

## A Pregnant Hamster Passes Away

**A 6-month-old hamster due for giving birth suffers complications.**

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**Q:** My 6-month-old hamster passed away recently. She was pregnant and appeared to be going into labor three days prior, but she never delivered any babies. Her bottom was bloody, so I thought I should leave her alone assuming she was having the babies. Then she became very lethargic, and her breathing eventually became very shallow and she died. Any thoughts on what happened or what I could have done differently?

**A:** That is very sad. I'm sorry to hear about this. Hamsters are experts in giving birth, and it is very, very uncommon for there to be complications. There is very little you could have done differently. There are a couple areas I can suggest extra attention be given for any future pregnancy. Make sure any hamster that is pregnant or nursing has an excellent diet with a lot of calories, calcium and protein. A mother needs that to nourish their young. If they don't have a proper diet, they will put their calories, protein and calcium into the babies and there will be little left for the mom's body. Eventually, the mom will get debilitated and may die.

It is unusual for a hamster to be in labor for three days. This may have been a sign that your hamster was in distress. Could you have done anything to save her? That is unknown. Possible causes of a pregnancy that becomes fatal to the mom include infection, inadequate nutrition, or even malpositioned babies.