

Care and management of new-born puppies after whelping

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[DOI:10.5281/Vettoday.17237324](https://doi.org/10.5281/Vettoday.17237324)

Basic Protocols to Caring for Newborn Puppies

Proper care and management during the first few weeks of life of puppies are crucial for the health and well-being of both the puppies and their mother, so it is important to care for and manage the conditions.

1. By providing safe surroundings

A safe, clean, pleasant, and comfortable space is crucial for the mother and her puppies.

- **Whelping Area:** Should be a noiseless, warm, and moisture-free area for the mother to whelp. A whelping box should provide clean and moisture-free bedding.
- **Temperature Management:** As newborn puppies are unable to regulate their body temperature by themselves, keep the room warm (around 85°F for the first week) by using a heat lamp or heating pad if required.

1. Feeding the puppies

Nutrition is very important during the first few weeks of life.

- **Mother's Milk:** Colostrum feeding during early days is best as it provides passive immunity by providing variety of immunoglobins, vitamins, and minerals, which helps in improving the defence mechanism of newborns. So, ensure that

mother is feeding her puppies every 2-3 hours.

- **Supplementing:** If the mother is unable to nurse, the mother is sick, or the mother is not alive after whelping, if there are more puppies, or if there is low or no milk production, use a high-quality puppy milk replacer. Avoid cow's milk, as it can cause digestive upset, or if you have to use it, dilute it with the same amount of clean water, if available, then use goat's milk, as it is easily digestible.

2. Monitoring Health

Monitoring the mother's and her puppies' health on a regular basis

- **Weight checks:** Weigh the puppies on a regular basis to ensure they are gaining weight. A healthy puppy should double its birth weight by two weeks. A healthy puppy typically gains about 5-10% of its body weight each day.
- **Signs of Distress:** Look for signs of distress or discomfort in the mother or puppies: difficulty in respiration, difficulty in suckling, bloating, lethargy, anorexia, or abnormal behaviour, or any abnormal discharge. Consult a veterinarian if any of the signs are shown.

3. Socialization and Handling

In order to produce well-adjusted puppies, socialization must begin early in life.

- **Gentle Handling:** Gentle handling should be done early in the life of puppies, as they are very soft and delicate, so it prevents damage to them.
- **Introduce New Experiences:** To develop confidence and flexibility, progressively expose the puppies to a variety of sights, sounds, and experiences as they get older.

4. Veterinary Care

Routine veterinary care is important.

- **Health Checkup:** Routine checkup of mother and puppies in the first few weeks to ensure health of the newborn and mother after whelping.
- **Vaccinations and Deworming:** Deworming should be done at regular intervals from 4 weeks of birth to the entire life. Also, vaccinate the puppies after 6–8 weeks of birth, which prevents them from deadly diseases in the future.

Precautions:

- Make sure that each puppy is breathing and that the mother cleans them off. If not, gently rub them with a towel to stimulate breathing.
- Lamps used for heating whelping pen or providing warmth to puppies should be kept in a distant place to avoid burning of puppies and also to avoid excess heating of the pad.
- Proper space should be there in the whelping pen to avoid crushing puppies with their mother.
- Use of Puppy milk replacer (800 ml cow milk, 200 ml cream, 1 part egg yolk, 6 grams steamed bone meal, 2000 IU vitamin A, and 5000 IU vitamin D with 4 grams citric acid and give at 4 to 5 times a day) or goat milk or diluted cow milk should be used if the mother is not alive.
- Proper deworming and vaccination of pregnant mothers should be done to avoid chances of disease in newborns.

- Provide a healthy and balanced diet to the pregnant mother so that healthy puppies are born.
- Avoid giving newborn children too much colostrum and milk to prevent bloating, gas, and diarrhoea.
- Gentle handling of newborns to avoid damage.
- Gently clean the puppies with cotton cloth after whelping.
- If there is premature birth of a young one, then it is crucial to keep them in the intensive care unit for a few days.
- If the environmental temperature is excessively cold, then to avoid hypothermia, keep the puppies in an incubator (if available) or hot room.



- Avoid unnecessary handling and touching of puppies.
- At the time of whelping, don't pull any part of the foetus unnecessarily; otherwise, it may break.

- After birth, observe the mother and puppies to ensure suckling of milk; if puppies are unable to suckle milk, then suckle them with a feeding bottle, dropper, syringe, spoon, or cotton swab soaked in milk.
- Cut the naval cord at a distance of 2.5 cm from the body by using a sterilized blade or scissor and apply antiseptic solution locally.
- If the naval cord is bleeding, tie it and apply tincture iodine.
- Regular cleaning of the writing pen should be done to avoid any infection.
- If there are multiple numbers of puppies, try to feed them in a divided number.
- Orphan pups require more care in terms of nursing, feeding, and management.
- Some bitches are in the habit of eating their own pups just after delivery. Be careful in such cases, and do not allow her to do that.
- Since the eyes of the newly born pups are closed, assist them to reach the teats after proper cleaning of the udder and nipple of the bitch with lukewarm water containing little potassium permanganate.
- If the bitch is not able to breastfeed the pups, provide them with a mixture of half a cup cow's milk, one teaspoonful of Nestle's or Amul's condensed milk, and one teaspoonful glucose at body temperature with the help of a dropper. One table spoonful of this mixture is sufficient for toy breeds, while large breeds pups may need half to one ounce of this mixture per day up to the age of about one week.