

New Baby "Petiquette"

Bringing home a new baby turns life upside down for everyone in the household, including your pet. Whether you have cats or dogs, it's best to start preparing them for the new baby's arrival early on. Colleen Demling, president and founder of Pawtopia, gives some pointers to make the transition easier.

BC (Before Child):

- Make physical changes in the house as early as possible. Set up the crib, sit in the rocking chair and turn on musical baby toys. You can even begin using baby powder and baby lotion to get your pet used to the smell. Encourage your animal to investigate these new items.
- Get pets used to the sounds of babies. Invite friends who have young children over for a visit. Play tapes of babies cooing and crying. Two CDs that are perfect for this are *The Sounds of Baby* and *Preparing Fido*. Find them online by

going to ePregnancy.com, scrolling down the home page to the Go Codes section and entering 8435 for *The Sounds of Baby* and 8436 for *Preparing Fido*.

- Gradually spend less time with your pet so he is more independent by the time baby arrives. If Fido has security issues, encourage him to bond with another family member who can spend time with him.

AD (After Delivery):

- Send your baby's blanket home the night before you bring him from the hospital. Let your pet explore the smell so she has "met" the baby before he arrives.
- Make sure your pet is calm, then sit on the floor with your newborn in your lap. Don't force interaction, but let your pet approach the two of you on his own time and give him treats so he associates the baby with good things. However, be careful not to let your pet lick your baby.



- Have a third party standing by in case your pet needs to be redirected away from you and your little one. An introduction that's spread out over several days is better than none at all.
- Finally, even if your pet bonds quickly with your baby, never leave them together unattended. — CC