb syringe
 - Baby scale or digital food scale
 - Dental floss
 - Disposable gloves (optional)
 - Heating pads

2-4 Hours Before Labor

- Visible abdominal contractions will begin
- Have all supplies ready and have heating pads under towels or blankets nearby
- If mom is having contractions for 24 hours without puppy, she needs to be seen by a vet immediately

Labor Process:

- Once the first puppy is born, the time between each puppy can be anywhere from minutes to 24 hours
 - If mom is still showing labor signs and has not had a puppy in 24 hours, she needs to be seen by a vet immediately
- As the puppies are being born, mom will likely clean them, chew their umbilical cord, and nurse them

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- If she is not attending to puppies or is having them too quickly to attend to each, you should step in and help
 - Break any sacs surrounding puppies ASAP
 - Make sure they are breathing
 - If they are having a hard time breathing or she is not cleaning them, use a bulb syringe to clear airways (nose and throat)
 - If they are not crying and wiggling, rub them and continue to bulb syringe until they are
 - If mom has not chewed the umbilical cord within 5-10 minutes, tie a piece of dental floss very tightly around the cord about 3-4 inches away from the puppy to cut off blood flow. Cut the cord 2-3 inches on the side of the tie that's closer to the mom.
 - Place them on a heating pad with a blanket or towel in between near mom so they can begin nursing
 - If any puppy is inactive or seems to have trouble breathing still, contact emergency foster phone
 - If a puppy feels cool (dog temps are higher than human temperatures) even after being warmed from heating pad and blanket contact emergency foster phone
- Mom will likely not eat until after labor, but might drink in between puppies
- Weigh each puppy as they are nursing to get an initial weight. It is a good idea to keep track of their weights for the first 2 weeks to make sure they are not losing weight.
- You will be able to tell when the labor process is over because mom will relax, contractions will stop, and she should stop panting. She may get up to eat or drink, but will likely sleep and nurse her puppies.
- Mom will continue to bleed from her vulva for several days, but it will slow down and get darker as time passes

**For Emergencies~
9 am to 5 pm daily~ Bring the pet directly to LHS
AFTER HOURS CALL~ 434-473-1383**

**Questions concerning fostering, email
foster@lynchburghumane.org**

National Kitten Coalition (Producer). (2020). *Pregnancy and Birth- Caring for Pregnant and Nursing Cats and their Kittens* [video webinar] Retrieved from <https://kittencoalition.org/programs/webinars/>

Raposa, K & Erdle, R (Author) (2020) Dog Pregnancy and Labor Tip Sheet. Lynchburg Humane Society

Williams, K., & Ward, E. (n.d.). Pregnancy and Parturition in Cats. Retrieved from <https://vcahospitals.com/know-your-pet/pregnancy-and-parturition-in-cats>