

## Think Outside the Box

**The ultimate puppy nursery should be a warm, safe, well-equipped haven for all.**

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They're Here, They're Here! Once the puppies make their entrance into this world, examine them for a cleft palate using a penlight. Have an aspirator handy to clear nasal passages if necessary. Talk to your vet about obtaining Dopram and oxytocin (sometimes referred to as POP). Dopram or even a small drop of whiskey is good to stimulate a sluggish pup. Some vets will allow regular clients to use POP judiciously to help during a protracted or interrupted labor. Be sure to discuss the proper use of this with your veterinarian. Iodine or other disinfectant is always good to have on hand. Use blunt scissors to cut cords if the dam is disinterested or cuts them too short, as one of mine did. It's not usually necessary to tie off cords, but, if so, floss works better than thread as it's sticky. It's not easy to hold onto a squirmy, slippery pup and a slippery umbilical cord and tie a knot! Vet Bond is even better in case Mom becomes carried away with gnawing on cords.

Once I felt comfortable with tube feeding, I never turned to a baby bottle again for pups ... but tube feeding is a scary process when you are learning. With nine orphans, I didn't have a choice! Whatever you use for supplementing or total feeding in the case of orphan pups or an ill or uninterested mother have bottles or tube feeding equipment on hand. Simple, nutritious puppy formulas are included in *Successful Dog Breeding*, authored by myself and Bonnie Wilcox, DVM or you can purchase canned formulas.

Diarrhea is a common problem in infant dogs, and can be dangerous. Dehydration and weight loss can quickly become life threatening. If pups become dehydrated, they drop weight quickly and can develop other life-threatening problems. Have Pedialyte on hand to substitute for drinking water should this occur, in addition to any safe diarrhea medications your vet may advise.

Beyond the Basics A recliner turned out to be the best place to plant myself prior to and during whelping, as well as a few days following. It's more comfortable than a stool or chair, yet doesn't allow a human nanny to sleep as soundly as if she were in bed. A camera to record growth is great to have puppy buyers love receiving pictures of their future adoptee. The ultimate are the digital cameras and/or camcorders. Send these via e-mail immediately!

One of my luxury items was a baby monitor system, with one speaker near the box and the other at my side wherever I was in the house. Have a car (with crate and warm towels) ready to make an emergency trip to the veterinary hospital or clinic.

I always found that the adrenaline rush of welcoming new puppies increased my appetite, so it's good to have some quick-fix food or a cook in the house, too! Make a big pot of coffee and settle in for the duration. Multiple births mean it doesn't usually matter whether this nursery is pink or blue!