The Ultimate Siamese Cat Secrets

Breeding

Your Siamese Cat

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Chapter One: The Mating/Breeding Cycle Explained

Domestic cats usually reach puberty (sexual maturity) between five months to one year after birth. At this time the queen (female cat) experiences her first estrus which is defined as the time when she displays interest in mating. The age at which the queen first experiences estrous varies based on breed, however there are always exceptions to the rule. Generally Siamese queens mature early with the onset of the first reproductive cycle occurring at about 4 months. A female cat will generally display estrous behavior every 14-21 days unless she becomes pregnant throughout the breeding season. The breeding season for most cats is mid January to August however Siamese cats are more likely to cycle all year round.

The following phases make up the estrous cycle:

- **Proestrus**- During this period of the cycle, the queen is not yet receptive to receiving the tom cat however she is beginning to display signs of estrus. Proestrus lasts approximately 1-3 days.
- **Estrus**- Considered the true “heat”, this cycle can last from 3-7 days and signifies the period of time when the female will except the male for mating.
- **Interestrus**- If the female does not become pregnant and does not ovulate she enters this cycle which can last 1-2 weeks in length.
- **Diestrus**- If ovulation occurs and the queen does not become pregnant she will enter this stage of her cycle, lasting on average 35 days.

Cats were worshiped in Ancient Egypt for their ability to reproduce and little has changed since that time. It is rare for humans to have to interfere or “help” in the mating cycle.
Choosing The Correct Mate

Each breed has specific standards, which makes selecting the right mate a very important part of the breeding process. Read the “Ultimate Siamese Cat Secrets” bonus book 3 “Siamese Cat Showing” which will tell you all the current, highly desirable traits should seek in your cat to breed or a mate for your cat.

The best way to go about Siamese breeding (unless you already have a Siamese to breed from) is to purchase a queen as a kitten from a reputable breeder, she should be of the highest standard you can afford. You will need to look for suitable parents (Siamese shows are perfect for this) with all the traits and point coloration you desire and book a female kitten from their next litter. Wait until a queen to be bred is 3 months old before purchasing, this will give you a valuable insight into her true personality and her coloration as Siamese tend to darken as they get older. Always visit the mother to be of your queen in her home to examine her nature and social skills you want a mother that is very good around people and other pets. Ask plenty of questions about breeding records and pedigree, you would ideally want a queen who has a genetic record of rearing successful litters as well as performing well in shows. After bringing home your new queen you will have to do a great deal of preparation before she is ready for her first mating, this includes feeding her the best possible diet and exercise her and give her a lot of loving human contact so she totally loves and trusts you which will be better for you both when she falls pregnant.

When seeking out a mate for your Siamese you of course will initially be drawn to the outward appearance of your prospective mate, but don’t forget to look deeper for a cat with responsive, calm and outgoing nature. This will help make your kittens much more saleable. It is also important to investigate the genetics of both your queen and the stud cat as you will want to ascertain what characteristics will be passed on to their offspring as a kitten inherits half their genes from their mother and half from their father. A cats genes are responsible for their point coloration and all other characteristics so therefore it is important to find out about the lineage of your cat to see what characteristics you can expect in the kittens, the easiest way to do this is to look at the parents, if all 4 parents (and their offspring; the cats to be mated) exhibit characteristics you find desirable you should proceed with the mating. Experienced breeders know how to spot both weaknesses and strengths in their cats. You
should be able to do the same when considering a mate for your cat. Choose a mate that will complement your cat's size, temperament and genetic build. A good place to start in either purchasing a queen to mate or finding a suitable stud cat is at Siamese cat shows, the early contacts you make can be very valuable in terms of joining the Siamese breeding network. The goal of responsible cat breeders is the preservation and improvement of the pedigree. For this reason cats should not be breed for the sole purpose of a monetary gain, you must also care about enhancing the breed as a whole.

**Pre-Mating Preparation**

Once you have selected a mate for your cat, your next step would involve a physical examination from your veterinarian. Both cats should receive a clean bill of health, which means they are up to date on all vaccines and free of internal and external parasites. Certain fatal diseases can be transmitted from a mother to a litter of kittens so the queen should be tested for FeLV, FIV and other genetic diseases.

Female cats require additional nutrients while pregnant; your veterinarian can recommend a proper diet to ensure she receives all the nutrients she needs during pregnancy. As with most purebred cats, the Siamese has a tendency to develop certain diseases or hereditary conditions. Discuss any concerns with your veterinarian before breeding your cat.

