

Caesarean Sections

Things to Bring:

1. A clean box for the puppies. Cardboard is fine. We may have one we can use, but just to be sure please bring your own. A plastic storage bin with a lid works fine. Stay away from anything that cannot be disinfected, like wicker or cloth.
2. Clean bedding for the puppies. A couple of towels or an old sheet is fine.
3. A heat source for the puppies. Heating pads work best. We can keep the box warm and make sure the pad is not getting too hot. Minimally, a hot water bottle. It is very important that the puppies stay warm on the way home. If you don't bring something, we will try filling gloves with warm water, but these don't stay warm very long and can break and make the puppies wet.
4. A crate for the mom on the way home. She has just had surgery and needs a safe, secure place to ride home. She CANNOT be with the puppies on the way home. It is too dangerous. She may be a bit unsteady. Loose in the car is never a good idea, but especially after surgery.

What to expect on the day of and the days after the Caesarean Section

Some things to keep in mind, we can only estimate the day your dog should have a planned c-section. We can't promise she will not go into labor early. You may end up in an emergency hospital if it happens after hours. If you come in after 4pm as an emergency c-section at Chino Hills, you will be charged afterhours fees. Overtime for our staff is required by law and some of them can't stay late. We may not have a doctor or enough staff to safely do surgery on your dog. If this is the case you will be transferred to an emergency clinic.

We will do either a reverse progesterone, and/or an ultrasound to confirm that the puppies are ready. The decision of what tests to run is up to the doctor. This is required unless your dog is obviously in labor. Taking puppies even a day early can greatly reduce puppy survival rates and increase complications for the mom. Also, if we do the surgery too early, there is a good chance mom will not have milk or be a good mother.

You will need to be here on time, and this time is usually two hours before surgery, minimally. This allows us to

make sure your dog is ready and to do all the pre anesthetic tests and place a catheter, also to shave your dog so the anesthetic time is not as long.

On the day of your scheduled c-section, we may decide based on the reverse progesterone, ultrasound, and/or physical examination that we need to wait another day. You need to be prepared. On the day your dog is scheduled for her c-section, feed a small meal if the surgery is scheduled more than 4 hours from the meal. Water is fine.

Many owners wait in the lobby during the procedure. If not, you need to make sure you are readily available by phone. Complications with the surgery or the puppies could require an immediate decision during the surgery.

Once the surgery is completed, we try and get mom and babies home as quickly as possible. It is important that the puppies nurse in the first 6 hours after birth, and sooner is better. We prefer not to nurse them here for a couple of reasons. For one, this is not the best environment for mom and babies and the stress can make the mom have a bad experience or even try and hurt her puppies. Secondly, someone has to be with the new mom and the babies constantly, and the time and labor involved also make it

costly. Some clients who live far away have us do it, and some clients do it in their car or van before they head home. Plan to take mom and babies home approximately an hour after surgery.

Your dog will be sent with pain medication and instructions. Painful dogs are not good mothers. Don't assume your dog is not painful. She has had major abdominal surgery. All dogs need 2-3 days of pain medication and 5-7 days of antibiotics. In addition, we have Adaptil collars. These collars are infused with calming Pheromones and have been shown to improve mothering ability in some dogs. They work best if you put them on 5-7 days before the surgery.

Some dogs take to motherhood immediately. Some take a few hours and have to be constantly monitored so they don't hurt the puppies, or even be forced to lie down so the babies can nurse. Some dogs are never good moms and can never be trusted with the puppies. You need to be prepared for all of these things. You should have supplies ready to feed the babies and someone should be with the mother and puppies to make sure the puppies are safe, stay warm, and are eating for the first few days, minimally.

A couple of things to be aware of: Dogs have bloody discharge and even some green discharge after whelping and after a c-section. This discharge can last up to 9 weeks and in the first two or three days it can be quite a bit. As long as your dog is eating, drinking, and has pink gums this is normal. If the discharge is excessive, does not let up, or is bright red we need to see your dog.

Next, panting is normal during lactation, especially early on. Your dog will pant a lot when the milk starts to flow. This is normal.

Puppies should be weighed twice a day for the first week, or until they are all gaining well. A 20% weight loss in the first 24 hours is not uncommon, but if your puppies go more than 24 hours after the first day without gaining mom and babies need to be seen immediately. We can use medications to possibly increase milk production and can help you get started tube feeding and bottle feeding if needed. If the puppies are not nursing well or mom never has any milk, we need to consider giving the puppies plasma to boost their immune system.

If you have a breed than needs us to do puppy tails or dewclaws, or both, they have to be done at the 3-5 day mark. Please make your appointment as soon as the puppies are born, as this procedure takes some time and our schedule fills up quickly. Please mark tails prior to the appointment.

This article is intended to just cover the basics of what happens before and after a c-section. Please ask questions regarding any concerns you have.