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Foaling Kit

Clean terry cloth towels (4)

Wide mouthed jar filled with 2% iodine solution (1-2 ounce size)

Fleet enema

Clean tail wraps (2)

Large animal "Ring Top" thermometer with string and attached clothes pin or a digital thermometer

Dewormer e.g. Strongid-P

Large plastic bag for placenta

Flashlight and replacement batteries

Bucket

Liquid Ivory soap

Paper towels

Roll cotton

Scissors

Recommended reading:

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



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The Pregnant Mare

1. Mare should be kept separate from all other horses and animals as she approaches her due date.
2. Provide outdoor exercise as well as a well bedded (preferably with straw) shelter (stall or shed).
3. Energy demands will increase gradually as she gets closer to foaling: an appropriate amount of well-balanced grain ration appropriate for broodmares, as well as good quality hay, access to clean water and a salt/mineral block at all times are essential.
4. The mare should be vaccinated for **rabies, eastern & western encephalitis, tetanus; West Nile virus, influenza, 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.
5. 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 vet right away)

Stages of Foaling

Stage 1: The mare becomes restless (pawing the ground continuously, lying down, rolling, sweating, looking at sides, curling lip)

CALL THE VET 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 gust 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 (the amniotic fluid), you should observe her to lie down and begin to strain.

1. White – Bluish membranes should become visible at her vulva within the next 10-15 min as she strains
2. You may also start to see the foal’s front limbs and / or nose appear with the membranes

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3. 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
4. With some straining, the mare should be able to push the entire foal out within 20 min from the time you first see membranes appear at the vulva

WHEN TO CALL THE VET:

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

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 foals 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 up, 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. 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 hrs.
 - ** DO NOT pull on the hanging placenta to try and remove it from the mare (it could tear and the pieces left inside will make the mare very sick)
4. 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 vet will want to examine this the next day during the mare and foal exam.

CALL THE VET 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 THE VET**
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 min – CALL THE VET**

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.

** The vet 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)

CALL THE VET IF:

1. **The foal does is unable to stand within 1 hour or nurse within 2 hours after birth.**
2. **CALL THE VET IMMEDIATELY – if the foal is unresponsive and/or not breathing after birth**

Over the next 12 hrs. you should observe the foal to:

1. Nurse from the mare at least twice (if the mare is kicking or not allowing the foal to nurse, hold her still) – CALL VET if problem continues
2. Pass its first manure, the “muconium” (soft, dark brown manure)
3. Urinate
4. Successfully lie down and get up again unassisted

CALL THE VET (if all is normal) within 12 hrs. of foaling to schedule a Neonatal Exam ** It is very important to conduct this exam within 12-18 hrs. after birth to catch problems early if they arise. When the vet comes they will examine the mare, the foal, and the placenta (please save). The vet will also draw blood from the foal to run an **IgG test** – this will tell us if the foal has received sufficient milk from the mare to get the antibodies it needs to survive.

Options/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**
- There, depending on the treatment she receives (medical and or surgical treatment to remove and treat the foal), the costs can start from \$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 euthanised 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 in 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 to foal 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>