

- Typical gestation for a horse is 340 days, this will determine your mare's "due date", but this is just an estimate since they can foal weeks before or after the "due date". Foals born earlier than 320 days are considered premature.
 - Vaccinate your mare 30 days before her due date.
- Watch your mare carefully for signs she is getting ready to foal. There are milk test strip kits which can help predict foaling, and there are also ways to test the mare's milk using "pool strips". When your mare is nearing foaling time, be sure she is in a clean, dry, safe stall or paddock. Straw is the best bedding for foaling.
- When your mare's labor begins she may appear colicky. It is normal for her to get up and down frequently. She may also urinate frequently (small amounts.) Foaling is imminent -- be sure you've wrapped her tail and cleaned her udder.
 - When her water breaks it will look similar to urine, but there will be much more of it. Make note of the time.
 - Within +/- 15 minutes the amniotic membrane should appear (this will look sort of like a whitish colored balloon.) If this is red your mare could be having a "red bag delivery" -- have someone call your vet immediately and you must break the red membrane manually or your foal could die from suffocation.
 - Within +/- 15 minutes you should see a hoof shape appear in the amniotic membrane, and then another hoof, and then the nose. If this doesn't happen your foal may need to be repositioned.
- The foal is able to begin breathing once his chest is out of the mare. The amniotic membrane should have broken on its own so the foal can breathe, but verify this and clear the amniotic membrane from the nostrils if needed.
- It is normal for the mare and foal to rest for a few minutes at this point, either while the foal is still partially in the mare, or as soon as he's fully exited the mare. Let them rest.
 - Once the foal has fully exited the mare DO NOT break the umbilical cord and DO NOT try to pull out the placenta.
- The umbilical cord will typically break on its own. At this point dip the foal's umbilicus in diluted Chlorhexidine (preferable) or 1-2% iodine (if you don't have Chlorhexidine). Do not use 7% iodine.
 - Let the placenta come out naturally. You can tie it in a knot if needed, so it doesn't get stepped on. Pulling it out prematurely could cause pieces to tear off and remain in the uterus. Once the placenta is out, check it to make sure no pieces are missing and retained in the mare because this could cause a serious infection in your mare. Save the placenta for your veterinarian to examine. If the placenta isn't out in 3 hours, contact your vet.

A healthy foal should....

- ... sit up almost immediately after foaling
- ... attempt to stand within 30 minutes
- ...stand unassisted in 1 hour
- ... nurse in 2 hours

- The vet should check your foal's IgG at 12-24 hours (12 hours is better.) If his IgG is low (you want it to be > 800mg/dl) he may need oral colostrum or a plasma transfusion. This can be lifesaving.

The times outlined above are estimates, but if anything seems "off" or doesn't follow these rough outlines the best idea is to call your vet. It's better to be safe than sorry. If in doubt, call your vet!

Enjoy your foal!