



The NLRC was organized in 1996 with the idea of creating a national club that would preserve and promote the Labrador Retriever. Everyone in the Labrador community is welcome...from pet owners to old timers.

We are a National Lab Club formed by the members, for the members, working together for the preservation, betterment and service to the Labrador Retriever.

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Canine Neonatology by Rick Kesler, DVM Royal Canin USA

The first few weeks of life for a newborn puppy are the most critical period they will ever encounter. They are born solely relying on their mother for survival. Neonates encounter high mortality rates during the first three weeks of life so it is essential that you can differentiate a normal from an abnormal neonate in order to intervene if necessary to deliver the appropriate care. This can be especially challenging because puppies this young are difficult to examine due to their size and immaturity.

Spontaneous breathing and crying within the first 20 seconds after birth is an observation that correlates with survivability. Puppies are born with immature lungs so breathing early delivers oxygen to their system and support to their cardiac system which is also undeveloped and will undergo further maturation. Using a small bulb syringe to help clear uterine fluid from their nasal and oral cavity can help open airways. Gently rubbing their chest wall and tail head with a clean towel helps stimulate respirations and removes fluid that would otherwise act as a chilling effect. Cleaning and disinfecting the neonates' umbilicus supports the reduction of life threatening septicemia. It is imperative to observe early effective nursing so that the newborn receives colostrum. Maternal milk is the only source of food during the first weeks of a puppy's life. It provides all of the nutrients, water and energy required for healthy growth.

An excellent early indicator of healthy growth is daily weight gain. Recording the neonate's weight regularly will allow you to track daily progress. Daily weight gain is different for every breed so that must be taken into consideration. It is normal for a puppy to lose a small amount of weight during the first 24 hours as a result of fluid loss. However, if a puppy loses more than 10 percent of his weight in the first 24 hours than the prognosis for a healthy life is poor. Puppies should gain around 10 to 15 percent of their weight each day; this weight gain is a direct correlation with survival. Using a digital scale to weigh each puppy in grams is more accurate than using another mechanism to weigh them in pounds. Most healthy puppies will double their birth weight by the tenth day of life.

The canine APGAR scoring system can be used to assess the viability of neonate puppies and to aid in determining the survival prognosis. Five parameters are used in the evaluation for puppies. They include heart rate, respiratory effort, reflex irritability, motility and mucous membrane color. APGAR scores are given to each puppy after assessing these parameters and (continued next page)

APGAR SCORING SYSTEM

PARAMETER:	SCORE: 0	1	2
Heart Rate	< 180 bpm*	180 bpm to 220 bpm*	> 220 bpm*
Respiratory Effort	No crying/ < 6 rr*	Mild crying/ < 6 to 15 rr*	Crying/> 15 rr*
Reflex Irritability	Absent	Grimace	Vigorous
Motility	Flaccid	Some Flexions	Active Motion
Mucous Color	Cyanotic	Pale	Pink

*Beats per minute and respiratory rate

Canine Neonatology (continued from page one)

a high score correlates well with survivability while a low score is associated with a higher risk of mortality. In summary, a heart rate above 200 beats per minute, crying and a respiratory rate above 15, a puppy that has vigorous reflexes, active motility and red mucous membranes all correlate with high survival rates.

During the second half of pregnancy not only are the puppies developing, but the mammary glands are preparing for the secretions that provide the nutrition for the newborn puppies. Toward the end of gestation the mammary cells start to trap the immunoglobulins from the mother's body and will play a crucial role in her colostrum and the health of the puppy. The first milk, called colostrum, is rich in these immune cells as well as lipids, lactose and proteins. Immunoglobulins are proteins that will provide the puppy with defenses against disease causing pathogens. In the canine species, there are four cell layers between the mother's and the puppy's blood supply in the placenta which limits the crossing of these immunoglobulins to the puppy. That is why it is imperative for the puppy to nurse and receive colostrum during the first 18 hours of life because after this time they are unable to absorb immunoglobulins. Two main immunoglobulins are transferred to the puppies: immunoglobulin G (IgG) provides systemic immunity while Immunoglobulin A (IGA) provides local protection to the linings of the respiratory and digestive tracts. They are present in different proportions at birth

and in time change when the colostrum turns to milk. The immunoglobulin received by the puppies provides protection against disease but will start to decrease during what is called the immunity gap.

