

FOALING CHECKLIST

& INFORMATION



PRE FOALING

Mare Preparation

- Good plane of nutrition and body condition score
- Vaccination (4-6 weeks prior to foaling to receive a tetanus vaccine)
- Removal of caslicks 1 month prior to foaling
- Up to date with farriery, worming and dentistry

Foaling Environment

Prepare a clean and spacious environment for the mare to foal

- Close proximity so that you can quickly access overnight
- The mare should be moved to the environment 2-4 weeks prior to build antibodies to pass onto the foal in her colostrum

- A rested paddock with no hazards and good fencing
- Or deep bedded stable

Monitoring

- Camera
- Foaling alarms

Foaling Kit

- Tail bandage
- Clean towels
- Clean water and cotton wool to wash the mare
- Bucket for the placenta
- Obstetric lubricant
- Disposable sterile examination gloves
- Head torch
- Sharp scissors or scalpel blade
- Phone to call for help and monitor timings
- Thermometer
- Fleet enema
- Umbilical spray/dip
 - Diluted (1%) iodine (riodine or betadine solution)
 - OR chlorhexidine solution (dilute 1 part 2% chlorhexidine with 3 parts sterile water +/- surgical spirit to help dry)



Foaling Prediction

- The average gestation length for a mare is 340 days
- This can vary however broodmares tend to follow a similar pattern to previous years (i.e. stick to the same gestation length and signs)
- Maiden mares can show minimal signs and be difficult to predict therefore it is important to monitor carefully
- The mammary glands will begin to fill 2 – 4 weeks prior to foaling - this initially will walk off and reduce in size with exercise/walking as the day goes on, and then closer to foaling the udder will remain large and teats engorged/pointing
- The muscles in the tail head will relax in the weeks leading up to foaling
- The vulva will begin to relax and elongate, losing the wrinkled appearance days prior to foaling
- Waxing of teats - in the 48h prior to foaling the small secretions of colostrum may dry up at the end of each teat

+ Call vet if the mare is running milk prior to foaling

FOALING

Stage 1 - Positioning of the foal

- Initial uterine contractions begin and the foal rotates into position
- Changes in behaviour including: restlessness, sweating, pacing, getting up and down (becomes more frequent) and flicking of her tail
- This stage can take up to several hours
- Ends with her waters breaking

What to do:

- Keep the mare quiet in the stable/paddock
- Bandage her tail and clean vulva gently with clean water

Stage 2 - Expulsion of the foal

- Starts with her waters breaking
- The mare will usually be in lateral recumbency (lying down) and strong abdominal contractions occur
- A white membrane (amniotic sac) should protrude from the vulva
- The foal should present both front feet first, one slightly in front of the other, followed by the head on top of the legs
- The foal should be delivered within 20 minutes
- Once delivered the amniotic sac should be carefully removed from the foal's nose

What to do:

- The mare should not require assistance (if need to do so, please wear gloves to determine foal position)

+ Call vet if:

- No foal presented in 15 minutes of the waters breaking
- Abnormal position: Head only, head and one foot or back feet etc
- Evidence of haemorrhage
- Red bag instead of pearly white amnion

Stage 3 - Passing of the placenta

- Expulsion of the placenta in <3hrs
- Tie up the placenta carefully into a knot if touching the ground

+ Call vet if:

- The placenta is still attached after 3 hours
- If not all the placenta is present when checking what has been passed – the most common site to be stuck is the tip of the non-pregnant horn
- The mare is showing signs of colic or depression

POST FOALING

Within seconds the foal should sit into sternal (upright)

- Suck reflex after 15-30 mins
- Standing within 1 hour
- Once up the foal should start searching for the udder
- Nursing within 2 hours (latched on and swallowing milk)
- Passed meconium (the first dark brown pellets of faeces, should then be followed by soft yellow milky faeces) within 4 hours
 - use the enema if no meconium has passed
- Within 6-12 hours the foal should have urinated
- The mare will start to lick foal but you can towel dry the foal if it is particularly cold
- Allow the mare and foal time to bond
- Do not cut the umbilical cord – allow to break naturally.



+ Call vet if:

- Foal is lethargic or weak
- Does not nurse, urinate or defecate
- Has abnormal vital signs e.g. fever or yellow membranes
- Swollen joints
- Diarrhoea
- Urine out of umbilicus

Next steps

- Vet check the following day of both the mare and foal
- Foal IgG test (12-18h post foaling)

