

Be Dog Smart

A baby on the way is exciting times for all involved. Sometimes all this excitement can become stressful for a dog if not managed properly. The ideal time to prepare your dog for a new arrival is before the baby is born. Here are some of our **Be Dog Smart** tips to keep your new arrival and four legged friend safe and happy.



PAWS,
THINK,
STAY SAFE

Before baby arrives

-  Train your dog using positive training techniques. Be sure your dog understands basic commands such as “sit”, “stay” and “leave it”.
-  Make a dog friendly, indoor safe zone or a quiet spot for your dog. Begin to reduce the amount of time spend with your dog as they will naturally receive a little less attention when baby arrives.
-  Familiarise your dog with baby crying’ sounds and baby products. Allow them to sniff and inspect buggies, car-seats, blankets, changing bag, etc.
-  Bring your dog for a health check up for peace of mind to ensure your dog has a clean bill of health and is up-to-date with vaccines, wormer and flea treatments.
-  Set ‘out of bounds’ zones before baby arrives, this is the perfect time to put up baby gates to allow your dog to get use to them and so they know which rooms are off limits such as the nursery or your room. The earlier you begin this training the better.
-  If your dog sleeps in your room, slowly transition them to where they will sleep once baby arrives. Put a baby gate up and have the dog sleep outside the gate with the door open for a few hours at a time and build this up eventually to a full night. You may also decide to progress to a different location. Again build this up.



When baby arrives



-  Always bring home a piece of baby's clothing from the hospital before baby arrives home so your dog can get use to baby's scent.
-  Always make sure the first introduction is a calm and positive experience for your dog when baby arrives home.
-  Always praise and reward your dog for good behaviour around the baby. This will reinforce the positive association in your dog's mind.
-  Always exercise your dog adequately and daily. This will make for a happier dog and calmer house.
-  Never leave your dog and baby (or any child) unattended. Supervision is always priority.
-  Never shout at or scold your dog if they approach the baby in the wrong way so they don't associate the baby with a bad thing.
-  Never place your baby on the floor with your dog. Dogs do not know to be careful and may innocently hurt your child.
-  Never leave things to the last minute and assume your dog will adjust. Do the responsible thing and prepare and train your dog for your new arrival.

Remember, if you are struggling seek professional advice



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