

Name _____

How Do Meerkats Reproduce?



Meerkats have fascinating ways of reproducing and raising their young. They live in social groups called mobs, where a dominant pair usually leads the group and is responsible for most of the breeding. The dominant female is the primary breeder, while other members help care for the pups.

Meerkat mating often occurs after a courtship ritual where the male shows interest by grooming and following the female closely. Once the female accepts, they mate, and the gestation period begins. The gestation period for a meerkat lasts about 11 weeks or roughly 70 days.

After the gestation period, the female gives birth to a litter of 2 to 5 pups. These tiny pups are born blind and helpless, relying entirely on their mother and the mob for survival. The mob works together to keep the pups safe and well-fed.

The mother nurses her pups for about 3 weeks while staying mostly in the burrow. After this period, the pups begin to explore the outside world under the watchful eyes of the adults. The entire mob participates in raising the young, with babysitters staying behind to protect the pups while others forage for food.

As the pups grow, older meerkats teach them how to hunt for food, dig burrows, and stay safe from predators. This cooperative care ensures the survival and growth of the young, making meerkats one of the most social and caring species in the animal kingdom.