



# Pregnancy & Birth

*A guide for Burrinjuck Guardians*



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## Welcome to the Burrinjuck Labradoodles Guardian Community.

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Our Guardian girls are very special, and your decision to be part of the Burrinjuck Guardian Program will spread happiness and love and make a positive difference in the lives of many families – thank you!

The team at Burrinjuck Labradoodles cherish the relationships with our Guardian Families. We could not continue to provide the high quality of love and care to our breeding dogs, without the involvement and support of our wonderful Guardian Community.

We have created this guide to help you understand what's ahead and to answer your questions, leaving space for you to enjoy the magic and excitement of what we hope will be a wonderful and rewarding experience for your family.

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**Watching our Guardian girl become a mum has been such an incredible experience for our family, with Katrina and Hamish supporting her (and us!) every step of the way.**

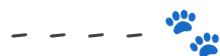
*-Anita, Burrinjuck Garam Masala's human*

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## Heat cycles - what to expect.



From around 6-9 months of age, your dog's heat cycles will begin. Most dogs cycle every 6 months but this can sometimes stretch out as far as 9 months between cycles. Each cycle will have 4 stages, including a 'period' stage of bleeding. Most girls will be 'in season' for around 14 days. The first week there will be a gradual increase in blood spotting, vaginal enlargement and a bit of a funky smell. Behaviours to look out for include increased licking of the vulva area, a change in appetite and an increased attachment / clinginess with her humans.

While your Guardian won't be joined with a mate during her first cycle, it is still VERY IMPORTANT to keep the Burrinjuck team updated as your dog progresses through her cycle each time, and especially to **notify us on the first day you notice the bleeding begin**, as this

ensures the correct timing for your dog to be joined to give the best chance of success.



*While the bleeding stage of her cycle does not cause any distress for your dog, it can make a mess of your floors and furniture, so having some appropriately sized dog diapers on hand can be handy!*

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## Getting pregnant.



When your Guardian turns 1, we will arrange for genetic testing and complete hip / elbow scoring to assess her suitability for our breeding program. Then at around 18 months- 2 years old the Burrinjuck team will select the perfect partner for her, and - based on her cycle tracking - they will begin to plan for her mating. You must notify the Burrinjuck team at the beginning of EVERY cycle.

A girl will generally be in her fertile window from around day 7 or 8 after the bleeding begins, and be receptive to mating during the second week of her cycle, which is when Burrinjuck will plan to join her with her chosen mate. She may need to stay at Burrinjuck for that week to enable her to complete the 3 joinings (one every 2 days from day 3 to 8).

Katrina and Hamish will guide you through the process and reimburse any required veterinary bills - for example if progesterone readings are required for artificial insemination.

## Confirming pregnancy.



While everyone will be keen to know right away, it can be difficult to confirm a pregnancy in the first few weeks after mating. Many of the early signs (clingy, tired, nipple changes) can also be caused by hormone fluctuations. But you won't have to wait too long!

At around day 30, we will arrange a visit to your home and bring along our ultrasound machine to determine if we have a viable pregnancy.

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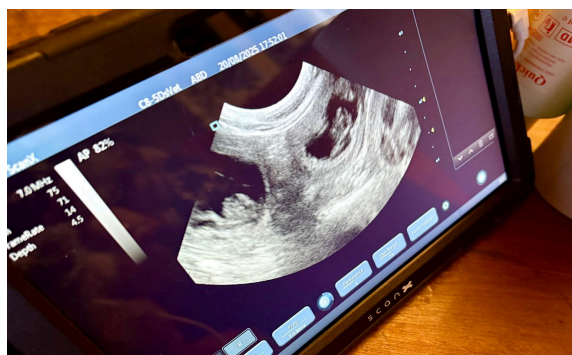


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## She's pregnant! What happens now?



Your girl will be almost halfway (4 weeks) through her pregnancy when it's confirmed (gestation is around 9 weeks / 63 days from ovulation). From here on, it's important to limit her contact with other dogs -



especially nose to nose or nose to butt contact - to ensure she is not exposed to herpes or other viruses that could harm her pups.

From week 5 (once pregnancy is confirmed) you'll start to see some significant changes in her behaviour and appearance.

### Weeks 5-6

- She'll be needing more sleep, and will start to nap more often
- Her appetite will increase, needing smaller, more frequent meals. She will need a protein-rich diet to support her and her pups during this time and we will supply this for you.
- Her nipples will become larger and begin to change in appearance
- Exercise is still important, but her energy levels may decrease



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### Weeks 7-8

- Her weight will increase rapidly as her tummy expands
- Her appetite will further increase to accommodate the pups' growth, and ideally she will move to 'free feeding' where food is available for her as she needs it throughout the day.
- Her capacity to walk any long distances without tiring will be limited, so walks should be close to home and gentle at this stage - she'll let you know when she's done:)



- You'll be able to feel (and see!) the pups move in her belly.
  - Nesting. You'll notice she digs in on or underneath furniture or in soft spaces to create a 'nest' as she looks to make herself comfortable.
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## Week 9. Here come the puppies!



Most of our Guardian girls return to Burrinjuck to birth their pups. We will arrange to have your girl with us around 3-5 days before her due date (estimated at the time of her ultrasound in week 4).

While we can usually predict the delivery date, sometimes things can happen earlier than expected. If your Guardian goes off her food, has a constant need to toilet / clear out, begins shaking / shivering or showing signs of discomfort (e.g. whining), let the team know right away as she could be heading into labour.

We will take extra special care of your girl while she is with us and keep you updated as she approaches birth and delivers her pups. She'll need to stay with the pups until the weaning process is complete. Dogs are individual with how long it takes them to fully wean, and it can take between 6-8 weeks. We complete the weaning process with our Guardian girls gradually to avoid any risk of them developing mastitis. Once weaning is complete, your girl can return home!

We understand that being separated from your Guardian can be difficult for our families, and we welcome you to visit and/or keep in regular contact with our team.

### Home birth

Sometimes it may be in the best interests of all concerned for your Guardian to birth at home. This can be beneficial in situations where there are strong bonds and a risk that your girl may stress if separated from her family.

If all parties have agreed on a home birth, Burrinjuck will supply a whelping box and any other required materials and/or reimburse costs.

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Wherever and whenever it happens, the moment your girl gives birth to the next generation of gorgeous Burrinjuck Labradoodles is very special, and we are excited to share this journey with you and your family.



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