

Whelping Service

WhelpWise™ Service:

The WhelpWise service includes a Uterine Monitor, Fetal Heart Rate Doppler and 24 hour support. (WhelpWise is only offered in conjunction with a licensed Veterinarian)

Service begins 3-5 days before the expected due date. Data is collected twice daily for one hour, and sent over your home telephone line to the monitor center for immediate feedback. When labor is established, monitoring occurs as often as needed to assure all is proceeding without problems. Equipment is returned when whelping is complete. \$440.00 (includes standard shipping)

Until recently the lack of technology, methods, protocols and support systems made whelping a "stand back, cross your fingers and hope every thing comes out OK" experience. Many old wives tales exist about when a whelping should occur and how a normal whelping should progress. Whelping management and interventions by yesterday's standards were frequently based on subjective symptoms such as panting or nesting rather than accurate objective information on uterine contractions and fetal heart rates, placing the breeder and veterinarian in a passive rather than active role in the whelping process.

In almost every whelping there is a period of time when the breeder will wonder what is actually occurring either with the labor process itself, or concern about whether the pups are alive and well. The WhelpWise service was developed specifically to address the puzzling times surrounding a whelping by providing the breeder with accurate information on presence or absence of labor, and assessments of fetal well being as detected by the monitoring equipment. Uterine contraction and fetal heart rate monitoring equipment provided through the WhelpWise service will allow the breeder to know when labor has begun, and directly monitor the heart rates of the puppies. The service is always offered in conjunction with licensed veterinarians. This equipment, designed for use in the home setting, contains a built in modem that links the breeder, via phone, with specially trained obstetrical staff and protocols for whelping management.

Advantages of the WhelpWise Service

Monitoring uterine contractions and fetal heart rates allows the breeder to positively identify the onset of labor and accurately estimate the time that whelping should begin. Uterine contractions and puppies are followed throughout the whelping process confirming that all is going well, or identifying problems in a timely manner should they occur. Common problems such as inertia can be identified and treated in

the home setting using low-dose medication protocols, adjusting medications to support but not over stimulate the uterus. All medication doses are determined by the uterine contraction pattern. Conversely, instances such as a stuck pup where strong contractions exist and medication should not be given can also be identified, helping to prevent problems such as uterine rupture.

Monitoring the heart rates of the pups allows the breeder to know that puppies are doing well during the last few days of gestation and during the whelping. Stressed pups, identifiable by specific heart rate patterns, allows the breeder and veterinarian to make timely informed decisions about interventions, and make the interventions more likely to result in healthy pups.

WhelpWise begins 4-5 days before the expected due date and continues until whelping is complete. Information on uterine contractions is gathered twice daily for one hour, and fetal heart rates are checked at least once daily. This information is transferred over the phone line to the monitor center for interpretation. A baseline value for uterine contractions and fetal heart rates is determined in the days prior to whelping. When labor begins, monitoring frequency increases, and the equipment is used as often as needed during whelping.

Fetal Heart Rates

Litter size can be estimated with a high degree of accuracy by finding the geographical location of each pup by detecting their heart rate with the ultrasound doppler. Additionally, puppies not likely to survive the final days of pregnancy or survive the whelping can be identified by specific heart rate patterns. Early detection of distressed pups allows the breeder to make informed decisions about interventions. While not every breeder will intervene if puppies are compromised, they appreciate having the knowledge so timely intervention can be provided if they choose. The fetal heart rate Doppler can also be used around 6-7 weeks to confirm pregnancy. Dopplers are also available for purchase from Veterinary Perinatal Specialties.

Managing Whelping Problems

A significant benefit of the WhelpWise service is the ability to differentiate abnormal labor patterns such as inertia, versus a malpresented or exceptionally large puppy or other uterine abnormality. Inertia, or

lack of adequate uterine contractions, can be easily managed by giving medications in small frequent doses to achieve a productive contraction pattern and prevent medication overdosing. By simulating a normal labor pattern, unnecessary stress to the mother and the puppies can be avoided. Drug doses that are excessive can contribute to fetal deaths because uterine contractions cause a physiologic decrease in blood and oxygen supply to the puppies. If medications are overused, the uterus clamps down in a prolonged contraction actually cutting off the blood flow to the puppies. Additionally, large doses of Oxytocin will saturate receptor sites in the uterus making subsequent doses ineffective.

Abnormal contraction patterns suspicious for exceptionally large or malpositioned pups or other uterine abnormalities can be identified early in the whelping process and the client referred back to the veterinarian for additional testing.