

## Whelping Bitches



Contact the vet if...

### Before and during labour/parturition:

- The bitch goes off her food during pregnancy, or is unwell in any other way (a drop in appetite may be normal for some bitches after 30 days of pregnancy or just prior to delivery but she should be bright and well in every other way).
- More than 70 days of gestation have passed since mating.
- No puppy is born within four hours of the bitch passing a green or red/brown vaginal discharge (after two hours, be prepared to call the vet).
- Strong contractions for 20-30 minutes fail to produce a puppy. Contact your vet and take any puppies already born with you if you go to the surgery.
- More than two hours pass with the bitch resting or having only weak contractions between pups, and you know there are more inside.
- More than 12 hours of second-stage labour has occurred (second stage is when puppies are being born).
- The mother fails to go into labour within 24 hours of her temperature drop.
- She fails to produce a puppy 2-3 hours after foetal fluids were passed.
- She is unwell at all, depressed during labour.
- Any abnormal vaginal discharge occurs including excessive bleeding, or a foul-smelling discharge, at any point in the pregnancy or labour.
- You can see a puppy at the vulval entrance but the bitch's straining fails to expel it.
- The bitch aborts puppies during the pregnancy.

### After delivery look out for the following problems and contact the vet if:

- The bitch has not passed all the placentas you would expect (as many as there are puppies), she may eat them.
- She has a foul-smelling vaginal discharge.
- She has a very bloody vaginal discharge.
- She has a fever, is unwell with a loss of appetite, listlessness or a lack of interest in the puppies, any of which may indicate an infection within the uterus.
- The bitch shows signs of twitching, nervousness, restlessness and a stiff, painful gait, or seizures, which may be a sign of hypocalcaemia, a calcium deficiency.
- The mammary glands are red, firm and painful, or discharge from the nipples is smelly, brown or bloody.
- Death of any puppies.
- 'Fading' puppies - puppies appearing depressed or reluctant to feed.
- The bitch continues to strain after producing all the puppies you were expecting.
  - The bitch is unwell in any other way, not eating, depressed, has diarrhoea or is losing weight.



It is always best to consult your vet if you have any concerns. Be informed as to what to expect by researching and talking to other, experienced breeders.