

Prepare for Baby's Arrival Ahead of Time

You've got a couple of months left before the new baby arrives, and your faithful companion is still secure in the knowledge that she's Number One. It's time to get her used to sharing your affection. As with all important desensitization processes, and yes, that is what this is too, you'll need to start slowly.

- If you don't want Pooch in the newly appointed "nursery", it's time to start prohibiting him or her access. Start by closing the door at night, or when you aren't home. If Spot ceases to see that room as his territory, he won't be as put out by being "put out".
- Play recordings of a baby crying, and other various noises that little ones tend to make. By playing these for a little while every day, not only will your dog get used to the sounds and start to take them for granted, but so will you. Crying at the volume a baby can wail at can be distressing for a dog who's never heard it before. Start at a low volume, then gradually increasing it to a normal level.
- When the time is drawing near and you have about four or five weeks left, start to sprinkle baby powder around the house to help Spot get used to this new smell. Borrow baby blankets (unwashed) from friends, and let Spot get used to having them lying around. This is also a good way to get your dog used to not lying on a baby blanket draped along the sofa or chair. If he looks like he's about to get comfortable on a baby blanket on the floor, a firm "Off" and re-directing him to an appropriate place to

Behavioural Changes (in your dog, not you)

lay down will set a pattern, and soon he'll be avoiding blankets that may hide a baby in the near future.

- If you need to change house rules, change them before the baby arrives. Otherwise, your dog may associate the baby's arrival with her sudden banishment from the couch.
- Have your dog thoroughly checked out by a veterinarian before your baby comes home. This will give you time to deal with parasites or other problems that could pose a family health risk. Make sure you keep their nails trimmed.
- Before bringing your baby home from the hospital, send home a blanket or gown that the baby has been wrapped in. This will get your dog used to the baby's scent.
- Let Dad or someone else carry the baby inside at the first homecoming, so that Mom is free to greet the dog with open arms. That way the dog will be less jealous of her attentions to the baby.
- Start training your dog on the difference between his toys and the baby's toys.

Your Baby is Home. Now What?

Secondly, POSITIVE reinforcement is the only thing that will work with a dog, with reliable results. Punishing a dog is the worst thing to do; smacking a dog will incite biting, and it will also cause your dog to resent your child's presence.

- Start to reward your dog every time they are together. He NEEDS to associate the child with GOOD things. Once you've returned home with your new baby, yes, your dog may

Your dog might go through some personality shifts when you are

still feel a little jealous. It's perfectly natural to feel a little left out when there's a new arrival, but you can easily reassure your dog that he hasn't been displaced in your affections.

- Make it a habit to play with your dog too, even when the baby is out. Pet him while you are feeding the baby, or while the baby is looking around the floor on a blanket.
- Be careful not to push your dog away when his curiosity gets the better of him and he comes to sniff your new bundle. Ignoring him while the baby is loose will create problems as your dog starts to associate the baby's presence with his neglect.
- If your dog is rewarded every time he comes near the baby and sits nicely to sniff, it will not be long before the baby becomes the dog's favourite person next to you.
- I know that some days you feel like you just don't have the energy to play with your dog in addition to caring for your new baby, but the extra effort will be worth it as your human child and your dog grow to be inseparable companions in the years ahead.
- Reassure your dog, each time your baby cries, that this is a normal sound, and train her not to bark when she hears it. Use positive reinforcement such as a treat or a hug for doing the right thing.
- Spend one-on-one time with your dog while the baby is napping, or during walk time (your baby can ride along in a sling or front-pack).
- Be patient, it may take some time before your dog is really comfortable around your baby.

expecting. It shouldn't be alarming, but it could be noticeable. A normally aloof dog

might suddenly become clingy and cuddly. Your usually cuddly dog might become more so, and fixated on your belly, nosing it, smelling it, and wanting to be **on** it. Which is fine if you have a small lap dog, another story altogether if your “lap” dog weighs almost as much as you do?

Avoid jealousy when the new baby arrives.

"Why don't you get rid of the dog? He's so spoiled, you know he'll be jealous and try to bite the baby."

Whoa! Back up!

Before you start calling your local animal shelter and making arrangements for your dog to find a new residence, why not start now and get poor Spot used to the fact that he's going to have a sibling crawling around soon? It can be done, and fairly easily, and there's no need to remove from your life an animal that's been your best friend through thick and thin.

Always monitor your child when they are around a dog Never leave a dog alone with a child

Please, never ever punish a dog for growling, all it does is teach the dog not

to warn before biting. Remember, growling is NOT bad. It's the only way your dog has of warning your child that she's too close or telling you that he's had enough and needs time away.

Some important things to remember:

- Hold the baby, reward the dog.
- Feed the baby, feed the dog.
- Change the baby, reward the dog.

Talk with your Doctor and Veterinarian about helpful ways to introduce your dog and new baby

This pamphlet has been prepared by the [London Dog Owners Association](http://www.londondogownersassociation.ca) as a guideline only.

www.londondogownersassociation.ca

YOUR Pregnancy and Your Dog?

Overall, dogs do not pose any health risks for you and the developing baby while you are pregnant. The main concern during pregnancy involves larger dogs that might jump on your abdomen while you are lying down or sitting in a chair. The likelihood of any problem is extremely low, but if your dog is heavy and has the habit of jumping, it would be best to begin training him not to do that.

Nobody can really know what goes on in the minds of dogs, but I think it's safe to say that

yes, your dog does know there's something different about you. He may not comprehend the nature of the change (or maybe he can), but because your body chemistry changes when you're pregnant, it's guaranteed he can smell the changes.

Dogs are connected to their people and their daily routines. They know when they wake up, when and where they do certain chores, if it's the weekend etc. How? Well, actually it's quite simple...they are GREAT observers and creatures of habit. Dogs have a keen sense of sight and smell that helps them to monitor life around them. It is with this in mind that we believe dogs do notice the changes of pregnancy. Pregnancy creates hormonal changes that affect the scent emotions and routines of their dedicated female human.