

Prairie Dog Pup Care Considerations  
© 2014 by Gena Seaberg, Ph.D., All Rights Reserved

---

Please read the entirety of this general notice to all new prairie dog pup owners. It is written due to annual consulting performed in many countries currently where people are getting new pups and are fairly new to the species or pup ownership or it has been a long time since they had babies... After 20+ years of specializing in this species, what is strongly suggested is that you obtain free consultation in advance BEFORE you obtain a prairie dog so that you obtain the best gender pairing for the hormonal chemistry of all species in your home and also to have all the tools in advance for initial setup and nutrition, but also how to work with them behaviorally to get the best bond possible at onset instead of learning the through trial and error at the prairie dog's expense.

Pups often grow quickly; it is part of the nature of a prey species that they are forced to grow fast for risk of predation. There will be some that do not grow nearly as fast as others. This is where all new owners should be paying attention and observing for certain factors taking place.

1. Have they been consistently growing since you've gotten them and not dropping weight? Yes, it is worth the expense to own a kitchen digital scale long term for use over their lifespan to track such things on a quarterly basis, and more frequently (once a month with pups).

2. Are you monitoring daily food and water intake? They should be eating a great deal during this stage of development and if you are feeding correctly according to the Captive Nutrition document guidelines, you should have a good response.

3. Are they eliminating prolifically? There should be plenty of fecal output each day and they should progressively grow large in size and quantity as they grow. Fecals should be packed with traces of hay throughout and slightly moist like small jelly beans as pups but growing into larger jelly beans as adults. **FECAL OUTPUT IS YOUR KEY TO THEIR HEALTH AND IF THEY ARE TINY AND DRY, YOU NEED TO SEEK CONSULTATION ASSISTANCE SOONER THAN LATER TO FIND OUT WHAT MAY BE CAUSING AN ISSUE IN YOUR SITUATION.**

4. Are they maintaining their body temperature (similar to our own but ranges from 35.3-39C or 96-102F) when in deep sleep which is when they drop most metabolically? This is also an indicator of health. This should be checked daily.

5. **THIS IS IMPORTANT!!!** While I understand everyone is in love with their baby and wants to spend endless hours cuddling them, **BABIES NEED REST FOR PROPER GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT!** They need time to eat, drink, rest, and play with their cage mates. This is very important to their long term development. It is fine that you spend lots of time with them and I want that very much, but make sure to give them at least two hours at a time in several periods throughout the day where they are not distracted by you peering at them or handling them to allow them to focus on eating, drinking, and getting good rest for proper growth to take place.

6. Please monitor that they are not running on a wheel excessively. It needs to be limited to no more than one hour per day. The issue becomes when they are burning off more calories than they are taking in when they are in growing phases of development. You must watch for obsessive use of the wheel in adults as well but it is crucial important that wheel use does not impacting growth at this stage.

I have some clients that have their pups with them non-stop, and then they are seeing that growth has slowed markedly or health concerns have cropped up. This has been predominantly due to what is stated above and not considering that babies need their sleep!

You have no idea how much I want your babies to grow up in good health for the long term. Attending to some of these items will help you to help your babies accomplish just that.

As usual, it is free to contact me privately by private message at any time if you have concerns about any of the above with your pup or even concerning the care for your adults. You can also contact me by email at [prairiedogconsultant@gmail.com](mailto:prairiedogconsultant@gmail.com) or by phone at 425-870-1729 for assistance free of charge. I'd rather talk to you before a problem is serious and we're reacting, instead of as soon as you notice something is off which is more proactive. That allows for prompt resolution.

If you obtained your pup without advanced consultation about positive behavior strategies, bonding, habitat, and nutritional needs with the importance being placed on longevity, please feel free to reach out to me as it costs you nothing but a bit of your time, but the benefit to your prairie dogs will be worthwhile as your prairie dogs reach geriatric stages of 10 years or more with proper care. Thank you!