

# Veterinary Village Planning Your Bitch's C-section:

## Congratulations on your upcoming litter.

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The following information should be helpful in preparing you, your bitch and your household for the exciting upcoming event.

### When is my litter due?

We have estimated your bitch's due date based on \_\_\_\_\_ progesterone testing/ultrasound/radiograph/breeding dates.

Her surgery is scheduled for \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ with Dr. \_\_\_\_\_.

In most cases, we are within 24 hours of her ideal due date. However, in some cases such as in bitches carrying large litters or without precise progesterone timing at the breeding, we may be off by a few hours. Because of this, we recommend you monitor her the last 24 hours before her surgery to be sure she does not go into labor unattended. We are available from 7 am until 9 pm Monday thru Thursday and 8 am thru 6 pm on Friday thru Sunday.

### What should I do before her surgery?

Three days before her surgery, please apply an Adaptil (DAP) collar. These come in 2 sizes, and emit a pheromone that we believe helps with maternal skills, for 4 weeks.

A day or 2 prior to her surgery, you may wish to bathe her if you can do so safely. This means she will be cleaner for surgery and for taking care of her puppies. You may also wish to shave part of her abdomen; we will shave only the additional coat required for a sterile surgery field.

Please feed her dinner the night before her surgery but no food the morning of her surgery. She may have access to water until she is ready to travel to our office. If she is on any medications, she may have those the morning of her surgery, with only enough canned dog food or cheese to coat the tablet. Ask if you have questions about specific meds. Please do not use any topical flea and tick products on her within 1 week of her due date. She should have her Adaptil collar placed around her neck 3 days prior to her c-section.

### What should I bring along the day of her surgery?

Please bring the following with you to her c-section, so you may assist with an en route delivery (we hope not to have this happen) and for safe transport of your bitch and new litter home:

1. The bitch.
2. Your cell phone.
3. A tarp or vinyl tablecloth to cover the seats or floor of the car/van.

4. A large crate for the bitch.
5. Blankets and towels.
6. Heating pad and inverter to run the heating pad.
7. Plastic laundry basket or ice chest to take the pups home in.
8. Bulb syringe and DeeLee mucus trap in case she whelps en route.

#### What happens the day of my bitch's c-section?

We will have you arrive 1 to 2 hours prior to her scheduled c-section. On arrival, she will have the following procedures done by our highly trained technical staff:

1. Evaluation for active labor, which may include a vaginal examination.
2. Radiographs (x-rays) and/or ultrasound.
3. IV catheter placement. A small area on her front leg will be shaved for this.
4. Medications ordered by the veterinarian caring for her.
5. Shaving for her surgery.
6. Blood tests drawn and run which may include progesterone and pre-op blood work if not previously done.
7. Wrapping her tail, if she has one, to keep her tail clean until she is ready to discharge.

#### What happens during her surgery?

You are welcome to stay throughout her time with us. At times, she will be moved to areas of the hospital for her care; however, you may be with her as much as possible based on her needed care and that of other patients and clients in our hospital at the time. If you prefer, you may leave and return after the pups are delivered to take all home. We do not provide attended overnight care for bitches or puppies so will require you to make arrangements for this care in your home.

At the time we are ready to start her surgery, we will take her to our surgery suite. She will have her anesthesia induced in surgery. We will then promptly start her c-section, delivering her pups as swiftly as possible. You will be invited to the treatment area where the pups are when we have their care underway. You are welcome to watch her surgery through our surgery window and to watch the care of the pups in our treatment area.

However, our highly trained staff is very skilled at neonatal resuscitation and care and we ask you allow the staff to do what they do well without interference as the first few minutes of life require specific and well-orchestrated care for maximal puppy survival outcomes. We have developed systems and protocols that are highly effective in assuring the best possible outcomes for your puppies and bitch. Once the pups are stable and thriving, you may participate in their care.

After the pups are resuscitated, the staff will remove placentas, begin umbilical cord care, proceed with record keeping, and treat any pups with medical conditions as directed by the veterinarian. They will be moved to one of our incubators.

After the bitch's surgery is completed, she will be moved to our surgery recovery area. She will be on IV fluids, a heart monitor and will be monitored by our staff until she is recovered. If possible, we will assist you in helping her pups nurse for their first meal.

#### What do I need to provide medical care for my bitch and pups post-op?

A variety of medications will be sent home with you for your bitch and her pups. These may include:

1. Pain medications - usually metacam for post op pain management.
2. Reglan/metacam - to aid in improved lactation by increasing milk production.
3. Oxytocin - to aid in lactation by increasing milk letdown.
4. Nemex and strongid - as dewormers to start 2 weeks post partum.
5. Adaptil collar - if not already applied pre-op to improve maternal skills.
6. Plasma - for the pups, to be used via a feeding tube or by sq injection if there is any doubt about colostrums availability for the pups.
7. Bratwurst

#### What do I need to prepare before surgery?

In advance of your scheduled c-section, we recommend you have your whelping area ready for your arrival home. This includes:

1. Having a quiet warm area of your home or kennel designated for the nursery. Limit access to this area to children, extra people, and dogs.
2. Whelping nest or other heated area.
3. Wading pool.
4. Whelping and neonatal care supplies:
  - a. Rectal thermometer.
  - b. Room thermometer.
  - c. Heat source, avoiding heat lamps as they are fire hazards. T.E Scott whelping nest works great.
  - d. Tincture of iodine for umbilical cord care.
  - e. Puppy scale.

- f. Record keeping system for weights, temps, urine color and other notes.
- g. Marking system for puppies - avoid neck bands.
- h. Feeding tube.
- i. Puppy formula.
- j. Medi-nurser baby bottle.
- k. Bulb syringe and DeeLee Mucus trap.
- l. Disinfectant for the whelping box.
- m. Dewormer.

What do I need to know for caring for her after her puppies are born?

After her c-section, please watch for the following:

1. Monitor the bitch to be sure she is willing to accept and care for the pups safely. Do not leave the pups with her unattended until you are sure they are safe.
2. Monitor that she does not lay on the pups.
3. Monitor the pup's weights, temperatures and urine color twice daily, and record, to be sure they are gaining well and nursing adequately.
4. Bottle or tube feed the pups if they are not gaining well or staying well hydrated.
5. Contact us for assistance if the pups are fussy, not nursing well, have dark colored urine or are not gaining weight. We can help you with their care.
6. Monitor the bitch's incision, mammary glands, temperature, and appetite. Contact us if she runs a fever over 103<sup>o</sup> F, fails to eat and drink well, has a firm swelling of the mammary gland, or there are abnormalities of the incision.
7. It is normal for her to have bloody vaginal discharge the first few days after the pups are born, slowly changing to gray. Contact us if there is excessive blood, odor to the discharge, or an odd color to the discharge.

What do I need to do for the puppies after they are born?

Your next visits to the veterinary clinic will include:

1. Taildock and/or dewclaw removal for appropriate breeds from day 3 to 5 after birth.
2. Suture removal for c-section 10 to 14 days post-op.
3. Deworming at weeks 2, 4, 6, and 8 for the pups (Nemex) and the bitch (Strongid T).

4. Health exams, health certificates for travel, microchips and first vaccinations at 8 weeks. This appointment will take nearly 2 hours so we can photograph and document the pups health for your new owners.
5. Placing pups in new homes, with contracts after 8 weeks of age.