

Emery and Carbon Animal Health



Canine Pregnancy

Canine Pregnancy Diagnosis

Palpation: from days 21 – 31 the embryonic vesicles may be palpated

- After day 31 the vesicles change shape and become very difficult to feel
- After day 50 the puppies may be palpated directly
- Some large dogs or dogs with a tight abdomen may cause palpation to be extremely difficult
- The number of fetuses and viability usually cannot be determined using palpation alone.

Ultrasound: gestational sacs may be visible as early as 18 – 20 days

- Heartbeat is seen after days 23 – 25
- Fetal movement may be seen days 34 – 36
- Gestational age can be accurately determined using ultrasound, this accuracy decreases when closer to parturition especially in large (>55 lb) or small (<20) lb dogs.
- Counting the number of fetuses can be very difficult
- Very small litter sizes may be difficult, occasionally fetuses like to hide.
- Viability may be determined using ultrasound looking for fetal movement and heart beat, which is usually around 200 beats per minute.

Radiology: litter size is best determined after day 50

- The fetal skeleton becomes visible around days 43 – 46, different bones become visible at different times.
- Litter numbers are best determined using radiographs
 - This makes it possible to know when the female is done whelping
 - Easier to determine when assistance is needed
- We use digital x-rays allowing greater detail and better diagnostics than other options.

Relaxin: ReproChek or Witness Relaxin

- Relaxin is first observed 20 -30 days gestation
- Simple blood test to detect the presents of relaxin
- Cost is comparable to ultrasound and ultrasound gives more information

Also refer to Whelping or Parturition