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Preparing for your Mare to Foal

When will my mare foal?

Duration of pregnancy in the mare is around 335 – 342 days
If you know the mating date, foaling date can be estimated
Early pregnancy ultrasound can confirm pregnancy and estimate foetal age
The mare's udder grows in the last month, most noticeably in the last 2 weeks
Feel or see relaxation of the pelvic ligaments in some mares 3 days before
Teats filling with colostrum 'waxing up' is often 1 day to 1 week before
Mare may display walking or lying down the night of eminent foaling.

Stages of Foaling 1,2,3

Stage 1 – the foal is moving into birth canal inside mare

Mares may show some of the follow signs:

Patchy sweating on neck, girth and flank 4 hrs before
Restlessness, getting up and down
Posturing to urinate switching tail and looking at her flanks
Fluid passes out vulva or the 'water breaks'

***N.B. if velvety red 'red bag' is seen break it immediately and call your vet**

Stage 2 – the powerful contractions
Blue-white membranes appear

Mare lays on her side
Groups of 3-4 contractions with 2 min rests
Foal presents with two front feet and its head
Strong contractions push the foal out
Stage 2 usually takes only 10-20 minutes in total

***N.B. call the vet if contractions do not present a foal in 10 mins, if the foal presents differently to normal or if the foal is not out entirely very quickly.**

Stage 3 – membranes are passed

Mare may be uncomfortable and look 'colicky' pawing, getting up and down
Normally the membranes are passed within 3hrs after birth.

N.B. if the placenta is not passed within 3 hours or part of it is missing call the vet for assistance.

The New Born Foal

The foal should start breathing immediately after delivery

The foal should sit up in sternal position within 2 minutes

The foal should stand within 1 hour

The foal should nurse from mare within 2 hours, emptying the udders

The foal should pass meconium or yellow faeces without straining

N.B. failure of the foal to progress indicates to call the vet for advice.

Other indicators to call the vet for advice on your foal

- Any birth that required assistance
- The Foal has meconium – yellow coloured - staining at birth
- You see milk on the foals muzzle or face, indicates poor nursing
- The Foal's limbs are not straight or look abnormal
- Any signs of weakness or depression/dullness in the foal

Timing	Procedures for your Breeding Calendar.
5,7 and 9 months of gestation	Duvaxyn vaccination for protection against Equine Herpes Virus related abortion
2-6months before foaling	Prevent worm burdens: Prepare a 'clean' paddock for the foaling. Summer spelling at least 2 months, winter 6 months. Stables need to be emptied and disinfected by scrubbing with povidone iodine and dirt floors limed.
4 weeks before foaling	Vaccinate your mare with tetanus vaccine or tetanus 2 in 1, for antibody production in colostrum. If the mares' vaccination status is unknown or if she has not been vaccinated a full course should be done. Move mare into foaling paddock and stable.
1 week before foaling	Remove 'Caslick's sutures from mares' vulva if she has them. Decrease amount of bulk in mare's diet Start 'foal watch' monitoring evening mare behaviour or use a foaling alarm.
Foaling night	Wrap mares tail and wash udder
Within hours post foaling	Monitor the mare and foal from a distance, that they are progressing normally Allow umbilicus to break on its own from foal, then dip in iodine solution
Day 1 post foaling	Have Vet check the Foal's IgG level Administer Tetanus antitoxin
The first week post foaling	Regular observations of the new foal ensure to see frequent nursing, vigorous activity and passing of urine and faeces. Examining the mares' udder is a good way to determine adequate suckling.
Second week	Strong straight limbed normal foals can mix with other horses on the property in larger paddocks.