

EQUINE PREGNANCY

A Natural Guide for Everyday Horse Owners



UNDERSTANDING EQUINE PREGNANCY

Pregnancy in horses is a beautiful and delicate time that requires attentive care, balanced nutrition, and a calm environment. A healthy mare not only nurtures her growing foal but also prepares her own body for birth and lactation. From conception to foaling, a naturopathic approach focuses on supporting the mare's natural physiology and emotional wellbeing.

GESTATION

The average gestation for mare's is approximately **11 months (320–360 days)**, however, maiden mares or those bred early in the season may carry slightly longer. It's important to remember that each horse is individual, a variation of a couple of weeks on either side of this timeframe is considered normal.

Just like humans, a mare's pregnancy is divided into three trimesters, each marking a key stage of foal development and maternal change:

- **First Trimester (Day 0–114):** Early development and implantation.
- **Second Trimester (Day 115–226):** Steady growth and increasing nutritional needs.
- **Third Trimester (Day 227–340):** Rapid foal growth and preparation for birth.

Understanding these stages helps you tailor the mare's nutrition, environment, and care to best support both her health and the developing foal throughout the entire pregnancy.

PADDOCK MANAGEMENT

Creating a calm and safe environment for your mare is fundamental for ensuring a problem-free pregnancy.

- Keep the mare in a stress-free environment, away from aggressive herd mates.
- Provide gentle, regular exercise (light groundwork or paddock movement).
- Ensure safe fencing and adequate shelter.
- Regular hoof care and dental checks remain essential.
- Parasite control is important. (Anti-parasitic herbs should not be used during pregnancy).

NATUROPATHIC DIETARY SUPPORT

Nutrition during pregnancy is about balance, not excess. Overfeeding can cause foaling complications, while deficiencies may lead to poor milk production or weak foals.

General feeding tips:

- Feed by body condition, not by habit - aim for a gently rounded but not fat mare.
- Introduce dietary changes gradually to avoid digestive stress.
- Avoid over-supplementation; balance is more important than excess.
- Continue providing clean water, good fibre, and daily movement to encourage healthy digestion and circulation.

EARLY TO MID PREGNANCY (CONCEPTION – ~7 MONTHS)

Nutrient demands remain close to maintenance. Overfeeding early can cause excess weight, which may complicate foaling. Good-quality hay or pasture provides most needs. Ensure steady access to clean water and a salt lick.

Maintain a balanced intake of calcium, phosphorus, copper, and zinc to support early foetal development and placental health. Light inclusion of rosehips can gently nourish and support circulation without overstimulating the system.

LATE PREGNANCY (LAST 3–4 MONTHS)

Energy needs rise by around 15–25%, as the foal gains most of its weight in this stage. Protein requirement increases by 20–30% to support tissue and milk-gland development. Add a good protein source such as lucerne, lupins, or chia/flaxseed meal. Avoid feeding excessive lucerne or high protein diets which can cause toxicity.

Maintain a balanced intake in vitamins and minerals such as calcium, phosphorus, copper, zinc, manganese and selenium, as they support skeletal formation and bone strength in the growing foal.



GREENPET PRODUCT RECOMMENDATIONS

Supreme MVA: Comprehensive vitamin, mineral and amino acid supplement that has good levels of nutrients required during pregnancy.

Xtra Cal: Chelated calcium blend which can be added, especially if grazing oxalate pasture. Calcium is important during pregnancy to ensure healthy foal growth and strong bones.

Rosehips: High in vitamin C (antioxidant and anti-inflammatory), supporting immunity, healthy skin and coat.

Chia or Flaxseed: Natural omega-3s for hormone balance and foal development.

Chamomile: Relaxation, digestion and nervous system support.

Flower Essences: Gentle emotional and energetic support for mares during pregnancy, birth, and early motherhood. They work on the vibrational level rather than the physical, helping balance mood, ease anxiety, and strengthen the emotional connection between mare and foal.



USE OF HERBS IN PREGNANT MARES

While many herbs offer wonderful benefits for digestion, calmness and overall wellbeing, a mares body becomes more sensitive throughout pregnancy. Understanding which herbs are safe and beneficial to use throughout your mares pregnancy is important, as some herbs can influence hormones, uterine tone and circulation.

Only mild, nutritive herbs should be used throughout pregnancy. Stimulating, detoxifying and uterine-acting herbs should be avoided entirely. When in doubt, seek advice from a natural pet health care professional.

SAFE HERBS FOR PREGNANT MARES

- **Chamomile** - supports digestion and relaxation.
- **Marshmallow Root** - soothes the digestive tract.
- **Slippery Elm** - supports the stomach and gut.
- **Rosehip** - rich in vitamin c and antioxidants.
- **Nettle Leaf** - mineral rich and supports healthy blood.
- **Dandelion Leaf** - supports the liver and kidneys.
- **Peppermint Leaf** - digestive support.
- **Fenugreek Seed** - appetite support.
- **Raspberry Leaf** - tones uterus and best used *only in late pregnancy*.

GENERAL GUIDANCE AROUND HERBS FOR PREGNANT MARES

Avoid all strong uterine herbs unless advised by a natural pet health care professional throughout your mares pregnancy. Ensure any herbs are introduced in slowly and small amounts, monitoring for change in appetite, manure & mood. Avoid use of essential oils internally. If you are uncertain about a certain herb, avoid it entirely.

The information in this guide is intended for general educational purposes and reflects our experience supporting animal health using natural diet, lifestyle, and holistic care principles. It is not a substitute for professional veterinary advice, diagnosis, or treatment.

This guide is designed to support overall wellbeing during pregnancy and is not intended to treat, cure, or prevent any disease or medical condition. Every animal is an individual, and pregnancy can present unique health considerations. Always seek veterinary guidance if you have concerns about your animal's health, fertility, or pregnancy progression.

Do not discontinue any prescribed medications without veterinary supervision, as some medications may require gradual adjustment. For any complications or emergencies during pregnancy, please contact your veterinarian promptly.