

Guide to Equine Foal Delivery

Stage 1 Labor (2-8 hours)

| Normal Conditions | | Consult your veterinarian if any of these conditions occur. |
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| Mare exhibits unease-mild contractions, restlessness, biting sides, kicking belly, sweating, and unusual level of alertness. | → | If mare exhibits signs of colic that do not resolve, and the birthing doesn't progress within 1-2 hours, call veterinarian, there may be a serious problem. |
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| Water Breaks | → | If water doesn't break or fetal membranes are red If water doesn't break, but red bag emerges (Red Bag Delivery), the placenta has detached early and the foal lacks oxygen. This applies even if water does break, but the membranes around the foal are red or maroon. Open the membranes of the fetal sac and speed delivery by manually pulling, only during contractions. Call veterinarian. |

Stage 2 Labor (20 to 30 Minutes)

| Normal Conditions | | Consult your veterinarian if any of these conditions occur. |
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| Delivery of foal. Mare sometimes stands and lies down repeatedly to help reposition foal. | | |
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| Foal appears in "diving position" with nose and front feet – one foot slightly in front of the other. | → | Consult veterinarian regarding inserting sterile gloved hand into vagina and attempting to locate the absent leg/nose, then gently manipulating it forward. |
| | → | Call veterinarian , While waiting, get mare to her feet – this could reposition the foal. Otherwise, assistance is needed. |
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| Mare should begin pushing foal out within 10 minutes of foal's appearance. | → | Call veterinarian. |
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| The shoulders are the widest and most difficult part. The mare will usually rest a moment before she resumes pushing. | → | Call veterinarian. The mare may need help getting the foal out. |
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| Within minutes of delivery, the foal should roll to his or her sternum and take its first breath. | → | If foal has a strong heartbeat, administer pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) by clearing airways and blowing into nostrils. If heartbeat is weak, compress chest (one breath per five compressions) until veterinarian arrives. |

Stage 3 Labor (30-120 minutes)

| Mare | | Foal |
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| Normal Conditions | | Normal Conditions → Consult your veterinarian if any of these conditions occur. |
| Recovery and expulsion of birth tissue | | Umbilical cord usually breaks when mare or foal stands or moves away from the other. Do not hurry this event. → If bleeding → If there is persistent bleeding, grasp stump and squeeze until bleeding subsides. |
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| After the birth, the mare rests for a short period of time before she nuzzles and cleans her foal. | | Disinfect navel by applying diluted chlorhexidine solution as directed by your vet with syringe or squirt bottle. → |
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| After your new foal is born, make sure that the mare has completely expelled the entire placenta. If the mare has not expelled the placenta, it can cause a build-up of toxins that can cause inflammation and infection. Even a little piece left inside can cost your mare her life! If it hasn't passed in three hours, call veterinarian. The placenta can be tied up, but never attempt to pull it out, this can injure the mare! Once passed, keep it so veterinarian can check it to make sure it is complete. | | Foal should develop suckle reflex within 45 minutes and stand within an hour. → If foal acts abnormal, call veterinarian. |
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| | | Foal should nurse within three hours. → If foal nurses but does not lie down (stands and dozes), mare might not have enough milk. Check for adequate milk. If not enough, consult vet regarding administering colostrum. |
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| A simple perineal (vaginal) tear is not an emergency and can be treated the next day. If torn through to the rectum or if you have any question, call veterinarian immediately | | Foal should pass meconium (first manure). → If foal is straining but not passing the meconium, consult veterinarian about administering an enema. |



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