

HAVING PUPPIES

by Morven Bellinger



Two years ago my family and I decided we would have a litter of puppies. We own a Russian Spaniel. This rare breed of upland bird dog is used for flushing and retrieving North American birds like partridges, pheasants, and grouse. When we bought her we agreed to breed her at least once. We had the opportunity to have a litter, so we went for it. It was one of the most rewarding experiences that our family had together.

Leksie, our female, met Dasher (the male) and 4 ½ weeks later we gave her an ultrasound test to see if she was pregnant...we were thrilled, she was expecting four puppies. We fed her extra amounts of healthy dog food and made sure she got enough gentle exercise to keep her in good shape for her delivery. We were surprised because she really didn't start to look pregnant until a couple of weeks before her due date, which for dogs is 63 days after mating. When she did start to show, we knew we would be having puppies soon!

On her due date, we watched her closely. I stayed with her that night, rubbing her tummy during contractions. At 6am she had her first puppy, while we all quietly looked on. Clover, was born! We planned to keep one, and it was her. By 9am we had four tiny, healthy baby girls. They were so cute!

Leksie was the BEST mom! She cleaned them, fed them, kept them warm and even let us hold them! As the pups grew, Leksie continued to look after them, making our jobs very easy. Soon they were walking and playing with us. At four weeks we started feeding them softened puppy food. We took them for short hikes in the woods, to get them used to their working environment. We socialized them at our local farmer's market and my kid's friends helped too. They were rather popular!

Overall, it was such a rewarding experience for our entire family that we decided to do it again! 🐾



LEKSIE and her new puppy litter

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