

HORSEDOC

Foaling Schedule and Newborn Foal Guideline

© 2003 by Dr. Robert L. Leonard, DVM, AAEP at www.horsedoc.org

- I. Prenatal: *Preparations before and leading up to foaling*
 - A. **2 months in advance . . .**
 1. remove mares from fescue pasture and hay
 2. vaccinate to booster immunity if not already done according to reminders
 3. evaluate body condition; start feeding a **minimum** of 4 lbs. of grain
 - B. **1 month in advance . . .**
 1. administer vitamin E and selenium,
 2. vaccinate with tetanus toxoid if not already done according to reminders,
 3. check for Caslick's surgery,
 4. Review breeding/due dates.
 - C. **2 weeks in advance . . .**
 1. examine udder for filling,
 2. **For 1st time foaling (maiden) mares:**
 - a. massage udder with vitamin E oil, Bag Balm or Vaseline to prepare for the feel of nursing, clean between teats,
 - b. **if no activity in udder:**
 - (1) CALL US IMMEDIATELY!
 - (2) start on Domperidone
 3. inventory foaling supplies:
 - a. antibiotic/iron/vitamins A, D, and E injection
 - b. tetanus antitoxin
 - c. enema,
 - d. iodine solution/soap,
 - e. Ivermectin base dewormer,
 - f. bucket/towels/gloves,
 - g. tail wrap
 - h. choose a birthing center (inside/outside?)
 4. Review imprinting procedures,
 5. review foaling video
 - D. **1 week in advance . . .**
 1. examine the udder on "experienced" mares (those foaling for the second time, or more)
 - a. **If no udder activity** for experienced mares, **CALL US IMMEDIATELY!**
 - b. start on Domperidone
 2. review **"2 weeks in advance . . ."** section above

II. The Big Day: *On The Expected Foaling Date . . .*

A. Set the wife's alarm clock!

B. If the wife refuses to do it all herself . . .

1. collect udder secretions for a foaling predictor test
2. examine udder . . .
 - a. if no activity . . .
 - (1) **PANIC! CALL US IMMEDIATELY!**
 - (2) and purchase:
 - (a) a small container of Foal Lac
 - (b) synthetic colostrum
 - (c) oxytocin
 - (d) continue on Domperidone
 - b. if udder is leaking milk:
 - (1) the mare will probably lose her colostrum
 - (2) in this case, we must blood test the foal between 4 and 24 hours after foaling for presence of sufficient antibodies
 - c. If teats are waxing:
 - (1) look for muscle relaxation of hips on either side of tail,
 - (2) observe the mare walking (to avoid false alarm)

III. Foaling: *things to do immediately*

- A. find your healthy foal on the ground, usually up and nursing
- B. administer . . .
 1. injection
 2. TAT
 3. enema, and
 4. treat the navel
- C. imprint, observe
- D. collect and examine and/or save the placenta
- E. deworm the new mother with Ivermectin-based paste

IV. Postnatal: *things to do shortly after foaling*

A. **12 hours post foaling . . .**

1. examine and milk the udder, and find one of three conditions:
 - a. PURE WHITE MILK [*see “a” below*]
 - b. NO MILK **or** MILK, BUT SOMETHING OTHER THAN “PURE WHITE MILK” [*see “b” below*]
2. After examining the udder and the milk . . .
 - a. If the milk issued by the new mother is **PURE WHITE MILK** (accept absolutely no substitutes), you will see a happy foal that is either sleeping, snooping around, or occasionally nursing, and passing a yellow soft stool
 - b. **If you cannot milk anything from the udder**, or if you milk out **ANYTHING** other than pure white milk . . .
 - (1) **PANIC!**
 - (2) set yourself an imaginary timetable of 24 hours, *this is how long the foal will survive without milk or supplementation*
 - (3) Start the mare on Domperidone . . .
 - (a) 1 per day for three days
 - (b) 1/2 per day for four more days
 - (4) Give synthetic colostrum, *without colostrum the foal has not received antibodies and will become sick!*
 - (5) If the foal is born energy deficient, start on Foal Lac and feed every 3 hours for first 3 weeks!
 - (6) Leave the foal with the mare – to allow bonding and to stimulate the udder – 3 days. The foal will nurse continuously.
 - (7) Observe the foal for straining/constipation; you will need to administer an enema every other feeding until see yellow stool.
 - (8) Observe the foal for
 - (a) depression
 - (b) lameness
 - (c) swelling in any joint
 - (d) You will see septicemia in 3 to 4 days due to stress and lack of colostrum, energy.
Administer . . .
 - i) Plasma IV
 - ii) Antibiotics
 - (9) **After** feeding the baby 8 times per day – even for only 3 days – plus the cost of Foal Lac, synthetic colostrum, Domperidone, and so on, promise yourself to pay closer attention to the mare’s udder next year!

