



## ARE YOU PREPARED FOR FOALING SEASON?

Here are a few tips for recognizing the **BIG DAY** and knowing what to do after your mare foals:

1. **Gestation Length** (length of pregnancy): approximately 340-345 days.
  - a. Pregnant mares should be vaccinated at 5, 7, 9 months of pregnancy with a Rhino vaccine. And a final 6 Way Vaccine one month prior to foaling date to increase antibody levels in the colostrum for the foal
  - b. If your mare has a Caslicks remember to get this opened approximately 2-4 weeks prior (or earlier if needed)
2. **Milk Calcium Levels** increase as foaling approaches. Most mares foal within 48 hours of when milk calcium levels reach 200 parts per million
  - a. There are test strips available to help you determine this
3. Waxing of Teats is a sign that foaling will occur in most mares within 24 to 48 hours.
  - a. However, not all mares wax up, and the duration from the onset of waxing to foaling can vary
4. **STAGE 1 OF LABOR:** Generally lasts 1-4 hours. Signs to look for:
  - a. Frequent lying down, looking at flanks, pawing, sweating.
  - b. Stage One is complete when the mares water breaks or ruptures the outer placental membrane and release allantoic fluid
5. **STAGE 2 OF LABOR:** or active labor, last 20 – 30 minutes.
  - a. 1st structure visible at vulva should be the amnion, a translucent gray membrane.
    - i. **\*\* IF THIS IS RED (RED BAG) CALL YOUR VET IMMEDIATELY, THIS IS A MEDICAL EMERGENCY \*\***
  1. Red bags mean the oxygen supply to the foal is compromised
  - b. Establishment of an airway and stimulation of breathing is top priority for a new foal. The amnion should be removed from the nasal areas (**IF IT DID NOT BREAK DURING FOALING**)
    - i. Stimulate breathing by rubbing a dry towel over new foal, you can tickle inside of nostrils and extend from legs to stimulate stretch receptors
  - c. Dip The Navel with a disinfectant soon after foal to help prevent bacterial infections and help seal the umbilical stump
    - i. Common disinfectants include diluted Nolvasan, Chlorhex, Betadine and iodine.
    - ii. It is recommended that the navel be dipped 2-3x day for the first couple of days
  - d. Standing & Nursing: should occur within 1-2 hours after birth.
    - i. We want to make sure the foal ingests the colostrum, which is rich in antibodies and critical for immune protection.



1. Ideally we would like the foal to ingest 1 liter or more of good colostrum within the 1st 6 – 12 hours of life. Antibody levels in the blood of the foal can be checked 24-36 hours after birth to determine if adequate transfer of colostrum antibodies has occurred.
  - a. The test performed is called an IgG snap test. IF levels are low, your vet can administer Plasma via IV.
  - b. If tested at 12 hours, or levels are less than adequate your vet can administer frozen/thawed colostrum.
  
6. **STAGE 3 OF LABOR:** is passage of the placenta. This should occur within 3 hours of foaling. FAILURE TO PASS the placenta could lead to severe medical conditions in the mare.  
**NEVER PULL THE PLACENTA OUT FOR RISK OF RIPPING IT.**
  - a. Early intervention can aid in the passage of placenta
    - i. Tie a wet towel to the placenta for weight
    - ii. Oxytocin can be given to help stimulate muscles to push
  - b. Meconium or the 1st feces of the foal should pass within 3 hours after birth.
    - i. You can administer an enema if foal is straining to defecate
  1. These can be purchased at your local drug stores