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Kittening

Feeding your cat during pregnancy:

Your cat will need more and more food as the pregnancy progresses. By the end of lactation she may be eating twice as much as normal. Towards the end of pregnancy and during lactation kitten food can be fed as it contains more energy. It is best to feed as much kitten food as your cat wants to eat (ad lib).

Worming:

Your cat will need worming once around the time of the birth. We recommend using a broad spectrum and highly effective wormer called Milbemax. The kittens also need to be wormed regularly (at 2, 5, 8 and 12 weeks old) using panacur.

Your preparations for the birth:

Your cat will need a warm and quiet nest in which to give birth. It should be big enough to accommodate both the mother and the litter and allow her easy access in and out whilst containing the kittens. A cardboard box is fine with plenty of newspaper.

Your cat's preparations to give birth:

Pregnancy lasts 63 days in the cat. During the last week of pregnancy your cat will be less active and seek out a quiet warm dark area in which to give birth. She may disappear from home at this time to give birth elsewhere. Your cat's behaviour may change, she may either seek or shun human company. Sudden movements of the kittens may appear to cause her alarm. Milk is normally present within 24 hours of birth.

1st stage labour:

Your cat may appear restless and may vocalise frequently. Her nesting behaviour may intensify, she may tear up and rearrange her bed. She may visit her litter tray frequently and strain briefly and unproductively. This 1st stage of labour may last anything between 2 and 12 hours.

2nd stage labour:

This is when your cat will start straining, using her abdominal muscles to push out her kittens. She may cry out when delivering her kittens and may suddenly jump up and lick her vulva or move around. The first kitten is usually born within 1 hour of abdominal straining. The remainder of the litter is usually born at 5 to 60 minute intervals. All the kittens are usually delivered within 6 hours. Occasionally long pauses occur during the 2nd stage. In these pauses your

cat will be calm and feeding her kittens, this can extend the duration of 2nd stage labour even up to 24 hours. During delivery a dark brown discharge is normally seen and arises from the breakdown of blood vessels in the placenta.

3rd stage labour:

This is when the placenta is passed and can be after each kitten, after 1 or 2 kittens or after the whole litter has been born.

Signs of potential problems:

Cats are often difficult to monitor closely since they often chose to give birth away from home. In addition too much interference can upset your cat and disrupt the normal kittening process. However if you are at all worried give us a call any time on 01442 833 198.

Your new kittens:

Kittens are quite poorly developed at birth and they require warmth and regular feeding. They should be suckling within 1 hour of birth. The litter should be weighed every few days to ensure they are continually gaining weight. Large litters may require supplementary feeding ('Royal Canin babycat' is a special cat milk that can be used). Your kittens will usually start to eat their mother's food at about 3-4 weeks old. The kittens should be weaned onto kitten food by about 6 weeks old.



Enjoy your new kittens!