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Foaling Fact Sheet

Late Pregnancy

- **Vaccinations:**
 - **Tetanus** is recommended 4-6w before foaling
 - **EHV vaccinations** to help prevent viral abortion are given at 5, 7 and 9 months of pregnancy
 - **Rotavirus vaccinations** are given to mares in the stud environment at 8, 9 and 10 months of pregnancy to prevent serious rotavirus diarrhoea in young foals
- **Worming**
 - Worming of the mare is recommended 2-4w before foaling
- Length of pregnancy: 335 days, but can range between 321 & 365 days!

Prior to Foaling

- 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.

Foaling

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, in some cases, cause her to reject the foal.

Stage 1: This lasts **approximately 1-6hrs**. The mare can be quiet, isolated, lose her appetite, or restless and roll to reposition the fetus. The mare is restless, perhaps walking the fence, sweaty and may roll and watch her flanks.

Stage 2: This stage lasts **approximately 30minutes**. It starts with the 'waters' breaking (rupture of the outer fetal membranes). This can often look like uncontrolled urination. The mare may lie down. Foaling should occur within 30 minutes ([contact us](#) if it has not occurred after 15 minutes). Two front feet should be visible. The foal is born in a sac and should break out on its own (assist it if it fails to).

Stage 3: Passing of the afterbirth. This should occur in the **first 3-5 hours**. Contact us if it has not occurred.



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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

Temperature	Age	Heart Rate	Respiratory Rate
37-38.5C	Birth	60-80	60-80
	0-2 Hours	120-150	40-60
	3+ Hours	80-120	30-50
	24 Hours	80-100	30-40

Colostrum:

- It is vital that the foal receives adequate colostrum (1.5-2l in the first 6hrs)
 - Foals suckle 5-7 times an hour
- Urination usually occurs 8-12 hours post foaling
- Meconium (the chocolate brown foal droppings) is passed in the first 24-48hrs. Completion of its passing is only confirmed by the appearance of milk dung (soft and yellow). Contact us if the foal persists with unsuccessful straining.
- Dip/Spray the foals umbilicus with iodine

When to contact us

Ultimately, if you are ever concerned about your mare and her pregnancy, call your veterinarian to discuss diagnostic options and arrange an examination. These are some guidelines that may help:

- **Before foaling**
 - Abnormal udder development or milk secretion well before due date – this could indicate premature foaling or infection
 - Any vaginal discharge – this could be a sign your pregnancy is in trouble
 - If you think your mare might have aborted her pregnancy
 - If the mare foals before 320 days
 - Gestation length more than 360 days
- **During foaling**
 - If the mare is in stage 2 labour for more than 20 minutes
 - If the mare is actively pushing but not making any progress
 - If you cannot see/feel two front legs and a head presenting at the vulva
 - If there is excessive tearing or abnormal tissue protruding from the mare
- **After foaling**
 - If the mare does not get up after foaling



HEV

Hunter Equine Vet

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- If the mare does not allow the foal to nurse
- Any abnormal signs such as colic, shaking, sweating excessively etc
- If the mare has not passed her foetal membranes after 3-5 hours
- If the foal is depressed, not suckling, lying down, lame, has diarrhoea or has a temperature.