

Care of the Pregnant Mare

How should I manage my mare in the first 7-8 months of her pregnancy?

Through her pregnancy your mare will continue to require the same care and attention as a ridden horse. Suitable exercise, correct nutrition, feet regularly trimmed, routine dentistry, de-worming and vaccinations will all help to ensure a healthy pregnancy, enabling you to look forward to the birth of your foal with greater confidence. It is during the last 3 months of pregnancy that she may need an increased calorie intake if her body condition score drops - this is usually made up using forage.



How long is equine gestation?

The average length of pregnancy in the mare is 338 to 343 days. If your mare still hasn't foaled by 360 days we would suggest a veterinary examination to confirm that she is still pregnant.

Vaccinations

Brood mares should be up to date with tetanus and equine influenza vaccinations prior to conceiving. A booster is then given during the last 3 months of pregnancy, which will result in antibodies being transferred to the foal via the colostrum that it drinks during the first few hours of life. Equine herpes virus can cause many different types of disease (respiratory infections, neurological symptoms and abortions). Pregnant mares are therefore usually vaccinated for equine herpes at 5, 7, and 9 months of gestation.

De-worming

It is important that near to the time of foaling, faeces are regularly picked up and depending on the management of the mare, a de-wormer may be required in the last few weeks of pregnancy as the mare can be the main source of worms to the foal.

Not all drugs are licensed to use in pregnant mares so check the product information carefully or contact your vet for advice.



Kings Bounty Equine Practice Client Fact Sheet

What should I do if I suspect my mare has aborted?

Sadly abortions do occur. If you notice a vaginal discharge, or the mare drips milk during pregnancy she should be examined by your vet.

If you find the remains of a placenta or foetus these should be saved for laboratory analysis.



Preparing for the birth

- Save our emergency number on your mobile phone and write it somewhere obvious at the yard
- A clock, pen and paper near the stable if she is to deliver inside is useful to time the stages of labour as you can lose perception of time in times of stress
- When the first stage of labour is suspected, the mare's tail should be wrapped with a clean tail bandage (ensure it is not too tight nor left on too long)
- Wash the mare's udder, vulva and hindquarters with water if she has faecal material present
- Ensure there is sufficient straw bedding if she is to foal in a stable

Where should my mare foal?

Ideally your mare will deliver her foal in an environment that she is used to that is clean and safe. If she is to be stabled we suggest it is at least 14ft x 14ft, with plenty of straw bedding (shavings tend to stick to newborn foals!) and a floor that can be disinfected just prior to expected delivery, or in-between different mares foaling.



Most mares will deliver their foals without any complications but we advise that foaling is observed so that you can contact us if you have any concerns. Foaling alarms or video cameras can be used to help you monitor the mare's activity as most tend to foal at night.