

HEALTHY FARMS LARGE

ANIMAL VETERINARY SERVICES



ALISON CORNWALL DVM

HEALTHYFARMSVET@GMAIL.COM

979 US ROUTE 2, MIDDLESEX, VT 05602 WWW.HEALTHYFARMSVET.COM 802.505.9639

The Pregnant Mare and Her Foal

The Pregnant Mare

Gestational length 341 days (some mares will go a year.)

- Vaccinations
 - Rhinopneumonitis (EHV-1) at 5, 7, and 9 months (Pneumabort-K)
 - Eastern and Western Encephalitis and Tetanus, Rabies, and Influenza at 10 months to help the mare generate a high quality colostrum. (EW/T, rabies, and an injectable, killed influenza vaccine.
- Feeding
 - Hay or grass, salt, and water as usual for the first 7 months.
 - During her third trimester, the mare will need increased calories, protein, and nutrients to support her rapidly-growing foal.
 - Horses tolerate copper well and making sure that your mare's diet is about 30PPM copper during pregnancy might help prevent joint disease in the foal (OCD.)
- Deworming
 - Parasites respond to hormones at the end of pregnancy. Deworm your mare one week before her due date to help stop the transmission of parasites from your mare her foal. She passes parasites through both the feces and the milk.
 - Avoid moxidectin (Quest) in the pregnant mare or foal. I recommend fenbendazole (Safeguard) at this time as roundworms are showing increased resistance to ivermectins and pyrantels.
- Predicting foaling
 - Udder develops 3-4 weeks before foaling.
 - Teats distend 2 days to 3 weeks before foaling.
 - Waxing occurs 6-48 hours before foaling.
 - While there is great variation among mares, each mare herself will be very consistent. If she waxes 20 hours before foaling one year, she will likely wax 20 hours before foaling next year as well.

HEALTHY FARMS LARGE

ANIMAL VETERINARY SERVICES



ALISON CORNWALL DVM

HEALTHYFARMSVET@GMAIL.COM

979 US ROUTE 2, MIDDLESEX, VT 05602 WWW.HEALTHYFARMSVET.COM 802.505.9639

- Problems to watch for (call your vet ASAP):
 - Mare should not have vaginal discharge (blood or any other discharge) at any time before labor during pregnancy.
 - Mare should not bag up (develop an udder) before 4 weeks ahead of her due date.

Foaling

- Most foalings occur at night (or when you have left your post to sprint up and grab a cup of coffee, for example.)
- The mare usually shows about 15-90 minutes of restlessness as uterine contractions begin and the cervix finishes dilating. This is Stage 1 of labor.
- Stage 2 of labor lasts 30 minutes maximum when all goes well. It begins when the water breaks and ends with delivery of the foal.
- Feet appear in 3-5 minutes
- Head appears in 5-6 minutes
- Progress with every contraction
- Call your veterinarian immediately if rapid progress is not being made.
- *If you see, rather than the head and feet of the foal, a bright red membrane coming from the mare's vulva, you must tear open this membrane immediately and assist the foal in delivery. Call immediately for assistance from your veterinarian in this case as these foals tend to become sick after birth.*
- Stage 3 of labor is passing of the placenta. This should take no more than 3-4 hours (3 hours if it is very hot out) and if the placenta is retained you must call your vet immediately.

The Newborn Foal and What to Do Right After the Foal is Born

- A new foal should:
 - Sit up within 2 minutes
 - Have a suckle response within 20 minutes, and be interested in his dam at this time
 - Stand in 1-2 hours
 - Nurse successfully within 2-3 hours
 - Pass his meconium (first feces) within 24 hours
 - He should not need assistance with these events

HEALTHY FARMS LARGE

ANIMAL VETERINARY SERVICES



ALISON CORNWALL DVM

HEALTHYFARMSVET@GMAIL.COM

979 US ROUTE 2, MIDDLESEX, VT 05602 WWW.HEALTHYFARMSVET.COM 802.505.9639

- A new foal will need to be dry and warm. If he is not in a warm place, he may need to be dried with clean towels.
- If all the above parameters are met, the mare, placenta, and foal should be examined when the foal is 12- 24 hours. If the above parameters are not met, call your vet immediately.
- At this exam the IgG levels in his blood should be checked to confirm that he received antibodies from the dam's colostrum.
- Your foal may need an injection of Vitamin E and Selenium at this time.

Things to watch for in the first weeks of life after the vet has pronounced your foal healthy!

- If you notice your foal's gums looking yellow during the first 7-10 days of life, call your vet immediately. Your foal could have neonatal isoerythrolysis. This is very common in mules.
- Lameness. If your foal does not want to stand on a leg, call your vet immediately.
- Not suckling or not showing interest in eating. An apathetic foal should be immediately evaluated.
- Diarrhea: diarrhea is common and even can be normal in young foals, but they should still be bright, alert, and eating well. If your foal looks depressed at all, is not eating with alacrity, or if you have any questions at all, call a vet.
- Fluid coming from the umbilicus: if the umbilicus is swollen or moist, call your vet. The umbilicus should become crispy within a day or so and the belly where the umbilicus comes out of the horse should not be swollen. Infections of the umbilicus, umbilical hernia, and patent urachus are all problems that need to be addressed immediately.

The First Year of Life

- Your foal will need to be **dewormed with Panacur (fenbendazole) once each month beginning at one month of age and continuing until he is 12-18 months of age.** At that time he may be dewormed with the rest of the herd. Some excellent peer-reviewed papers and my anecdotal observations tell use there is increasing resistance of the most common foal worm, the ascarid (roundworm) to ivermectins and pyrantels which is why I recommend fenbendazole. Additionally, you should test feces of you foal for parasite

HEALTHY FARMS LARGE

ANIMAL VETERINARY SERVICES



ALISON CORNWALL DVM

HEALTHYFARMSVET@GMAIL.COM

979 US ROUTE 2, MIDDLESEX, VT 05602 WWW.HEALTHYFARMSVET.COM 802.505.9639

eggs at least twice during the first year of his life, and more if he is on a busy farm or a farm where there is a known high parasite load.

- Avoid moxidectin(Quest) in the foal.
- Your foal will need vaccinations and his vaccination schedule will depend on whether or not his dam was vaccinated at 10 months of gestation and the area and circumstances in which he lives. If the mare has been vaccinated, general vaccine recommendations are as follows:

Vaccination Recommendations for Foals of Vaccinated mares.

- 1) Eastern & Western Encephalitis and Tetanus: vaccinate at 6 months, booster 30 and 60 days later.
- 2) Rabies: vaccinate at 6 months, booster 30 and 60 days later.
- 3) Rhinopnermonnitis (EHV-4 and EHV-1): vaccinate at 4-6 months, booster 30 and 60 days later.
- 4) Influenza: Injectable vaccine at 9 months, booster at 30 and 60 days. Intranasal vaccine: 11 months.

- 5) Discuss Potomac Horse Fever vaccine, Strangles vaccine, and Lyme vaccine with your vet.

For more information on vaccinations, visit the American Association of Equine Practitioner's website:

http://www.aaep.org/vaccination_guidelines.htm