



## CESAREAN SECTION POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

A cesarean section is major surgery to remove puppies from the uterus. Most dogs recover quickly from this procedure; however, if your dog was in labor for several hours before surgery was performed, her recovery will be slower, and she will need extra attention and help with her litter.

### *What should I expect during the mother's recovery period?*

The mother has been given an anesthetic that is eliminated from her body rather quickly. Most dogs are raising their heads about the time they arrive at home. Complete recovery from anesthetic may take 2-6 hours, depending on the mother's physical condition at the time of surgery and her age.

During the recovery period, she must be restrained in such a way that she does not fall and hurt herself or roll over and crush the puppies. The puppies should not be left alone with her until she is completely awake and coordinated.

The mother should be interested in eating within a few hours after she is completely awake. Allow her to eat and drink all that she wants, being careful that she does not overload her stomach. This can result in vomiting. Her food intake at this time should be about 1½ times her food intake before she became pregnant. By the third or fourth week of nursing, her food intake may be 2 to 2½ times normal.

The mother's temperature may rise 1°-2°F above normal for the first 1-3 days after delivery, then it should return to the normal range. The normal range is 100°-102°F (37.8°-38.9°C). Your dog should not be given aspirin because it may aggravate bleeding. However, acetaminophen is appropriate at a dose of 325 mg (one regular strength tablet) per 50 pounds. If the mother's temperature goes above 104°F (40°C), she and her litter should be examined by a veterinarian for the presence of serious complications.

### *When should the puppies begin to nurse?*

The puppies should be ready to nurse as soon as you arrive at home. Although the mother will not be awake enough to handle the nursing alone, it is still possible for you to assist the process by making her lie still so the puppies can nurse.

If the mother does not have any milk at first, you may supplement the puppies for the first day or two. There are several good commercial canine milk replacers available. Nursing bottles are available, made in the appropriate size for tiny mouths. The following formula may be used for a day or two if the other products are not available:

**1 cup milk + 1 tablespoon corn oil + 1 pinch of salt + 3 egg yolks (no whites). Blend together until uniform. It should be fed at the rate of 1 oz per 1/4 lb (1/8 kg) of puppy weight PER 24 HOURS. That amount should be divided into 3-5 feedings. The average newborn, small breed puppy weighs 1/4 lb (1/8 kg) at birth.**

Another alternative is canned goat's milk that is available in most grocery stores. It should be fed at the above amounts.

Although we prefer that puppies begin nursing immediately, a healthy newborn can survive nicely for up to 12 hours without nursing. However, if the newborn is weak, dehydrated, or chilled, nourishment must be given very soon.

### *How warm should we keep the room where the puppies are?*