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Client Foaling Kit

Clean towels
Bottle with 2 % Chlorhexidine solution (Nolvason) for dipping umbilical cord.
Small container or 60cc syringe case to dip cord
Fleet Enema
Tail wrap for mare
Thermometer and lubricant
Large garbage bag for placenta
Flashlight
Bucket
Liquid Ivory soap
Paper towels
Roll Cotton
Scissors
Exam gloves
Twine for tying up placenta so mare does not step on
Halter/ Lead rope for mare

Recommended Reading:

"Blessed are the Broodmares" by M. Phyllis Lose, V.M.D.



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The Pregnant Mare

1. The mare should be kept separate from all other horses and animals as she approaches her due date.
2. Begin bringing the pregnant mare into foaling stall at night starting 3 weeks before expected due date.
3. The stall should be at least 12'x 14' and check for sharp edges, nails, and holes.
4. Set up cameras or other alert device.
5. Provide outdoor exercise as well as bedded (preferably with straw) shelter (stall or shed).
6. Energy demands will increase gradually as she gets closer to foaling: a proper amount of well-balanced grain appropriate for broodmares, as well as good quality hay, access to clean water and a salt/mineral block at all times are essential.
7. The mare should be vaccinated for **Rabies, Eastern & Western Encephalitis, Tetanus; West Nile Virus, Influenza, Botulism, and Herpes Virus (Rhino Virus)** 4-6 weeks before foaling. This will ensure that adequate antibodies get into her colostrum to protect the foal when it is born.
8. As the mare approaches her due date, everyday check:
 - a. The size of her udder (will become larger as she gets closer to foaling).
 - b. Look for a white/yellow waxy substance forming on the end of each teat.
 - c. Always check under her tail and look for any discharge coming from the vulva (if this is observed, notify the veterinarian right away).
9. Signs of readiness for birth:
 - a. Relaxation of the pelvic ligaments, most easily palpable around the tail head and croup, where the region begins to feel slack, pliable, and soft as parturition approaches.
 - b. Udder development "bagging up" (tends to occur earlier in younger mares and later in older mares).
 - c. Waxing of the teats; white/ yellow discharge on the teats which usually appears between 2 weeks and 72 hours prior to foaling.
 - d. If the mare is seen with a full udder and/or dripping milk at any time **EARLIER** than 2 weeks before due date, call your veterinarian immediately. This may be a sign of abortion and/or inflammation within the placenta.
 - e. Testing kits (commercially available water hardness testing kits) can measure the calcium level in mare's milk; typically levels of calcium rise above 40 mmol/l in the 24 hours prior to foaling.

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Stages of Foaling

Stage 1: The mare becomes restless (pawing the ground continuously, lying down, rolling, sweating, looking at sides, curling lip) and may have a decrease in appetite. This is a good time to wrap her tail.

CALL THE VETERINARIAN IF:

Mare does this behavior for more than an hour with no other signs of foaling developing

****Stage 1 ends when her "water breaks" (amniotic fluid is expelled in a large gush from her vulva)****

Stage 2: This next phase is the expulsion of the foal itself. Whether or not you have seen her pass the large amount of liquid (amniotic fluid), you should observe her to lie down and begin to strain.

1. The mare will often lay down, roll and get up a few times.
2. White – bluish membranes should become visible at her vulva within the next 10-15 minutes as she strains.
3. You may also start to see the foal's front limbs and/or nose appear with the membranes.
4. Try to leave the mare alone and be careful not to disturb her as you quietly observe the membranes and foal come through the vulva.
5. With some straining, the mare should be able to push the entire foal out within 20 minutes from the time you first see membranes appear at the vulva.

