

Name _____



How Horses Reproduce

Horses have a fascinating way of reproducing. They are mammals, which means they give birth to live young. Horses reproduce through mating, where a male horse, called a stallion, mates with a female horse, called a mare. Mating often happens in the spring or summer when food is plentiful and the

weather is mild. During this time, stallions may compete for the attention of mares by showing strength and calling out with loud sounds.

After mating, the mare carries the developing baby, called a foal, inside her body. This period is known as gestation and lasts about 11 months. A healthy mare usually gives birth to one foal at a time, though twins can happen, but it is very rare. When the foal is born, it can stand and walk within a few hours, which helps it stay safe from predators.

The mare takes excellent care of her foal. She nurses it with milk, which provides the nutrients the foal needs to grow strong. The foal stays close to its mother for safety and learns from her how to graze, run, and socialize with other horses. Foals often stay with their mothers for several months before becoming more independent.

Horses are social animals and live in groups called herds. Herds help protect young foals by keeping a lookout for danger. The lead mare and stallion help guide and defend the group. This teamwork ensures that young horses have the best chance to grow up healthy and strong.