



## AT HOME CARE RECOMMENDATIONS

**Whelping box:** These can be homemade or purchased online. Make sure the box is at least 1 foot longer than your dog, there are online guides for size measurements.

**Towels and Pee pads:** Whelping box and puppies should be kept as clean as possible. Trade out any wet or feces laden bedding right away.

**Bulb Syringe:** Use to suction the mouth and nose of newborns as needed

**Iodine:** Needed for at home delivery. Dilute to a light tea color and dip umbilical cords after birth.

**Thermometer:** Rectal thermometer to monitor puppy temperature, Room thermometer to make sure puppies are kept at appropriate environmental temperature.

**Colored collars:** Whelping collars are available online and can be helpful to easily identify the puppies, especially if there are multiple puppies with the same coat color

**Kitchen scale:** Weigh the puppies daily during the first week of life to ensure they are gaining weight daily. If a puppy stops gaining or loses weight, this can be a sign of illness. Puppies should be gaining about 10% of their body weight per day.

**Heat source:** Puppies are unable to regulate their body temperature for the first 2 weeks of life. A heating pad or heat lamp should be available to keep them warm. The temperature should be 77-80 degrees, which will keep the puppies temperature around 98-99 degrees. There should also be room for the puppies to crawl away from the heat source to prevent overheating.

**Stimulate to use bathroom:** Puppies are unable to urinate or defecate on their own for the first few weeks of life. The mother dog will usually groom the puppies to help stimulate them. If the bitch does not do this on her own, you should use a damp warm washcloth, paper towel, or cotton ball to stimulate them. Rub gently/massage around the anal area to mimic a mother's tongue. Do not aggressively rub the anus or ulceration will occur. Feces should resemble the color of mustard after the initial meconium passes.

**Cleaning:** If the puppies get dirty, you can use a wet warm washcloth to wipe them down. Make sure to fully dry them so they do not get cold.

**Safety:** Monitoring for safety during the first 10 days is crucial. Some bitches' will not immediately display mothering instincts and may try to harm the puppies. They may also inadvertently sit on or step on the puppies.

**Milk Production:** Fenugreek is an herbal supplement that can help with stimulating milk production. Also ensure the bitch is on a high-quality puppy food during lactation so she is getting enough calories/fat and calcium for milk production. If milk production does not kick in within 24 hours, you will need to consider tube or bottle feeding. See separate handout for instructions.

**Milk Replacer:** We recommend the Esbilac or Petlac brand of milk replacer. This should be mixed at a ratio of 1 part powder to 3 parts water to help prevent constipation. Can be fed through a bottle if puppies are strong and have a good suckle reflex. If weak, feed via stomach tube. NEVER feed with a syringe as this often causes aspiration, which can lead to pneumonia.

**Post Op Care:** If your bitch had a C-Section, check the incision at least twice a day to ensure it stays clean and dry. If you need to clean it, use a damp paper towel. Do not put any ointments or topical substances on the incision. No baths for 14 days after surgery. No antibiotics will be sent home (unless there was a complication). Pain medication will be sent home, we will go over the instructions during discharge.

**Feeding:** Puppies will need to eat every very frequently

- **Week 1** – feed every 2 hours
- **Week 2** – feed every 3 hours
- **Week 3** – feed every 4 hours
- **Week 4** – feed every 5-6 hours
- **Week 4/5** – start to introduce gruel

**Gruel:** mix of dry and wet food soaked in warm water to soften

- Feed in a shallow saucer so the puppy can get in and out of the tray easily
- Also offer water in a shallow saucer
- Gradually reduce the amount of water used to soften the food so they are on solid kibble by 8 weeks old

**Deworming:** Start deworming at 2 weeks old with pyrantel (strongid) and repeat every 2 weeks. We recommend a dose of 1 mL per 5 lbs.

**Vaccines/Health Certificates:** The puppies first vet visit should be scheduled at 7-8 weeks old. They will get an exam, DHPP vaccine, Bordetella vaccine, deworming, fecal exam, and health certificate for sale if needed. We have special pricing for litters for this visit.