

"Before we left the hospital, my husband took blankets home to our dog, Dakota, so she'd know our newborn Donovan's smell." This help eases the tension of your pet when your baby comes home.

When your pet meets your infant, it might not be love at first sniff

## Baby and the Family Pet

No, your cat will not suffocate your infant in the crib. The myth that says it will dates back to the days of witchcraft, when infant mortality was high and standards of hygiene were low. Someone always seemed to remember seeing a cat in the crib of a baby who subsequently died. The unfed animal was probably attracted to the crib by the smell of the milk. A cat, or any other animal, for that matter, is incapable of forming a complete seal around a baby's mouth and nose, and so could not possibly suffocate him or her.

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However, it is wise to consider the possible reactions of your dog or cat to a new baby. If you have no other children and have had your pet for some time, it is probably accustomed to being "the baby," a valued and well loved member of the household, and may very well be jealous of a rival for your attention. The animal will most likely adjust quickly and learn to love the baby as much as it does you. You can ensure this acceptance by preparing the pet for the baby, much as you have prepared an only child. First, consider obedience training for a dog that will not obey your commands to sit, stay, and be quiet, or that cannot be kept from jumping up on people or furniture. If your dog or cat is not accustomed to children, try to arrange for it to spend some time with a baby occasionally. Speed up the process of your pet becoming acquainted with your baby by bringing home from the hospital something the baby has used so the dog or cat will get used to the unfamiliar scent. Some parents put a cloth diaper or a small blanket in the hospital bassinet with the baby to

## BABY GIFTS & GIFT BASKETS

Never leave your baby alone with the pet. Even the gentlest animal can react unpredictably. Your baby's crying could startle your cat, or your dog could suddenly become territorial. Consider setting up baby gates to limit your pet's access.

[Baby Gifts and Gift Baskets](#) provides timely and practical information for new moms, as well as gift ideas for pregnancy, baby showers, and to celebrate birth:

### New Baby Gift Ideas

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pick up this odor. And when you get home from the hospital with the baby, try to spend a few minutes alone with the pet to assure it of your love, just as you would an older child.

Of course, you don't want even the most loving dogs or cats in your infant's crib. If you have not been able to train your dog to stay off beds or other furniture, or if your cat shows an interest in leaping into the crib to investigate the new arrival, block the door of the baby's room with the gate that you will be using later on to keep your baby from tumbling down the stairs or otherwise getting into dangerous trouble. This will allow you to see into the baby's room, but will keep the pet out.

## Baby Einstein Bath Time



Bath time will be a treat with this great gift featuring Baby Einstein products. We've used a plastic tote to hold lots of great stuff for baby. First is "Water, Water Everywhere," a vinyl bath book. For more fun in the tub, we include a Baby Einstein terry cloth bath puppet, large enough to fit an adult hand. Music will be in the air with Baby Einstein's Baby Neptune CD. We also include the Baby Einstein Splash & Discover Infant Care Trial Size Zippered Tote. Perfect for their diaper bag or overnight trip, it includes 2-in-1 Body Wash, Gentle Baby Wash, Extra Gentle Baby Shampoo, and Moisturizing Baby Lotion.

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The possibility that your dog or cat will not adjust to having a baby in the house and have to be banished is remote, but the chances that your baby will be allergic to your pet. May not be. About one child in five develops allergies to one or another substance. Pollen, food, or dust may be responsible-even the bacteria that survives in your water bed-anything that can be touched, eaten, or breathe, or even the tiny particles of dog or cat hair or skin [called dander] that are suspended in the air of your house. A tendency toward allergies is often inherited, but the specific allergies, do not always take the same form in one family member as in another. For example, you yourself may be sensitive to certain foods or a plant that blooms at a certain season of the year, but not to animals. Your child may inherit your tendency to allergies, but react, at least in infancy, only to animals.

The symptoms of allergy to animal hair are similar to those of hay fever caused by pollens of trees, grass, and other plants. You may at first confuse them with the symptoms of a cold; itchy, runny eyes and nose, a general stuffiness of the head, an ear infection or perhaps even a little wheezing in breathing. If you suspect that an allergy to your pet is causing your baby's discomfort, see your doctor. Until something is done, the

symptoms will increase and can cause sleeplessness, loss of appetite, inflammation of the eyes, ears, sinuses, throat and bronchial tubes, and perhaps even a full blown asthma attack. Unfortunately, your only solution will be to get the animal out of the house. Allergies do change as people grow older, and at some time in the future your child may outgrow this one and be able to enjoy the benefits of having a dog or cat.

Do be aware that pests, such as fleas, and even some illnesses can be transmitted from pets to children. Keep your pet clean and insect free. Wash your hands carefully after handling or cleaning up after your pet. Ask your veterinarian's advice if your dog or cat is sick, or if there are animal illnesses prevalent to your community.