



TRIPLE ACES

# WHELPING ADVICE



**TRIPLE ACES CANINE FERTILITY CLINIC**  
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# GENERAL GUIDANCE | PREPARING FOR BIRTH

Whether your dog has a natural birth or caesarean, here are some helpful guidelines to help you and make sure your dog and puppies are looked after properly.

In your home, you'll need to set aside a specific area in which your dog can give birth. It's important this area is set up correctly to make sure the mother is stress-free and comfortable, and the puppies have the best possible start. Make sure the area is clean and quiet.

## The birthing (or 'whelping') box for your dog

This should be made of a non-porous material, able to be cleaned easily and an appropriate size for your dog and her litter. Cover the base of the box with materials which keep the heat in and can be removed for easy cleaning: towels, sheets or newspapers are ideal. If you have a dog weighing over 15kg, position rods 10-15cm from the floor and sides of the box to prevent the mother crushing the puppies when she lays down.

## Introduce your dog to the birthing area

To make sure your dog feels happy and relaxed when she gives birth, you should introduce her to the birthing area (even if she's having a caesarean) and box one to two weeks before the expected delivery date. Keep her, and the area, free from other adult animals to avoid infection, and make sure she is comfortable in the space.



**\*If you have any concerns regarding the health of your dog or puppies please call Essex Vets or a vet of your choice immediately**

## **Heat, Humidity and Air**

Newborn puppies can easily lose body heat and become dehydrated, so keeping the birth area at the right temperature and humidity is essential. Use bowls of water or a humidifier to keep the space at 65-70% humidity, and a heat lamp to heat the space.

In the first four days of a puppy's life, their environment should be kept at between 29.5 - 32°C. After this, temperatures may be gradually decreased to approximately 26.7°C at seven to ten days, and again to 22.2°C by the end of the fourth week of the puppies' lives. The birthing box should also be in a well-aired area that's not too draughty or stuffy.

## **Keep your dog's home birth hygienic**

The birthing area needs to be kept incredibly hygienic, which means limiting the number of people going into the area as well as frequent disinfecting and cleaning. Take good care in your own personal hygiene before going into the area, sterilise your hands and remove shoes. Before you introduce your dog to the birthing area, wash or brush her to get rid of as many parasites or bacteria as possible.

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# GENERAL GUIDANCE | POST BIRTH CARE

## 0-4 WEEKS

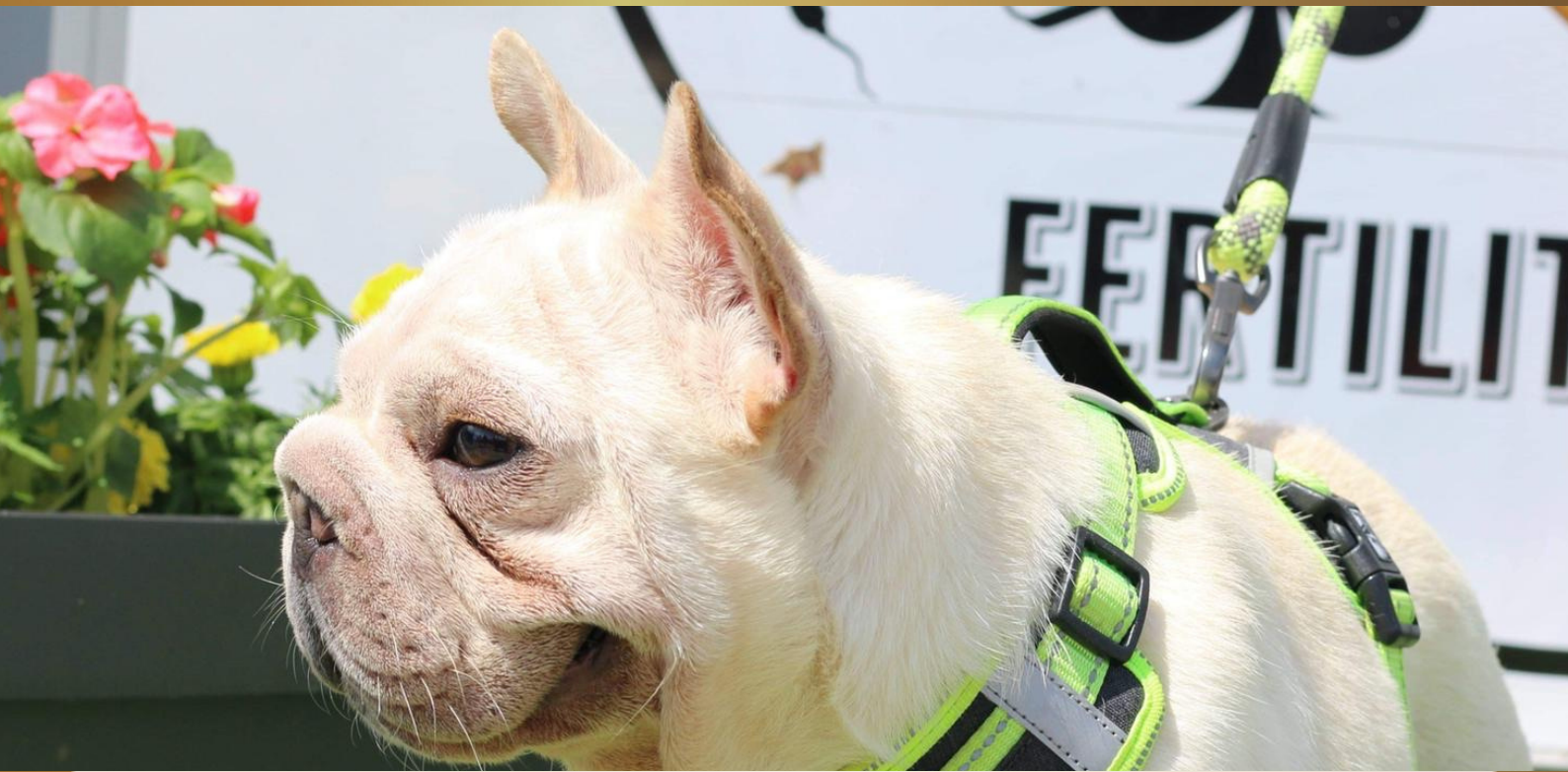
Puppies are highly sensitive during the first three weeks of their lives. In particular, the first 48 hours can be a deciding factor in whether they continue to develop healthily. Lack of oxygen and infection are the biggest risks during birth, so it's important to follow the tips above to prepare the birthing area and reduce that risk.

