



Bristol Veterinary Service, S.C.
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New Foal and Mare Examinations

There is little for us to do during pregnancy, and even less we know about the foal's health, until it is born. We hope and pray that during eleven months of gestation all is well and during delivery the mare and foal experience no complications. Ninety percent of the time foaling is problem free and all we need is to be a prepared spectator. In other words, witness the miracle and don't interfere unless a problem arises. Even then the most critical knowledge is to know the normal time and sequence of events and when to call for help. After birth, mother nature has designed a pretty good plan. Interfere **ONLY** when necessary. Remember to call and ask before intervening as best intentions will often make the situation worse, so if you have any doubt, please call.

Providing the delivery and the first 24 hours after birth went well:

- Mare eating and maternal
- Foal up and nursing
- Mare has passed the placenta

It is Bristol Veterinary Service's recommendation that both foal and mare be evaluated 24-48 hours post delivery to insure good health and catch problems that may have developed during gestation or delivery.

Our foal examination is designed to evaluate two areas of concern:

- To find, diagnose and treat developmental or congenital issues that are present that may affect the foals life or future viability
- To find, diagnose and treat problems that may have occurred during foaling or the first days of life. We evaluate the following:
 - Nursing (are we finding the teat, suckling, and swallowing)
 - IgG absorption and levels
 - Digestive function, including constipation and passing of meconium
 - Navel or umbilicus management
 - Cardiovascular and respiratory function
 - Mental alertness and function
 - Visual function
 - Limb function and development.



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For the mare we need to evaluate several areas as well. The event of delivery can be a traumatic process and on the rare occasion, lead to complications. The mare is examined for:

- Normal appetite, digestion and stool passage.
- Damage to the birth canal (tears to the external genitalia are common)
- Milk production, let down and quality
- Maternal instincts (attentive to the foal, allowing to nurse, rejecting the foal)
- Retained placenta (please save for veterinary examination)

Placenta (afterbirth) is considered retained 6-12 hours post-foaling. If the foal was born in the evening the issue should be addressed the next morning. Should it be a day time delivery, the placenta should be seen before office closing. All retained placentas need to be evaluated to ensure complete expulsion of all the placental membranes.

These examinations are designed so that problems of delivery and early life can be diagnosed and addressed, insuring a healthy beginning and positive future.