

First rule of foaling- Don't Panic!

95% of mares can foal on their own with little assistance from humans. However, advance planning can help prevent problems. **Vaccinations** one month prior to foaling help insure high levels of IgG (antibodies) in the colostrum.

Provide a **safe place** to foal – outside on a clean grassy pasture is acceptable. In freezing weather, provide a clean stall with clean straw (not sawdust). A 14 x 14 stall is ideal.

Monitor your mare's progress. Signs of impending parturition (birth):

- Filling of the udder (two to six weeks)
- Distention of the teats (four to six days)
- Waxing of the teats (one to four days)
- Obvious dripping of milk (one to two days)
- Other signs include: Muscles around tail sag and vulva sags to almost twice its normal length.

If your home (or camper) is close to the foaling stall, inexpensive wireless video monitors are available.

Another alternative is the Foal Alert system. This features a transmitter sutured to the mare providing an electronic page when the mare begins to foal. Visit www.foalert.com.

Preparing for birth: **Wash the mare's** udder, vulva and hindquarters with a mild soap and rinse thoroughly. Many infections can be transmitted to a newborn foal at time of nursing. Wrap the mare's tail with a clean wrap.

Signs of labor:

- May act colicky and paw the ground
- May sweat around neck and flanks
- May urinate frequently
- May pace, lie down and get up frequently

Normal delivery of the foal begins with a silvery-gray bag. Inside the bag are the front hooves with the bottom of the hooves pointing towards the mares hocks and closely followed by the foals' head resting between its knees.

Red Bag Delivery

If delivery starts with a "**red bag**", there is a problem. Promptly making a hole in this red bag with a ball point pen or similar object should reveal the silvery-gray bag underneath and allow foaling to proceed normally.

If everything is lined up, then sit back and watch. Resist the temptation to "help". Do not pull on the foal.

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Prevention of problems – two items are key

- Prompt nursing will help ensure adequate immunity through the colostrum. This prevents many problems.
- Treat navel repeatedly over the first couple days with mild disinfectant (tamed iodine or chlorhexadine solution).

Save the placenta for your veterinarian to examine. Pick it up using a plastic bag, do not use a pitchfork.

- If the placenta has not passed within 3 hours, contact your veterinarian.

Conversations over the phone may prevent problems.

The morning following foaling is a good time for a **neonatal exam** by your veterinarian which may include: examination of the mare and foal, antibiotics for potential infection, an IgG test to measure antibody transfer and examination of the placenta to ensure it is complete.

Healthy Horse Seminar *March 28, 2009 10am*

Presented by:

Oakwood Veterinary Service

Please join us at Schone's Friendship Farm for a spring event geared towards your horses' health and well-being.

Topics will cover Nutrition, Vaccinations, Emergencies, Colic, Equine Dentistry and Hoof Care.

Veterinary presentations by:

Richard Rock, DVM
Jaime Miller, DVM

Equine Dentistry presentation by:

Jeremy Chenoweth

Farrier presentation by:

Mike Born

*Product giveaways and snacks
will be provided.*



Lawn chairs optional