After a successful birth, you can give the litter the best start possible in a few simple ways.

### **\*BEFORE HANDLING PUPPIES ENSURE YOU USE A HAND SANITISER**

Try to get the puppies to suckle on their mother's teats as soon as possible after they are born. Rather than ingesting milk, the litter are ingesting colostrum, a substance produced by the mother which supports and enhances the puppy's immune system. Colostrum must be taken in during the first 12 to 16 hours, so encourage the newborns to suckle straight away.

**Your puppies may need help with going to the toilet if the mother does not lick them. Take a warm bowl of water and a cotton wool ball and massage the genital area and bottom to stimulate them and make them go to the toilet.**



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## General Guidance

The puppies will usually feed every 2 hours and it is important that if you do not have roll bars (to prevent the mother laying on them) in your whelping box/ pen that you keep the puppies in a separate box. Use plenty of blankets and preferably a heat lamp to keep them warm. If the mother has had a caesarean, she will be disorientated so its recommended to keep the puppies separate in any case and put them on to feed only, until she is properly recovered.

## Weigh Your Puppies

It's recommended to weigh puppies regularly in order to give an outline of their condition and progress. Puppies that fail to gain weight or begin to lose weight should be examined by a vet as soon as possible. You should also identify puppies with a low birth weight so they can be monitored and supported.

**Done in the right way, a home birth can help your dog feel relaxed while delivering her litter. Your role is to prepare your home carefully, and give the puppies the care they need in those crucial first few days.**

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# How to Care for Your Dog After She Gives Birth

Feed your dog high-quality puppy food during the final trimester of her pregnancy. This puppy food should be high in protein and calcium. She should eat puppy food until her puppies are weaned. Schedule an appointment with the vet for a checkup. 10 Aug 2018

Increase the number of meals throughout the day. Free-feed her, offering unlimited access to dry food throughout the day.

As a rule of thumb, at peak lactation you should increase a bitch's dog food intake by 25 percent per puppy above what is usually required to maintain her body weight, although it is best to free feed for as long as she is feeding her pups.

## 4-8 WEEKS

For the first few weeks of their lives, newborn puppies depend on their mother's milk for nourishment and survival. Not only does it provide the essential nutrients for growth and development, it also contains antibodies to protect young pups from disease. Once they reach about 4 weeks old, it is normal to start weaning your puppies from their mother's milk. At this moment of transition, it is necessary to teach puppies to eat puppy food. We recommend pre-soaking your chosen puppy food in goat's milk or water, to make sure it is easier to digest and reduce the risk of choking. Keep the mother separate whilst the puppies are eating. They'll continue to nurse off of their mother, while they get used to eating their puppy food. Over the next 2 to 3 weeks, you'll feed them puppy food more and more and they'll nurse less and less.

## 8 WEEKS +

At around 8 weeks old your puppy should be completely weaned. They should also be eating dry puppy food and drinking water. The pups should be wormed and microchipped ready for their new home.

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**THANK YOU  
FOR USING  
OUR  
SERVICES.**

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**WE HOPE TO  
SEE YOU  
AGAIN!**

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