

# Downers Grove Animal Hospital & Bird Clinic, P.C.

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## Post-Natal Care

Pregnancy is a major stress to your pet. Things get worse after delivery because as the offspring grow, the female is required to produce more milk to nurse the puppies.

### **The following procedures are recommended to insure the health of both mother and offspring:**

- The mother and offspring should be brought to the office for a post-birth physical examination and any necessary treatment within 24 hours after delivery. We will be happy to answer any questions you may have at that time.
- Fresh, clean water should be available at all times.
- We recommend feeding a premium puppy food to nursing dogs because of the higher protein level.
- Mothers should be fed all they want to eat--remember they are eating for several mouths.
- Try to keep the new family in quiet surroundings and avoid all commotion possible for the first two weeks. Excitement causes many of the problems we see in both the female and offspring. Allow the female to get all the exercise she desires.
- Females often develop soft stools for a few days due to their diet changes, vaginal discharges, and the cleaning of their offspring.
- Palpate the breasts and observe nipples daily. Wash with warm water if needed. Notify the clinic of any discoloration of the skin, tenderness, or severe engorgement that occurs. Watch for sores on the nipples as the pups begin to get teeth.
- Notify us if the female has a change of disposition or if nervousness or tremors develop.
- A bath is recommended for Mom regularly during the nursing period. Daily brushing is important for proper sanitation. Notify us if you begin to see a significant loss of hair, or bald spots.
- Some weight loss is to be expected, but consult us if the pet becomes thin. Routine fecal examinations should be performed to guard against intestinal parasites, especially those that could be passed on to the offspring.
- If you decide to spay your pet to avoid future "heat" cycles and pregnancy, it is best to wait at least one week AFTER the offspring are weaned. This gives the breast time to stop milk flow.
- In the dog, expect to see a normal "heat" cycle about six months after the cycle on which the dog was bred.
- Food quantity to the female should be reduced at weaning to help decrease milk flow. Sometimes antibiotics are required if the breasts are engorged to prevent breast infections.