



PENGUIN VETERINARY CENTRE

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Some Information on **DOGS: BREEDING**

PUBERTY: Small breeds (e.g. Silkies) can reach puberty by 5 months of age; Large breeds (Great Dane) may be even 2 years old. Pubescent Males start to “cock the leg”. Females show a swollen vulva, bleed, and attract male dogs as they enter their first “heat”

HEATS or SEASONS: An average normal female canine heat period lasts 3 weeks, with males being attracted throughout.

- Week 1. The vulva swells and she drips blood; she will not accept a mate.
- Week 2. Bleeding eases; she is “in heat”, actively seeks a mate and can conceive.
- Into week 3. The heat eases off, and male dogs are again refused.

At her first heat the dog is still growing. Her 2nd, 3rd & 4th heats are best for breeding.

MATING: Take her to the male dog on the 9th day after bleeding start. It may be a bit early, she may refuse him. Return each 2nd day until, having mated, she again refuses him. This usually results in 2 or 3 successful matings. It is to the last successful mating that she will conceive. If your dog has not mated by the 13th day, consult a veterinarian.

PREGNANCY lasts 9 weeks (63 days) counted from the last successful mating.

Note: all female dogs undergo the same hormone & body changes for at least 4 weeks after a heat, whether they have mated or not. Milk glands and nipples enlarge, and will never quite flatten out again.

WHELPING: After her waters break, contractions should not weaken until the first pup is born. In-between pups the mother-dog may rest for two minutes or for several hours, but when real contractions re-start they should not ease up until a pup is born. Most mother-dogs nibble off the afterbirth (which has the green stain), and then immediately suckle the pups. In between pups she may bleed a little, or pass a dark green stain but this should NOT happen before her first pup.

FEEDING THE PUPS: The mother’s first milk (colostrum) is important in providing immune-protection for the pups; they must each get a drink within 12 – 24 hours of birth.

A mother-dog should be able to feed her pups entirely herself until they can stand up properly at about 3-4 weeks. If supplements are needed, offer them via a teat and bottle after each pup has suckled his mum. Use proper dog-milk substitutes such as Wombaroo; (not cow’s milk; not Supermarket ‘puppy milk’ which is nowhere near rich enough for milk-dependent pups). “Solids” such as puppy cereal or mince can be offered when the pups are steady on their feet. Later, offer them milk in shallow dishes.

WEANING: can be at 5 to 8 weeks, dependent on the pups’ size, & on the mother-dog’s milk supply and temperament.

Pups should stay with their mum till they are at least 8 weeks old. From their mum, and from interaction with their siblings, they learn important lessons in being a dog.

WORMING: Of mother dog: Prior to mating; when 6 weeks pregnant & when pups are 3 weeks old.

Of pups: At 2,4,6,8 & 10 weeks of age for Roundworm; At 3,4,5 & 6 months (then each 3-4 months) for both Roundworm & Tapeworm.

VACCINATION: For: Parvovirus (contagious viral gastroenteritis and cardiomyopathy);
Canine Hepatitis;
Canine Distemper (viral encephalitis/pneumonia) &
Canine Cough (Bordetella & Para-influenza strains)

Of mother dog : Prior to mating, so she can protect herself AND her newborn pups.

For the pups: A full course of vaccinations is needed: at 6-8 weeks (best a week before the pup leaves home), then at 10-12 & 14 – 16 weeks & at 15 months of age.

Microchipping at the time of vaccination is best, it allows an exact record to be kept of what vaccinations / health issues each pup has had

The pup is not fully protected until a week after its 3rd injection. Until then they should not go where unvaccinated dogs may spread contamination (such as parks and walkways); nor should they play with other pups or unknown adult dogs.

Booster vaccinations will be needed to maintain immunity.

