



Bayswater Veterinary Clinic
35 Alexander Street, London, W2 5NU
020 7229 2040
info@bayswatervets.co.uk
www.bayswaterveterinaryreferrals.co.uk

Is your Bitch right for Breeding?

Having puppies can seem very exciting but there are some serious factors that need to be considered before mating your bitch;

- **SAFETY**- It is important that your bitch is in good health and is not too young or too old to breed. Many breeds have breed related complication at birth which you must be aware of.
- **FINANCES and TIME** - Having puppies can be expensive. In some breeds, more than 80% of births are via caesarean section. Many births occur out of hours and some puppies need hand rearing and feeding every few hours.
- **PEDIGREE** - many pedigree breeds have inherited health conditions. The BVA and Kennel club have set up health schemes to test for these and prevent breeding from affected animals.

Worming

All bitches carry roundworm larvae that remain dormant in the body but become active during pregnancy and can cross the placenta into the puppies. For this reason worming is necessary from day 42 everyday until 2 days after whelping

The puppies will need to be wormed at 2,5,8 and 12 weeks of age.

Feeding

The demand on her body in the 3rd trimester of pregnancy and whilst lactating will be greatly increased. Adult dog food does not provide enough energy for this so we advise feeding a puppy food. It would be best to feed a puppy diet from the same manufacturer as the food she was currently on. Introduce the new food slowly over 5 days. The amount to feed should be stated on the back of the packet. Feed several small meals throughout the day with a larger meal at the times she was normally fed. She should be fed this until the puppies have been weaned at around 4 weeks of age.

Try to not to introduce any new treats at this stage.

Always ensure there is plenty of water is available.



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Whelping Box

A whelping box is used to provide a nest for the puppies so that they are able to easily find the mother and keep warm. They should be filled with newspaper, old duvets are fine and vet bedding is often the easiest to manage.

They should have a rail or 'lip' to prevent the puppies from being squashed by the mother, high sides and an entry/ exit point for the mother. Avoid materials such as cardboard as they will disintegrate.

These are a few examples;



Exercise

She will be fine to exercise in the early stages of her pregnancy but we advise restricting exercise in the last 2-3 weeks. If she was a working dog, we would say that she should stop all work for the last 3 weeks. Gentle walks are fine and she can still go off the lead but retrieving and very boisterous play should be prevented during this time.

What to Expect During Labour/ Whelping

The average gestation period is 63 days but this can vary from 58 to 70 days. Litter sizes range from 1 puppy in small breeds to 15 puppies in large breeds (Great dane!)

Her behaviour may change a little a few days before labour. This can range from restlessness, attention seeking, being distant or even refusing food.



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Labour occurs in 3 stages.

STAGE 1: This begins with uterine contractions. They can be restless and may pace, dig, rearrange bedding, shiver, pant and even vomit. This can last from between 6 to 12 hours.

STAGE 2: Uterine contractions increase in intensity and abdominal contractions start; these are often visible. Straining will start; foetal fluid is passed followed by a puppy. Expect one pup every 45 to 60mins. There is usually 10 to 30mins of hard straining and she may rest between pups. Puppies are born covered in placental membranes. She should lick this off after a minute or two. If she does not, simply wipe the covering from the puppy's nose using a clean towel.

STAGE 3: expulsion of the placenta. Labour should be done within approximately 6 hours.

When to Call The Vet

We are open from 8:30am to 6pm. In the event of an emergency out of hours please call the Elizabeth clinic – **020 7730 9102** 55 Elizabeth street, SW1W 9PP.

Reasons to call the vet:

- A greenish discharge from the vulva with no puppy within 2 hours.
- Foetal fluid with no puppy after 2 hours.
- 20 to 30mins of strong straining with no puppy
- Greater than 2 hours between puppies
- Weak or absent straining for more than 2 to 4 hours
- Second stage labour lasting more than 12 hours.
- Signs of pain