

Dogs and Babies

How will your dog react when you bring home the new member of the family?

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Q. I'm sure this question comes up all the time, but I need a question answered that I can't find in any article.

I am due to have a baby, and I already have four dogs and two cats to introduce when I bring him home. I have read everything I can about the introduction period, but no one seems to have mentioned the fact that strangers also will be in and out of the house to help with the baby.

I guess it boils down to this: Is it good to wait a few days before letting someone stay at our home, creating yet another new person for them to deal with? Or, would having a new person there right away actually distract the dogs and cats enough that the transition would be easier?

I am asking this question to anyone I can! Your advice would be greatly appreciated!

A. Wow, it sounds like you are going to have a full house. This is probably mostly an issue for your dogs, since your cats will likely just hide out for a while. The main concern would be if one of your dogs got stressed enough with all of the commotion to actually bite someone. You may want to watch Disney's *Lady and the Tramp* a few times to get in the mood for the new dynamics that will take place.

I would recommend introducing your dogs to the new people who will be spending time in your house before your baby comes. That way, your dogs should be somewhat familiar with them. As with anything else with dogs, try to make changes as gradually as possible.

Your critters will no doubt love the baby. I would have no worries there. Everyone has heard the horror stories about cats sucking the breath out of newborns. Don't worry-it's a creative, but blatantly false, accusation (probably concocted by dog people).

Good luck with your family expansion, and thank you for your question.

Best, Jon Geller, DVM

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