

Its that time of year again. Time to start preparing your pregnant mares for foaling! Here are just a few helpful hints to make sure the process goes as smooth and stress free as possible:

Preparing your mare:

1. Make sure your mare is up-to-date on all her vaccines. We recommend vaccination with EHV-1 (pregnant mare vaccine) at 5, 7, and 9 months of gestation. 30 days prior to her due date, booster with EEE/WEE, Tetanus, EHV-1/4, Flu, West Nile and rabies (6-way vaccine). If you vaccinate for Strangles, you want your pregnant mare to receive a **KILLED** (intramuscular) vaccine at this time as well (30 days prior to due date). **ABSOLUTLY NO Live or Modified-live vaccines** should be administered to your pregnant mare!
2. Deworm 30-45 days prior to foaling. Have Ivermectin on hand for deworming at time of foaling.
3. Increase the mare's plane of nutrition starting in her third trimester.
4. Schedule an appointment with your veterinarian to open the mare's caslicks (if present) 30-45 days prior to her due date.
5. If you have a maiden mare (never had a foal), start desensitizing her udder by touching, massaging and cleaning (warm water) in preparation for a nursing foal. Even if your mare is not a maiden, cleaning her udder is a good idea as you approach her due date, to help reduce the bacteria contamination for the nursing foal.
6. If your mare is on any prescription medications (for example, Regumate or Pergolide), contact your veterinarian for advise at least 30 days prior to foaling date.

Preparing for your new foal:

1. We recommend preparing a foaling kit that has all the essential tools for a smooth foaling (call and speak with one of our receptionists about purchasing a pre-made kit). Some items might include:
 1. Tail wrap (for mare, prior to foaling)
 2. Cotton and ivory soap (to clean mare's udder/vulva at the start of the birthing process)
 3. Scissors (in an emergency, you may need to cut open the birth sac if you notice a 'Red Bag'- occurs with pre-mature placental separation).
 4. Sterile lubricant and sterile sleeves/gloves
 5. Several large bath towels (for drying foal)
 6. Clamp (for umbilical cord if excessive bleeding)
 7. Navel dip (dilute iodine or chlorhexadine solution) for dipping umbilicus (this should be done at the time of birth and several times/day for the first few days of life)
 8. Fleet enema
 9. Thermometer and stethoscope

As it gets closer to your mare's due date, make sure you have plenty of straw as well as a clean, safe and spacious environment (stall or shed) for foaling.

The 30, 1-2-3 rule:

The birthing process (from the time your mare's water breaks to expulsion of the foal) should take no longer than 30 minutes. The foal should be standing within 1 hour, nursing within 2 hours and the mare should pass her placenta within 3 hours. **CALL** your veterinarian if this process does not appear to be going according to this general rule.

Call to schedule a post foaling-mare and foal exam with your veterinarian (should ideally be performed within 12-18 hours of foaling). **SAVE** the placenta for your veterinarian to examine at the time of the mare and foal exam.

Please contact us if you have further questions about the warning signs of a difficult birth or preparing for the arrival of your new foal in general. Good luck and have a great foaling season!

Coming soon...visit our facebook page for pictures of new arrivals this spring. Also, send us your adorable foal pictures to be posted!