



Finally Everyone Is home!

I can make many suggestions here for you to consider, but having come home with a newborn 3 times I know all too well that even the best set plans can be thrown aside for many reasons. The most important suggestion is trust your gut and take your time. If you need time before introducing the baby and your companion then take that time. Moms often feel a new sense of vulnerability once they have a newborn in their arms. Accept whatever feelings you may have and go at your own pace.

Here are some suggestions to consider for introductions.

Dad comes home while Mom and Baby are in the hospital.

Have Dad bring home a blanket that you used with the baby. Once home he can put the blanket on the baby doll and allow your dog to explore reminding him of the expected behaviors you have decided and practiced ahead of time. Praise him and reward him.

Use the name of the baby especially now with the new scent of the blanket.

Allow your dog to sniff the blanket and treat him as he investigates.

Put the blanket in the crib or in the car seat. Some place that the baby will be in so that the scent is familiar in these places as well.

You may even want to rub the blanket on your dog's food dish so that he associates positive things with the baby's scent.

Mom and Baby coming home.

If possible plan for someone to walk or play with your dog so that he has had some good exercise before everyone arrives home.

It is ideal that Dad or someone else holds the baby while Mom comes in and greets her furry baby. She has been away and this time is important. It is really important that the Mother trusts her timing of introducing the baby. She must feel ready and comfortable. Rushing this can make everyone uneasy. Go slow and go at your own pace. If you have a multi-dog home plan ahead how you want to handle the greeting. You want this to be as stress-free as possible.



New Moms may feel a vulnerability that is unlike any other feeling. This can make even their best canine friend seem unsafe. Maternal instinct and hormones can be very strong at this time. Accept this feeling and give things time. Go at your pace.

*** Some dogs are very uncomfortable by a baby startling. Your calm response will show him all is fine.

Ideas for entertainment.

A stuffed frozen kong may be a good idea to have on hand for the first couple of days. While the baby is enjoying a meal, your dog can have a goodie as well.

Find creative ways to include your dog while the baby is awake. Time with the baby around should be fun! Ignoring your dog or paying less attention when your baby is not around also helps the positive association. Remember you are supposed to rest when your baby rests right?!?

You want your dog to connect baby = fun things, happy time.

Buster cube

Fetch

Basic obedience

Bones

These things can be offered while the baby is in the room and removed when the baby leaves the room. Baby comes back and the buster cube appears again. Yeah!

Enjoy these days and be patient with yourself and your canine family member. If you are feeling stressed out put your dog in a room with a goodie so that he is occupied and you can focus on you and the baby. Many families feel guilt for sending their dog to a "dog zone". Consider this a favor for your dog. When times are hectic and stressful he will be picking up those responses from you. If you allow him to be away from that with a treat or kong, you are doing him a favor not punishing him.

Moms must rest and take it slow. The preparation ahead of time will pay off here.

Good Luck and CONGRATS on your new bundle of Joy!

As always keep in touch and SEND PHOTOS!

Jennifer Shryock

<http://www.familypaws.com>

961.1608

jen@familypaws.com

"Dedicated to safe kid & k9 interaction from the start!"

Copyright© Family Paws 2003.