CALL THE VETERINARIAN IF:

1. **The mare has been straining for more than 15 minutes and no progress is made or the foal is not expelled within 30 minutes.**
2. **If at any point you see a bright blood red tissue protruding through the vulva ("Red Bag") instead of the white/blue tissue. CALL VETERINARIAN IMMEDIATELY**

Stage 3: Once the foal is completely out of the mare, it is best to continue watching from a distance and not disturb the mare or foal. If necessary, you may gently wipe the membranes away from the foal's nostrils (if they are still covering the face) to ensure that the foal has an open airway to breathe through its nose. * **Otherwise DO NOT attempt to move the foal or disturb the mare***

1. The mare may remain lying down for some time (usually about a ½ hr. after foaling).
2. When she does stand, the umbilical cord will naturally break between the mare and foal.
DO NOT manually break apart the umbilical cord between the mare and foal
3. The veterinarian will provide you with a solution of **umbilical dip** (blue chlorohexadine solution). Once the mare stands and the umbilicus is broken – gently dip the umbilical stump of the foal in this solution (should be repeated twice daily for 2 days).
4. You will probably notice membranes hanging out from the mare's vulva – this is the placenta which she should pass completely within the next 3 hours.
DO NOT pull on the hanging placenta to try and remove it from the mare (it could tear and the pieces left inside can cause severe complications)
5. Tie the placenta up so the mare doesn't step on and tear it, which can cause severe complications.
6. Once the mare has passed the placenta – it is important to place the entire placenta into a garbage bag and save it in a safe area (where animals cannot get into it).
The veterinarian will want to examine it the next day during the mare and foal exam

CALL THE VETETERINARIAN IF:

1. If the mare has not passed the entire placenta (meaning a piece of tissue is still hanging from the vulva) 3 hours after giving birth- **CALL IMMEDIATELY**
2. If the mare begins to act uncomfortable after foaling (pawing, rolling, curling her lip, lying down and getting up again) and the discomfort continues for more than 15 minutes- **CALL IMMEDIATELY**

Stage 4: You should observe the foal to stand within 1 hour and nurse within 2 hours of being born. You may gently assist the foal to stand if it has made several attempts to stand on its own.

CALL THE VETERINARIAN IF:

1. The foal is unable to stand within 1 hour or nurse within 2 hours after birth.
2. **CALL THE VETERINARIAN IMMEDIATELY-** If the foal is unresponsive and/or not breathing after birth.

Over the next 12 hours you should observe the foal to:

1. Nurse from the mare at least twice an hour. (If the mare is kicking or not allowing the foal to nurse, hold her still). **Call the Veterinarian if problem continues.**
2. Pass its first manure, the "meconium" (soft, dark brown manure).
3. Urinate.
4. Successfully lie down and get up again unassisted.

CALL THE VETERINARIAN (if all is normal) within 12 hours of foaling to schedule a Neonatal

Exam. It is very important to conduct this exam within 12-18 hours after birth to catch problems early if they arise. When the veterinarian comes they will examine the mare, the foal and the placenta (important to save). They will also draw blood from the foal to run an IgG test- which will tell us if the foal has ingested a sufficient amount of colostrum from the mare to receive the antibodies needed to survive.

Options and Decisions:

- If a complication with the birth arises, in order to save the foal and/or the mare, she might need to be referred to an equine hospital – the closest is **Mid-Atlantic Equine Clinic in Ringoes, NJ (609) 397-0078.**
- At the hospital, depending on the treatment she receives, (medical and or surgical treatment to remove and treat the foal) the costs can start at \$3,000 or more.
- Should a severe complication arise and referral for treatment at this hospital is NOT an option, the mare (and foal) will have to be humanely euthanized on the farm by an overdose of anesthetic. **This is a difficult decision that is best discussed between family members BEFORE the time comes.**
- Even when the birth goes normally without complications, foals can become very sick very easily during the first months of life. Referral to the above mentioned clinic for proper treatment of the foal may also be necessary.
- You always have the option to bring the mare to a facility where experienced staff can monitor and assist your mare during the birth for you. Contact us for more information about this option.

Useful Links for more info:

<http://www.thehorse.com/pdf/factsheets/foaling/foaling.pdf>

<http://www.thehorse.com/ViewArticle.aspx?ID=10872&src=topic>

<http://www.thehorse.com/ViewArticle.aspx?ID=16821>

<http://www.thehorse.com/ViewArticle.aspx?ID=10872&src=topic>

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