

STOCKING THE NURSERY Print this page
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Here is a short list of items you should have on hand when a cria is due.

Betadine or Iodine Antiseptic

It is a good idea to have on hand some mild antiseptic for use on the navel. (Clip extra long navels.) Dipping the navel with 7% Iodine works well, or Chlorhexedine 1%. Avoid the older products such as mercurochrome- they can be an irritant. Navel infections are not common, but the umbilical area can act as a point of entry for bacteria. Applying Iodine is an ounce of prevention that is worth a ton of cure.

Thermometer

I use a digital model that beeps when it reaches a final temperature. Any baby thermometer from your local drugstore will work.

Bottles

A kitten size (4 – 8 ounce) pet bottle for nursing crias is good and a plastic baby bottle works well for older cria.

Nipples

Use soft pliable nipples for cria and regular human type baby bottle (Flutter valve teats are best.) rubber nipples for older cria. You may need to enlarge the nipple hole for older cria.

Stomach Tube or Feeding Tube

Don't rely on your veterinarian to have one in his or her car! He may have left it at his office being sterilized or he may have donated it to the last farmer. Have your own, even if it is just for the veterinarian to use. An 18 gauge tube is ideal. You will also need a syringe for the feeding tube. You must learn how to use a feeding tube before attempting to feed a cria with it. If used improperly it will kill the cria.

Surgical Clamp

This is used on the umbilical cord if bleeding occurs. In a pinch dental floss works well to tie off a bleeding umbilical cord.

Cria Coat

There are many commercially made warm cria blankets available. Be sure the coat does not cover the tail of the cria, which is the scent identification area for the mother.

Clean Towels

Towels always come in handy. You can use them to dry the cria, wipe your hands or help you get a grip if you need to pull the baby.

Bubble Wrap

A great insulator for premature cria.

Glucose and whole milk

Glucose is a source of “instant energy” – it doesn’t need to be digested. I use homogenized whole milk to feed cria that are not nursing. Homogenized milk is free of bacteria and will provide the essential nutrition and vitamins necessary for vigorous growth.

Electrolyte Solutions

For treating dehydration and diarrhea.

Petroleum Jelly

Used to soften the anus if the cria is straining.

Pet Enema

If the cria is constipated and the petroleum jelly has not worked, you may need to use a pet enema or human baby enemas. The pet versions are available from your local pet store. Avoid enemas high in phosphates.

Scales

The ability to weigh cria is a great way to monitor health. If you are concerned about whether a cria is getting adequate nutrition you can weigh them daily. They should gain between 3 and 4 ounces a day or 2 to 3 pounds a week.

Frozen Plasma (Llama or alpaca.)

If you don’t have any plasma, know where you can get it at short notice. Plasma is used to augment the immune response in cria that do not receive adequate protection from their mother’s colostrum while nursing at birth.

Pen and Paper

Keep records

Veterinarian’s Office and Mobile Phone Numbers

Stock all of the above items together in a “Cria Care Kit” kept in a specific location in your barn and have them readily available to your birthing pasture.