The colostrum that puppies receive not only provides immune support but much needed energy supplies. Since puppies have very little fat stored and are limited in their ability to produce glucose, colostrum also provides other nutrients that are important for the development of the gastrointestinal tract and its maturation. It also contains water to prevent dehydration. Since colostrum can only be ingested by the puppy during the first 16 to 24 hours after birth and early ingestion provides the highest quality, we as breeders need to focus on the mother's nutrition prior to whelping and then getting puppies to nurse early.

To improve the production and quality of colostrum we need to look at the mother's diet. The mother needs a high energy level during the third trimester and during lactation too, as do puppies during weaning. They share the same nutritional needs. It is during this time that the puppies are growing the fastest and colostrum is being produced. A diet that has high energy and contains highly digestible proteins as well as vitamins in the correct balance will contribute to the quality of colostrum. Ensuring that the mother continues to eat as she reaches the late stage of gestation is critical. We also need to realize that her water consumption will increase. Healthy puppies begin with a healthy mother.

The immunity gap is the time in a puppy's life when the immunity that has been provided by the mother falls below protection levels and the immunity received from vaccinations begins to rise. This usually occurs between 6 to 16 weeks of age. Of course each puppy's time will be different depending on how much immunity was received from the mother. During the immunity gap is when the puppies are most susceptible to certain life threatening viruses. It is common in the early stage of the immunity gap to start protection by vaccinating the puppy. It is also common for these vaccines to be blocked by the maternal antibodies. We do not know precisely when the maternal antibodies (continued page 6)

Hemopet in Jeopardy - Jean Dodds, DVM

Hemopet (www.Hemopet.org) a non-profit, is basically the equivalent of a "Red Cross for animals."

The California Board of Equalization (BOE) recently audited Hemopet and determined that sales tax was owed on its blood products already sold in the amount of approximately \$81,000. Blood products already sold were, at the time of their sale, exempt from sales tax being collected according to the original wording of Senate Bill 898.

Senate Bill 898 was amended, though.... to allow the BOE to collect sales taxes determined to be owed on prior sales of animal blood products, which according to Hemopet's news release, essentially terminates the non-profit.

Termination of Hemopet would mean that 40% of the nation's lifesaving canine blood will no longer be available and shortages of canine blood products will occur nationally. (Greyhounds at Hemopet will be placed for adoption or will be humanely euthanized, Hemopet employees will be lost, Hemopet's Hemolife diagnostic laboratory will be shuttered, pet newsletters and health articles from Dr. Dodds will end).

Hemopet and its entities ended 2015 with a total loss of \$90,000 which was covered by Hemopet's operators. Dr. Jean Dodds does not collect a salary.

Hemopet is asking for donations and support. Visit: Hemopet.org/donate-adopt/hemopet-donate.html

NLRC Membership -- Open Enrollment

Membership in the National Labrador Retriever Club, Inc. is open to all Labrador enthusiasts; however, to join you must be in good standing with the American Kennel Club, Inc. and should consider the guidelines set forth in the [NLRC Code of Ethics](#) when engaged in any activities involving the breeding, exhibiting and selling of Labrador Retrievers.

Two types of annual individual memberships are offered:

Full (voting member)	\$30
Associate (non-voting)	\$20

Click the below links for NLRC Membership forms:

[NLRC Membership Application Form \(that can be printed and mailed in with your membership fee\)](#)

Or to both apply and pay online

[NLRC Membership Application](#)

Are you listed in our [NLRC Breeders Directory](#)?

NLRC Members with full

membership rights can apply to participate on the NLRC website Breeder Directory by completing the applicable section on the PDF membership application and submitting a \$10 fee.

