



FACT SHEET

- Topic:** THE BROOD BITCH
- Variety of Poodle:** Toy, Miniature & Standard.
- Goal:** To improve the overall health of a brood bitch in order that she might whelp naturally and easily and care for her puppies in a manner that will increase puppy survivability and health.
- Criteria for Breeding:** A bitch being considered for a breeding program should be structurally correct (no major faults) according to the breed standard. See the Illustrated Breed Standard at: <http://www.poodleclubofamerica.org/breedstandard.htm>. She should have a superior temperament (no shyness or aggression and should be self-confident, playful and love children and other dogs).
- She should have been tested for genetic health disorders appropriate for the variety (see CHIC at <http://www.caninehealthinfo.org/breeds.html>), and she should have passed these tests. A bitch that tests positive for any genetic health disorder should not be used in a breeding program.
- Ideally, a bitch should not be bred more often than every other heat. However, in some instances (i.e., age, availability of the stud dog, etc.) it may be appropriate to breed a bitch on two consecutive heats. A bitch under two years of age is not mentally or physically mature enough to be bred. Bitches over 7 years old may have age-related complications during whelping. A bitch should not have more than 3 or 4 litters in her lifetime.
- Choosing the Stud Dog:** Careful consideration should go into the choice of the stud dog. He should be structurally correct (no major faults) according to the breed standard. He should have a superior temperament (no shyness or aggression) and should have been tested for genetic health disorders. The Choice of a stud dog should be based on compatible pedigrees rather than flashy advertising and pretty pictures.

It can take time to pick the right dog, so you should not wait until your bitch is due to come into season before choosing a stud dog.

If it is necessary to ship your bitch to the stud dog, make sure that she is freshly bathed and in a clean crate with clean bedding. Include a package of her own food or advise the stud dog owner of her specific diet to limit the stress of changing foods. Clearly mark the crate with her name, your name and where she is going. Include your cell phone number. It is also a good idea to use a tear-away ID collar with her name, your name and phone contact information. Also include the stud dog owner's name and phone contacts.

If you have not already sent copies of your bitch's health testing results and registration information, you can put it in an envelope and tape it to the top of the crate along with any last minute information or instructions for the stud dog owner.

PRIOR TO BREEDING

Vaccinations: A bitch that is going to be bred should be brought up to date on all vaccinations or have demonstrated adequate antibody titers to the recommended diseases.

Parasite Control: It is advisable to worm a bitch prior to breeding. If she has fleas, use a safe product to eliminate all external parasites. Internal and external parasites will prevent a bitch from providing maximum nutrition and immunity to her puppies. This puts the puppies' survival at risk.

Physical Condition: A bitch should be in excellent physical condition (well muscled and in proper weight) to enable her to whelp naturally and easily. A bitch who is overweight or underweight, or one who lacks muscle, may have complications during delivery. Both the bitch and stud dog should be tested for brucellosis (a highly-contagious venereal disease) prior to breeding. Bitches carrying the brucellosis bacteria may abort their litters or deliver stillborn puppies.

It is also possible for this disease to be transmitted to humans through contact of the infected dog's bodily fluids or by handling aborted fetuses.

From the CDC website:

B. canis is the species of *Brucella* species that can infect dogs. This species has occasionally been transmitted to humans, but the vast majority of dog infections do not result in human illness. Although veterinarians exposed to blood of infected animals are at risk, pet owners are not considered to be at risk for infection. This is partly because it is unlikely they will come in contact with blood, semen, or placenta of the dog. The bacteria may be cleared from the animal within a few days of treatment; however, re-infection is common and some animal body fluids may be infectious for weeks. Immunocompromised persons (cancer patients, HIV-infected individuals, or transplantation patients) should not handle dogs known to be infected with *B. canis*.

The Environment:

A whelping box appropriate for the size of the bitch should be provided in a warm, draft-free room. The box should have a ledge that prevents the bitch from lying on puppies that get between the bitch and the side of the box. The bottom of the box should be lined with absorbent material such as shredded newspapers, old blankets, terry towels, indoor/outdoor carpeting, or artificial lamb-skin materials that can be removed and washed several times each day. These materials also provide good traction for puppies moving about the box. Slippery materials should not be used. You may also want to use an electric heating pad under one corner of the whelping box as a warming area that the puppies can crawl on or off as they want, to regulate their warmth.

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Versatility in Poodles
1929 Van Buren Ave., SE
Bemidji MN 56601

Send PayPal donations to vip_tsr@yahoo.com

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