B. **1 week post foaling . . .**

1. To reduce milk flow in *the mare that is milking normally*, drastically reduce the grain intake for the next week.
2. **If you are tempted to breed her back on foal heat:**
 - a. Bring the mare in for uterine examination, flushing
 - b. Then, 9 days after foaling, introduce the mare to the stallion
 - c. 10 days after foaling . . .
 - (1) Breed the mare (if she cooperates)
 - (2) Administer oxytocin 12 hours after breeding (if she did cooperate)
 - d. 12 days past foaling . . .
 - (1) Tease the mare, to see if she will stand for another breeding
 - (2) If she will stand again, repeat the procedure above in “10 days after foaling . . .”

C. **14 days post foaling . . .**

1. Start increasing grain rations to the mare again.
2. Use her body condition to guide you concerning the amount of grain she receives over the next three months.

D. **30 days post foaling . . .**

1. deworm the foal with a paste wormer
2. evaluate the foal's . . .
 - a. body condition
 - b. attitude
 - c. posture
 - d. and gait

E. **60 days post foaling . . .**

1. have a creep feeder available
2. deworm the foal with a different paste wormer, starting it on Strongid C
3. start on vaccinations: tetanus, sleeping sickness, influenza, rhinopneumonitis, strangles (Potomac Horse Fever)
4. trim feet to correct any crooked legs, regardless how minor the deviation
5. prepare the family for surgery on stud colts, which should give you 30 more days of “preparation time” for the 90 days post foaling procedure
6. booster vaccinations, as well as initial rabies vaccination
7. *if not on Strongid C . . .*
 - a. deworm the foal with **a different paste wormer**
 - b. continue this at monthly intervals, alternating different paste wormers
8. You may wean the fillies and lucky stud colts at this time if . . .
 - a. the foals weigh 300 lbs.,
 - b. and if the foals are eating grain (the mares' milk is decreasing at this time, just as the foals' needs are increasing)
9. schedule castration for stud colts, and plan to wean them two weeks after that time

F. **Weaning . . .**

1. Schedule weaning when you can wean several foals at same time.
 - a. If weaning one foal . . .
 - (1) leave it with other horses and/or in familiar surroundings
 - (2) move the mare out of the foal's range of hearing.
 - (3) If there are no other horses on the farm . . .
 - (a) rent a padded cell for 48 hours (for yourself),
 - (b) and be there to provide support for the "traumatized" foal
2. Have grain available to help offset hunger pangs . . .
 - a. **do not** provide grain "free choice" **unless** they are already on full feed
 - b. have a good **hay available free choice**
 - c. Provide a loose mineral
3. Provide **free choice exercise**: this time is **critical** for strong bone development

V. Once daily: *after weaning the latest worldbeater foals . . .*

- A. Catch, halter, and brush the foals
- B. Examine their feet and hooves

Your farrier and I will appreciate it

© 2003 Dr. Robert L. Leonard, DVM, AAEP

The Animal Clinic and Equine Center

West Plains, Missouri

www.horsedoc.org

For reprint requests

please contact Dr. Leonard requesting permission before republication.

This guide is available at www.horsesense.ws/horsedoc/

If you wish to copy this guide to give it to a friend or acquaintance, please feel free.

However, please include this copyright information.