

Popular Article

Care And Management of Puppies

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Abstract

The aim of the manuscript is to give vision and guidance to the pet parents and breeder regarding the neonatal care, foods and feeding pattern, skin and coat management, bathing pattern, oral hygiene, deworming and vaccination schedule. Do and don't during care and management of neonates.

Introduction

Puppies are young ones of the dogs, they born as eyes closed, less hair and tiny in size. The birth weight of the puppies varies from 60 to 760 grams (Amélie et. al. 2020). The neonatal mortality is major concern in canine breeding. Neonatal mortality in first two months of age is around 15% to the litter size. So, care and management play important role in canine breeding and economic impact to the dog breeders. With this background the manuscript describes the care and management of puppies.

Neonatal care

The pups are born with water bag and soiled, the water bag can be cut and pups are removed, cleaned with dry clean cloth and check for vital parameters including respiration, heart rate, respond to external stimuli and producing sounds. If not, should be done to secure the life of the young ones. Holding upside down to remove the mucus/fluid present in the nasal and oral cavity with gentle tapping of the both side of the thorax and blow the air through the nostrils and mouth. Umbilical cord should be tied leaving 1-2 inches away from the body using a cotton thread; the remaining part should be cut and removed. The umbilical cord should be touched with tincture iodine to prevent sepsis. Most of the times, the mother, herself will cut and remove the water bag and save the pup from aspiration. Allow the pups to the mother for licking will create a bond which helps for milk synthesis in the mother and then pups are allowed to suckle the colostrum. Colostrum feeding plays an important role in the young ones this will give passive immunity to the pups which prevent from different diseases.

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Two parameters play vital role in the neonatal life. The body and environmental temperature play a vital role for the survivability of the pups. During cooler climate and night, the pups should be kept under the heat or light source to give sufficient warmth to young ones. This will prevent from subnormal temperature and early neonatal mortality. The energy to the young ones by feeding the dams milk at different interval of sufficient quantity. If the dam is unable give milk or decline synthesis of milk may lead to starvation in the young ones. The pups may allow to suckle milk from some other dam which is recently whelped or artificial milk powder are available, which can be reconstituted with warm clean water and given to pups at different interval to avoid energy depletion and starvation. Pups should be kept in the basket or box to avoid stamping by the dam. The pups with lower birth weight should be given additional care in feeding and caring.

Deworming pattern

At 14 days, or less the young start opening the eyes, at this age the pups and dam should be dewormed with suitable dewormer. The pups should be dewormed once in 15 days for next 3 months and once in a month for next 6 months and every 3 months for till one year of age. The dewormer should be in suspension form for easy administration and later it can be converted into tablet form once it reaches body weight 10 kilograms and above. This will prevent the worm burden and also improve the growth rate and immunity in pups.

Feeding pattern

At this stage, the pups may be started with cow milk or some commercial foods similar to milk powder or small grains, which can be soaked with warm water or milk and give it as semisolid food at different intervals. The pups should be feed at least 7 to 10 times per day of smaller quantities and once during the night. Over feeding may lead to indigestion or acidity or vomiting and diarrhea in young ones. Using commercial foods for feeding, the different quantity for different breeds/ body weight at different age group is given in the pack which can be divided into 7 to 10 parts and fed to the pups. At two months of age the pups can be started with solid commercial or homemade food as per owners wish. If the dogs are kept in commercial food, it's a balanced food with protein, fat, carbohydrate, fiber, vitamins and minerals. The pups maintained in home food should be made into balanced one as per requirements of the pups, vitamins and minerals should be supplemented separately to support the bone growth and skin & coat. Lack in nutrients may lead to susceptible to poor immunity, bone deformities (rickets), dry & scaly coat.

General care & management

The pups should be kept in hard or rough floor to avoid slipping or deviation of the legs and joints. At regular interval the pups should be wiped with towel soaked in warm water, will prevent the disturbance from flies and ants. Readily available wipes for cleaning the young ones which are pH balanced and sterile. The stools and urine should be regularly cleaned to avoid soiling and contamination. The pups are provided with mats or paper to train for toilet. Whenever the young ones are expressing for urge, they should be put on the mat to pass the urine. This repeated activity may lead to train the pups to pass the urine on the mat. Slowly remove the mat from inside home to outside; pups also will follow to pass the bowel on outside the home. The pups should be taken for toilet, immediately after sleep and feeding. The nail in the pups will be very sharp and hurts the pet parents. To blend the sharpness of the nails it may rasped with nail clipper or allow the pups in the rough floor for playing will blend the nails. Avoid clipping the nails at young age may lead to severe bleeding.

Skin and Coat management

Pups have baby hair pattern during birth and a month so which is puffy and thin in nature, later the baby hair coat will be replace with adult hair coat. Changing coat/molding is common in dogs, the coat will change/ replaced twice a year. Generalized hair coat change is normal physiology but patchy hair loss, severe scratching, wound and redness of skin should be considered as serious issues. During summer the coat shade will lighter to reflect the heat and during the winter the shade will be darker to prevent the heat dissipation. The dogs are lack of sweat glands in the skin, they expel the heat by panting. The normal pH of the dog skin 7-7.4 whereas human skin pH is 5-5.5, so don't use human soap or shampoo for bathing the animals. The bathing should be done, on day time with luke warm water with mild puppy shampoo. The pups should be soak with warm water, the shampoo should be mixed with little amount of water, make lather and apply all over body, massage well and then wash with water than pad dry with clean towel. The dogs should be bath once in a week or two weeks once to prevent drying of the skin or complete removal of the sebum or oil secreted by the glands in the skin. Sebum will nourish, protect and gives immunity to skin. The pups should be comb twice daily when they took for walking or jacking or playing, this prevents shedding inside the home. The combing should be done in opposite direction will remove the dead hair from the coat, and gentle combing at same hair flow direction will give massage to the skin, increase blood circulation to the skin and result in decline shedding.

Oral care

Teething is a month process, they start erupt at age of 2 weeks to 8 months are called as milk teeth are white in colour, small size and sharp in nature. These teeth will be replaced with permanent teeth, so the biting nature and damaging the objects are very common. The rasp the teeth of the pups should be done by fed with chew sticks. Tooth falling, gum bleeding and regrowth of teeth are common finding occur during the early stage of pups. By the month of 7-8 months the pups should have all permanent teeth of total 42 teeth. Brushing the teeth should be started within a month.

Vaccination schedule

The pups should be vaccinated with core and noncore vaccines. If the dam is not vaccinated or orphan pups or insufficient colostrum feeding, the young ones should be vaccinated at early as 20 to 30 days against Canine Parvo and Canine Distemper vaccine. The ideal age for first dose of multiantigen vaccine (core vaccine) is at 45 days and two boosters should be given at 21 days interval. Antirabies vaccine (corevaccine) should be given at the age of 90 days and single booster may be given after 21 days. For both multiantigen vaccine and ARV should be repeated after a year for every year to save from the deadly diseases. The multiantigen vaccine contains Distemper, Hepatitis, Parvo, Parainflunza and Letospirosis. The noncore vaccine includes Corona vaccine and Kennel Cough vaccine, will be given at 2 months of age (Horzinek et.al. 2016). The vaccine card should be maintained for further reference.

Conclusion

Neonates are highly susceptible for hypothermia and depletion of energy. The young ones should be regularly dewormed, vaccinate to improve the growth rate and prevent from deadly diseases. Oral hygiene, skin and coat management and feeding pattern play vital role in the appearance of the pups.

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