

Name _____



How Do Bears Reproduce?

Bears have unique ways of reproducing and caring for their young. Mating season for most bears occurs in late spring to early summer. During this time, male bears search for female bears ready to mate. Male bears may compete with one another to win the attention of a female.

Once a female bear becomes pregnant, the gestation period lasts about six to eight months, depending on the species. Bears have a special process called delayed implantation. This means the fertilized egg doesn't start growing right away. Instead, it waits several months before developing. This delay helps ensure the cubs are born during the winter when the mother is hibernating in her den.

When the cubs are born, they are very small and helpless. Most bear species give birth to one to three cubs at a time. Cubs stay with their mother for about one and a half to two years. During this time, the mother bear teaches her cubs important survival skills, like how to find food and stay safe from danger.

Mother bears are very protective of their young. They keep their cubs close and defend them from predators. If a cub is threatened, the mother bear may roar loudly or even charge to scare away the danger.

Bears take great care in raising their young. The bond between a mother bear and her cubs is strong, ensuring the cubs learn all they need before going off on their own.