Any questions? Contact our Interim Membership Chair: Sandra Underhill
Sandy@LabsToLove.com

New Members Welcomed

Apply Online Today

Please feel free to forward our newsletter to interested family and friends

Support TVD Research!

Visit the [National Labrador Retriever Club Website](#) for more info!



WHISKEY HARPUR OF WILLOW BROOK, CGCA

Jen DeCuyke's Whiskey Harpur Of Willow Brook, CGCA
passed her Canine Good Citizen Advanced Community Canine test!
She also became a Therapy Dog!



RAZOR

Lynn DeVoogdt's (Lone Star Labradors) puppy Razor is presently training to serve a wounded veteran. Razor's training program is two years in duration whereupon completion Razor will become a certified assistance canine. Razor was donated to Patriot Paws Service Dogs.

Canine Neonatology (continued from page 2)

have decreased to a level that will allow the vaccine to be effective, which is one reason puppies are given a series of vaccinations.

Vaccinations traditionally begin during the immunity gap. A patented formulation of antioxidants including Vitamin C, Vitamin E, Lutein and Taurine have proven beneficial during this period. They allow for a faster and more vigorous response to vaccines allowing for a shortened immunity gap. A faster response to early vaccinations can shorten the immunity gap by decreasing the time that puppies are susceptible to disease. The beginning of the immunity gap also often overlaps with a very stressful time in a puppy's life -- weaning.

Weaning is a significant time of transition for a puppy because they go from total reliance on maternal milk for nutrition to the reliance on solid puppy food as their singular source of nutrition. It is also a time when the gastrointestinal tract is maturing and faced with the effect of parasites and less than optimal digestive capabilities. The stages of weaning include the transition from suckling, then licking the food to chewing a hard kibble. Weaning also coincides with a period of rapid growth and continued maturation of body systems. During this period, you will typically see puppies imitate their mother's eating behavior, their appetite change, high energy needs and digestive sensitivity.

Weaning diarrhea is very common and can be reduced by offering meals more frequently, often from four to six times per day. Choosing a diet that can be easily made into a porridge-like consistency allows for the transition period to go more smoothly for the puppy. The presence of antioxidants in a diet also supports gastrointestinal health and development by reducing cell damage. Once the weaning process is complete, your puppies are now successfully eating solid food and at eight weeks will transition to a growth formula that is best suited for the breed of the puppy. Each breed has different needs and nutrition plays a critical role in the successful transition period from a growing puppy to a healthy adult.

WEANING facts



Changes in the puppy's digestive capacities

- As the weeks go by, the puppy's tolerance to lactose (the major milk sugar) decreases and the ability to digest starch increases.
- The puppy has a more sensitive digestive system than the adult. A food specially adapted for weaning can help support healthy digestion while his digestive system matures.

The decline of maternal immunity

- From the fifth week of life, the puppy's own immune system starts to take over from the maternally transmitted antibodies.

Changes in eating behavior

- The first teeth appear around three weeks of age: the puppy will begin to eat solid food between four and six weeks of age.
- At the same time the suckling reflex declines and is replaced by the ability to lick then chew.

Evolution of the Puppy's Eating Behaviors



Did you know?

Giving porridge or rehydrating the kibbles can help make weaning easier, and is even more effective if it is the same food as the mother eats (mimetic behavior).

*Porridge = STARTER diets + STARTER MOUSSE OR STARTER diets + water



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The National Labrador Retriever Club, Inc. exists for the protection and betterment of the breed, to encourage education of the general public who may want to add a Labrador to their family and to meet a social responsibility to its members, the general public, and the Labrador world in particular. To this end, we adopted a [Code of Ethics](#) to serve as a guide.

Our Newsletter, The Labrador Connection, is published by the club periodically when sufficient material is received. The Labrador Connection's newest electronic issue is emailed to members when it is published and all issues may be viewed online at any time.

Visit our website online at www.NationalLabradorRetrieverClub.com

