

Foaling Kit

Foaling season is an exciting time, but it can also be unpredictable. Having a well-prepared foaling kit close at hand can make a critical difference in those first moments after birth. We recommend all broodmare owners assemble their kit well before the mare's due date.



What should a foaling kit include?

Your foaling kit should be kept clean, dry and easily accessible. We suggest the following essentials:

For the mare

- Clean bucket and mild antiseptic (e.g. diluted chlorhexidine)
- Tail bandage or vet wrap
- Clean towels
- Lubricant (non-irritant)
- Disposable gloves (long obstetric gloves if available)
- Thermometer
- Scissors (clean and disinfected)

For the foal

- Clean towels for drying
- Iodine or chlorhexidine solution for the navel
- Small clean cup for dipping the umbilicus
- Foal thermometer

Important extras

- Torch or headlamp (foals rarely arrive in daylight!)
- Fully charged mobile phone and phone charger / power bank
- Notebook and pen to record timings
- Your vet's out-of-hours contact number clearly written on the kit





Remember the “1-2-3 rule”

- Foal standing within 1 hour
- Foal suckling within 2 hours
- Placenta passed within 3 hours

If any of these milestones are not met, or if you have any concerns at all, please call us immediately. We’re here to help.

We strongly recommend all foals are examined within 24 hours of birth and a blood sample taken to ensure they have sufficient antibodies from their dam. The antibody we measure is the immunoglobulin G (IgG) which is the main antibody that provides early immune protection. This is important because foals are born without antibodies as they can’t go across the mare’s placenta (unlike in other species) so they must absorb IgG from their dam’s colostrum within the first few hours of life. The IgG test checks whether this was successful, a process called passive transfer. If this doesn’t happen it is called Failure of Passive Transfer which significantly increases the risk of illness and sepsis. If this has happened, then the foal will need a plasma transfusion to help support their immune system. This can be done on the yard. There are several reasons why we can have Failure of Passive Transfer including:



- The foal has been born early so the mare hasn’t yet produced colostrum
- The mare hasn’t produced sufficient colostrum (more likely in a maiden or mare with poor nutrition and some mares just don’t produce good enough quality)
- The mare has run milk before delivery
- The foal has failed to suck, sometimes due to other illness, behaviour of the mare, difficulty standing

If you’d like advice on foaling preparation, neonatal care, or post-foaling checks for mare and foal, please contact the practice. We are happy to review your foaling setup and discuss individual risk factors well ahead of time.

Wishing all our clients a safe and successful foaling season!

