

The Newborn Foal

After the foal is born and you have checked the face is free from amnionic membrane and the foal is able to breathe, give your mare and foal some privacy and watch from distance. However, it is still important to monitor the newborn foal carefully for the next few hours, to ensure there are no complications after birth.

A normal foal sits up in a sternal position and shakes its head within one minute. After 20 minutes, the foal should have a suckle reflex and attempt to stand up. Further to this, follow the Foal 1-2-3 below:

The Foal 1 - 2 - 3...

... within **1 hour – standing**: the foal should be up and standing, making its first steps and searching for the mare's udder.

... within **2 hours – nursing**: by now the foal should have found the udder, and had its first, life important meal of colostrum.

... within **3 hours – placenta**: the mare should have passed the placenta. When it has been passed, keep it aside, so your veterinarian can check it.

... within **4 hours – urine & manure**: the foal should urinate and pass the meconium (first manure).

EMERGENCY

If your foal is not able stand and nurse within the first two hours of life, give us a call.

EMERGENCY

If your mare has not passed the placenta within three hours, call your veterinarian.

A normal acting foal is bright and alert when it is up, sleeps a lot, and nurses frequently (every hour).

After your foal is standing and walking around it is recommended to dip or spray its navel with diluted chlorhexidine or iodine solution. Repeat this treatment twice daily for the first few days to reduce the risk of infection.

We highly recommend having your new born foal and your mare examined by a veterinarian on their first day together to assure their wellbeing – early detection of problems can be lifesaving. Your veterinarian will check the mare's placenta and do a thorough neonatal examination on the foal including an IgG test. The IgG test will give information about the immune status of your foal, indicating whether medical treatment is required.

Most mares foal overnight. Give us a call in the morning to let us know your mare has foaled, and we will be happy to give you further advice.

If you have any questions or concerns, give us a call - day or night.

Picture references: chronofhorse.com, vetnpetdirect.com.au, silhouettefarm.com, miniturehorsetalk.com, csu-cvms.colostate.edu, b4breeding.com, vetstream.com, pinterest.com, reddit.com, cdn.webservices.ufhealth.org, alamy.com, kimballstock.com, merckvetmanual.com

Photos from top: (1-3) Newborn foals with their proud mothers; (4) Mare nursing her foal – note the placenta hanging from the mare; (5) A normal placenta; (6) Meconium should be passed within four hours after birth; (7) What we all hope for – a strong and healthy mare and newborn foal!