**Mating**

The queen will signal her willingness to mate. She will take a unique stance or posture which indicates she is willing to receive the tom cat. The tom cat will then mount the female from the rear while biting her neck (to either ensure cooperation or stimulate ovulation). Intact male cats have a barbed penis similar to a fishhook which is believed to stimulate ovulation as well. Unaltered cats are driven by hormones to mate and reproduce. While a mating may only last a few seconds or minutes, the entire process can repeat again between the tom and queen. These multiple matings increase the chances of pregnancy. Remember that until the queen is willing to accept the tom, mating will not take place. Occasionally behavioral issues will require action. This occurs when a female has a strong preference for a male that is not selected as her mate or a tom is particularly shy.
Post-Mating Concerns

You should examine the neck of the queen after mating to ensure the tom cat did not puncture the skin while biting the neck. Abscesses can develop under the skin so it is important to not only look for punctures but also to feel for swelling in the area.

The next step is waiting to see if the queen is indeed pregnant. In some cases pregnancy will not result from mating due to failure to ovulate or sterility issues. If this is the case the queen will go back into heat in approximately one to two weeks.
Chapter 2: The Pregnancy

Signs, Gestation, Care, Complications, Final Weeks, Labor and Delivery

The gestation period for cats can range anywhere between 60-70 days. While there are not blood or urine tests that can indicate pregnancy in your cat, a veterinarian can confirm pregnancy by palpating the abdomen of the queen or giving your cat an ultrasound. Other common indications that your queen is pregnant include:

- Heat cycle stops.
- Nipples will become enlarged and pink, this usually occurs around three weeks into the pregnancy.
- Increased appetite
- Vomiting
- Noticeable swelling of abdomen around the fifth week
- Pregnant cats may also seem more affectionate and exhibit “nesting” activities

Your pregnant cat will require a good quality, nutritious diet to provide the needed nutrients for both mom and developing kittens. As she progresses through her pregnancy you can slowly change her diet to a food made specifically for pregnant and lactating cats. Avoid overfeeding your cat as excess weight can lead to complications during labor. Pregnant queens should be prevented from going outside to ensure her safety as well as preventing her giving birth elsewhere. While most cats go through pregnancy without experiencing any problems you should pay close attention to your queen in the event she experiences complications. Be on the lookout for vaginal bleeding which is not normal and may indicate a miscarriage or premature labor. It is normal to see a discharge in the final weeks of pregnancy. This discharge is normally black or reddish in color and consists mostly of old blood, if you are in doubt if the discharge is “normal” or something more serious, contact your vet for an evaluation.
You may notice other changes that are quite normal in the final weeks of pregnancy. This may include increased affection or a need for privacy from your queen, nesting behavior, loss of appetite and decreased activity. When you notice a milky discharge from the nipples and her temperature drops you should be ready for delivery to begin.

The **first stage of labor** is signified by the queen becoming anxious or restless. This may be accompanied by pacing, refusing food, panting or vomiting. The queen should be placed in the queening box (a designated box prepared in advance for the labor, delivery and birth) so she can find a comfortable place to give birth. If this stage of labor lasts longer than 24 hours, veterinary assistance is recommended. The normal time frame for stage one labor is 6-12 hours.

**Stage 2 labor** occurs when a kitten is being delivered. You will see visible signs of contractions similar to when your cat is having a bowel movement. If a kitten is not delivered within two hours of the onset of stage 2 labor, contact a veterinarian for assistance. After the kitten is delivered the queen may enter a resting period before delivering the next kitten. This period should last no longer than 4 hours without assistance. Stage 3 labor occurs after the delivery of a kitten; this is the time when the placenta is delivered. It is important that all placentas are delivered or the queen will eventually become ill. Since it is normal for the queen to eat this afterbirth, you must be sure to either remove the placenta or keep track of how many have been delivered. The queen may fluctuate between stage 2 and 3 throughout the birthing process.
Chapter Three: The Birth

What To Expect and How To Deal With Problems

Once a kitten is born the queen should start cleaning the kitten immediately. If the queen shows no interest in her kitten, your help will be needed to remove the kitten from the amniotic sac, tie off the umbilical cord and clean and dry the kitten until you hear him crying. He can then be placed back with his mother to hopefully nurse. It is important to pay close attention to the mother and kittens after birth to ensure the kittens are allowed to feed and the mother is caring for them properly.

Responsible breeders are prepared for the unexpected. If this is your first litter you should be aware of problems which you may encounter such as, difficulty in birth requiring a c-section, death of the mother and/or kittens or the queen rejecting her kittens. If your cat is experiencing problems during delivery or immediately after the birth, you must seek veterinarian assistance right away. Kittens that have been rejected by their mother will require hand-raising for the first several weeks of their life.

