

Questions for evaluation of the bitch at home or at the hospital indicating the probable need for an Emergency C-Section:

1. Has the bitch been in hard labor (abdominal pushing) over 2 hours on the first or 1 hour on subsequent pups?
2. Did the bitch initially show good abdominal contractions and stop without producing a puppy?
3. Is there is green vaginal discharge PRIOR to the delivery of the first puppy?
4. Does the bitch seem distressed? Frantic? Sick? Weak or unable to stand? Tremoring? Repeated vomiting?
5. Is this labor pattern different than her previous ones?
6. Has the bitch been unwilling or unable to eat and/or drink for over 12 hours?
7. Has WhelpWise^R indicated there is a problem with fetal heart rates (<160 BPM) or uterine contraction patterns?
8. Have any pups been born dead?
9. Did a previous radiograph or ultrasound suggest there could be a problem? (low heart rates on ultrasound or pups without visible heartbeats?) (Malpresented or very large pups)
10. Is a pup palpated on vaginal examination and in an unusual position or not progressing through the birth?
11. Did her temperature drop to 98 degrees and rise to normal (over 101.0) and stay there more than 4 hours?
12. Has her pregnancy exceeded 63 days?
13. Does she appear to have a very large or very small litter?
14. Does she have a previous history of dystocia?
15. Is she a breed at risk for maternal or fetal causes of dystocia?
16. Does she have unexplained or unusual discharge from her eyes?
17. Is she having weak or non-productive contractions with multiple puppies left?
18. If oxytocin has been used (more later), has there been a minimal or no response?
19. Does the breeder or veterinary staff member have a feeling that something is going wrong? Trust their intuition.

If the answer to any of these questions is yes, you very likely need to assess the bitch as soon as possible and advise your client that the bitch should proceed to emergency surgery unless you can immediately correct any cause for dystocia.