

Name _____



How Do Giraffes Reproduce?

Giraffes are fascinating creatures with unique reproductive behaviors. Male giraffes, called bulls, often compete for the attention of female giraffes, called cows. They do this by engaging in a behavior known as "necking," where they swing their long necks and use their heads to push against

each other. The stronger male often wins and earns the chance to mate.

Once a female giraffe becomes pregnant, the gestation period lasts about 15 months, or around 450 days. This is one of the longest pregnancy durations in the animal kingdom. Giraffes typically give birth to a single calf, although twins can occur but are rare.

When the baby giraffe, called a calf, is born, it can stand and walk within an hour of birth. This quick ability to stand helps protect the calf from predators since giraffes live in open habitats where danger can be spotted from a distance. The calf stays close to its mother for safety and nourishment. The mother nurses the calf with milk for the first several months while it grows stronger.

Giraffe mothers are very protective of their young and often stay in groups with other females and their calves. This grouping helps protect the young giraffes from predators like lions and hyenas. As the calf grows, it learns to eat leaves and other vegetation from the adults and slowly becomes more independent, usually around one year old.

Giraffe reproduction is vital for the survival of the species, especially as their habitats face threats from human activity and climate change. Conservation efforts help protect these gentle giants and ensure healthy giraffe populations in the wild.