

Meeting the new arrival.

- Your newborn cria should be quite active as soon as the birth is over, wriggling & squirming and have easy respiration.
- The cria will soon lift its head and roll into the cush position, this is a good indication that the cria is healthy. This usually happens by about 10 minutes after delivery.
- Some cria will sit in cush for quite some time, restoring their energy for that great feat of standing up for the first time, others will just get right to it. Cria should be attempting to stand within 30 minutes.

What can you do to help:

- If the cria is wriggling and breathing and doing all of the above, some quick checks can be done and then it is best just to leave cria and dam alone and let them bond.
 - * Quick checks that can be done are check that the cria is normally formed, ie: Mouth & teeth, ears, anus and sex.
 - * Once the cria and dam have bonded and the cria is dry, the cria can be weighed. Average birth weights are 6.5 to 8kg. It is a good idea to re-weigh the cria on day 3 to ensure that no weight has been lost and that feeding requirements are being met. Some cria may lose up to 10% of their birth weight in the first couple of days.
- If the cria is not acting in the normal ways, you may need to intervene and give some encouragement. If intervention is necessary, if possible keep the mother with the cria and allow her to see what you are doing.
 - * If the cria is not wriggling, rub the cria down the backbone with a towel in short intervals to try and get some sort of stimulation to the cria. Cria may be towel dried, but in the event of towel drying, try not to rub the tail or top of the head – these are the two main scent areas for the dam to recognise her cria.
 - * A cria temperature should be between 36.8 and 39 degrees. If the cria is under these norms it is probably hypothermic and needs to be warmed up and if it is over then it needs to be cooled down.
 - * To warm up a cria there are various different ways this can be done:
 - Place cria in a box of alpaca fibre and cover all bar the head, hot water bottles can be used on the outer areas of the fleece to help with instant heat.
 - Wrap the cria in bubble wrap or insulation paper or you can even use an electric blanket.
 - * To cool a cria down the best way to do this is to place the cria into a bath of cool water (not cold) immerse cria up to its neck.

It is vitally important that monitoring of temperatures is regular, you do not want to over do it. One way or the other.

- If the cria is reluctant to stand, a mix of 2 teaspoons of glucose to 60 mls of water can be given for instant energy.

What to expect as normal:

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| * Cush position by approx. 10 minutes | * Standing by approx. 3 hours |
| * Drinking by approx. 4 hours | * Bowel movements by end day 2 |

Once again common sense is the key, if you are unsure about any of your crias activity - Call the vet.

If in doubt – get it checked out.

‘Alpaca Breeders Birthing Handbook’ available for purchase from AAA.

References: *Alpaca Breeders Birthing Handbook – Written & Produced by Ewen McMillan & Carolyn Jinks*
Managing Alpacas in Australia – Produced by the Education & Training Subcommittee of the AAA.