

# Care Of The Pregnant And Lactating Bitch



## Vaccinations

Bitches should be up to date with vaccinations prior to mating to protect her and the puppies against infectious diseases. If you notice your bitch is overdue or not vaccinated then seek veterinary advice.

## Worm treatment

Your bitch should be up to date with her worming protocol prior to mating.

Pregnant bitches should be wormed with Panacur 10 % oral suspension from day 40 of pregnancy, every day until 2 days post whelping (approximately 25 days).

## Flea treatment

Your bitch should be up to date with flea prevention, and therefore once pregnant, should only be treated if required. However the safety of products are limited so seek veterinary advice before application.

## Feeding

Food should remain the same, until around the 5th week of the bitch's pregnancy. The bitch should then be moved on to Royal Canin Starter or a good quality puppy food, as it is higher in calories and meets the increased energy requirements she will need during pregnancy and lactating (feed at the recommended amounts found on the bag). This will also make weaning easier as this is what the puppies will move on to. Food quantities should gradually increase until the bitch's food intake is approximately one and a half times her normal level. She may require smaller more frequent meals during the last few weeks of pregnancy.

After the puppies are born the bitch will remain on Royal Canin Starter or puppy food and can be fed 'ad lib', as much as she wants, which could be up to 4 times her normal intake.

Fresh water should be provided at all times.

## Exercise

Regular exercise can continue, it is important to maintain the bitch's fitness and weight as this can help reduce the risk of difficulty giving birth. She may require shorter more frequent walks as she will tire quicker, the larger she becomes.

Once the bitch has given birth, she will not want to leave the puppies to be exercised but should be encouraged to visit the garden regularly for toileting. Once weaning has started about 3-4 weeks. she should be more willing to be exercised, and this should be gradually built up to her normal exercise regime.

## Accommodation

A quiet area should be provided for the bitch away from other dogs. This area should be warm and free from draughts. Ideally you should have a specially designed whelping box but if not then the area should be large enough for her to move around safely without risk of squashing any puppies. The bitch should be introduced to her new bed in the last 2 weeks of her pregnancy to become accustomed to the area before whelping.

**Please see our information sheet for Whelping Advice**