**Late Pregnancy**

* Booster vaccinations are recommended **1 month** before foaling
* Length of pregnancy: **335 days**, but can range between 321 & 365 days!
* Udder development starts **1-2 weeks** before foaling
* Waxy material may appear on the teats **2-4 days** before foaling. Mare may lie down more
* Milk may drip from the udder in the last **24 hours**. NB IF FOALING DOES NOT OCCUR IT IS WISE TO MILK OUT THE MARE AND FREEZE THE VALUABLE COLOSTRUM FOR THE FOAL!

**When foaling is imminent ring the practice so that the duty vet knows how to find you should an emergency arise.**

**Foaling – the three stages**

**NB. It is very important that foaling is allowed to occur as naturally as possible. Untimely interference may inhibit the mare and excessive handling of the foal may agitate her and occasionally lead to rejection. If you are lucky enough to witness the mare foaling then one person, who is familiar to the mare, can observe from a distance.**

* **Stage 1:** The mare is restless, sweaty and may roll and watch her flanks. **May last minutes or hours!** Put a tail bandage on the mare but TAKE CARE!
* **Stage 2:** Starts with the ‘waters’ breaking. The mare may lie down. Foaling should occur **within 30 minutes** (ring the surgery if it has not occurred after 15 minutes). Foal is usually ejected forcibly. The foal is born in a sac and should break out on its own (assist it if it fails to by freeing the nose and head). Initial gasps and neck arching are normal and **not** a signal for intervention. The cord will break usually within 6-8 minutes and the stump should be treated with antibiotic spray as soon as possible (within 30 mins of delivery ideally).
* **Stage 3:** Passing of the afterbirth (placenta). This should occur in the first **6 hours**. Ring the surgery if it has not occurred by 4 hours to avoid serious illness. Retained placenta = emergency.

**The Foal**

* Foal’s suck reflex appears in the first **5-10 minutes**
* Foal stands **1-3 hours** after birth
* Foal first sucks **2-4 hours** after birth. Intervention is required if this is not achieved.

***Colostrum:*** *It is vital that the foal receives* ***1½-2 litres*** *in the first* ***6 hours****.*

* Foal sucks 5-7 times an hour
* Urination usually occurs **8-12 hours** post foaling
* Meconium (the dark brown foal droppings) is passed in the first 24 hours. Completion of its passing is only confirmed by the appearance of milk droppings (soft and yellow). Ring the surgery if the foal persists with unsuccessful straining as meconium may become impacted.

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| **Temperature** | **Age** | **Heart Rate** | **Age** | **Respiratory Rate** |
| 37-38ºC99-102ºF | Birth | 60-80 | 5 mins | 60-80 |
| 0-2 hours | 120-150 | 15 mins | 40-60 |
| 3+ hours | 80-120 | 12 hours | 30-40 |
| 24 hours | 80-100 |  |  |