

# When to Be Concerned

Many pregnant dogs have smooth deliveries but complications can arise that require swift action. You should know what emergency hospital to take her and/her puppies to prior to birth!

## Possible Complications During Dog Labor

| Complication  | What You Can Try   | When to Go to the ER                                |
|---|--|---|
| <b>Puppy stuck</b>  | Experienced fosters can attempt to gently grasp head or straight legs and pull. Get mom to stand up. | First-time fosters, go directly to ER.              |
| <b>Weak contractions for 2 hours with no puppy OR 4 hours resting with no puppy</b> | 1 hr in, give vanilla ice cream if she has delivered multiple puppies already to give her energy.    | If no improvement, go to ER                         |
| <b>Active contractions for 30 minutes OR green discharge and no puppy</b>           | Nothing  | Go directly to ER                                   |
| <b>Stillborn puppy</b>  | If delivery is otherwise smooth, continue to monitor.  | Paired w/other complications, go to directly to ER. |
| <b>Mom in extreme pain</b>  | Nothing  | Go directly to ER                                   |

These are all indications that she is having a difficult labor and will need emergency assistance. There, they will take vitals of mom and her pups to measure maternal and fetal distress, then determine treatment or surgical options.

## Possible Complications of Just Delivered Puppy

| Complication                               | What You Can Try   | When to Go to the ER  |
|--|--|---|
| <b>Mom doesn't break amniotic sac</b>      | Tear open the sac yourself   | N/A   |
| <b>Mom doesn't chew off umbilical cord</b> | Knot cord 1" away from belly and then cut with sterilized scissors   | If cord is cut too close to belly by you or mom, it may result in emergency for the puppy.            |
| <b>Puppy isn't breathing</b>               | Wrap puppy with dry towel and rub vigorously, use bulb syringe to suction liquid out of nose/mouth. Try for as long as 15 minutes. | N/A   |
| <b>Puppy is premature</b>                  | Puppy will need to be tube-fed until strong enough to suckle on its own. Incubator preferred.                                      | If foster isn't capable of caring for them, then rescue needs to step in or ER needs to provide care. |
| <b>Puppy has a cleft palate</b>            | Puppy must be separated from mom and littermates and tube fed.   | If puppy has difficulty breathing, sounds raspy or is gurgling.                                       |
| <b>Puppy will not suckle</b>               | Puppy must be separated from mom and bottle-, syringe- or tube-fed until stronger.   | Puppy is lethargic, has shallow breathing or otherwise "fading."                                      |

There are limited options for extraordinary care for neonates. The majority of care includes supportive care, IV fluids, incubation and oxygen.