Nursing

When kittens are born they will seek out a teat from which to nurse. Once they have selected a teat they will return to nurse from there every two to three hours. They know which teat to nurse from by seeking out their own scent. Kittens who receive enough of milk will have plump bellies and sleep quietly. If kittens always crying or restless they may not be getting enough milk. Eventually kittens that are not eating enough will stop crying and moving which is a sure sign of trouble. To make sure the kittens are receiving enough milk, the queen's teats should be checked each day for signs of injury or infection. Mastitis can develop which will make nursing painful for the queen and non effective for the kittens.

If your new litter is strong and healthy the mother will require no assistance from you for the first 2 to 3 weeks at all. The only thing you will need to do is care feed the mother who may require up to 3 times her normal amount of food, get the kittens used to you and to change
the bedding in the nest (if this causes no stress).

**The First Week**

The queen is normally very protective of her kittens and will take evasive action if she feels humans are intruding too much into the nest. While it is important to help the queen if she needs assistance during and after the birth, it is also important to give her and her kittens privacy and time to bond. Queens have been known to move their litters if they feel they do not have enough privacy or protection. From newborn to one week kittens are at their most vulnerable stage. Weighing on average just a little over 3 ounces at birth, newborn kittens are completely dependent on their mother or human caregiver for survival. Most mother cats instinctively know how to care for their kittens however until you are sure how the queen is reacting to her new litter, you should pay attention to ensure they are being care for properly. For the first week, kittens are blind and deaf and are just beginning to receive immunity from their mother’s colostrum (first milk).

It is very important to start handling the kittens right from the start, by the end of the first week they should stop hissing at you when you pick them up. The kittens need to get used to human voices and contact, by regularly picking them up, stroking them and talking softly to them they will have familiarity with people from an early age, that is very important for when its time to sell them, social contact will also give them confidence as they grow. Kittens that haven’t had enough human contact can grow up fearful and hostile.

**The Second Week**

You can expect to see amazing growth from the first to second week of life for your kittens. While the first week was spent on feeding and growing, by week number two the kitten will be growing at a rapid pace. Having already doubled his birth weight, he will begin to open his eyes, the sense of smell is developing and determining the sex may soon be possible. Kittens experience amazing growth and changes from week to week but the changes from week one to week two are significant in their development. The two-week milestone is also
important for the queen as she would be showing signs of postpartum problems by this point.

**The Third Week**

By the third week the kittens eyes will be open but their sight will not be properly developed for a few weeks yet. In the third week the kittens will become more aware of their surroundings and take their focus away from their mother as they begin to play with things and each other. The mother will still be with them most of the time but begins to leave them alone for short periods of time to prepare them for the big wide world. They also start to develop their milk teeth and their sense of smell and hearing.

**1 month and onwards:**

By the forth week, the kittens sense of smell and hearing should be fully mature. They are also just beginning to take their first steps and their interest in the environment and their littermates continues to increase, at this point they start to explore their surroundings, which is very cute! They should also be capable of going to the toilet without the help of their mother, and mum will be teaching them to use the litter box as she does (Siamese are very clean) it is unlikely they will need any extra training from you.

By week number 5 the kittens’ eyesight catches up with the rest of their fully developed senses. They can now run around, avoid obstacles, stalk and pounce and groom themselves and their littermates as well as mum.

By week number 6 mother will usually start trying to wean her kittens onto solid food, in the wild she does this by presenting them with freshly caught prey. Kittens must be fully weaned by 12 weeks when they are ready to go to a new owner. By about a month old the kittens may have already started to eat some of their mothers’ food. Their first solid foods should be high quality canned kitten-specific food or finely chopped cooked meat, poultry or fish rolled into little balls for them. Do not give them dried food yet. By providing the kittens with a diverse diet this will encourage them to be less fussy later on in life, which is a good thing! Kittens should be fed small amounts 4-6 times a day up to 5 weeks, after this point the feeding periods can be gradually reduced down to 3 times daily.
By the time the seventh week rolls on, the kittens will be much more active and exploratory. This means less sleeping and more fighting with each other which serves to hone their senses and the skills they would need in the wild: stalking, pouncing and capturing prey. The kittens are now also beginning to develop adult sleeping patterns, social interaction abilities and motor skills. When the kittens reach 8 weeks old they will be completely weaned and then by 12 weeks completely independent from their mothers and old enough to give away to new, loving homes. They will need their vaccinations first which can be done at 9 weeks; they should not be allowed to go outside before this has occurred.