

Family and Pet Care



Highlights

Research has shown that children who have pets receive many benefits. While pregnant, think about how your baby will change things for your pet. Young children need to learn how to look after pets.

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What to consider before getting a pet?

Owning a pet can be an enjoyable experience for both you and your child.

However, there are many things to consider before getting a pet, such as:

Can you afford a pet?

Do you have time to take care of a pet?

Do you know how to look after a pet?

Will a pet fit into your family?

Taking care of a young animal can be time-consuming and expensive. Getting a pet should never be an impulsive decision. A veterinarian may help you choose a pet that suits your lifestyle.

What are the benefits of pets?

Research has shown that children who have pets receive many benefits. Pets may help prevent social-emotional problems in children. Children with pets tend to have higher empathy levels.

Pets and pregnancy

If your family already has a pet, you will need to help them adjust to having a baby at home. Some things you can do while pregnant include:

Having your partner take over all pet care duties

Getting your pet used to being home alone

Think about how your pet's care routine might change after the baby arrives.

Will this affect:

Where your pet sleeps?

Where your pet is allowed in your home?

How your pet travels with you?

If so, make these changes before the baby is born. Animals are sensitive to changes in the family. They read body language and can sense when something is happening. Preparing in advance can help your pet adjust.

Cats and pregnancy

Toxoplasmosis is an infection that can cause serious problems during pregnancy. It is caused by a parasite that can be contracted through:

- Eating raw or undercooked meat
- Using kitchen utensils that have been in contact with raw meat
- Contact with infected cat feces
- Drinking contaminated water

To reduce the risk of infection:

- If possible, avoid handling cat litter
- Disinfect the litter tray daily
- Do not feed your cat raw meat
- Practice good kitchen hygiene

If you must change the litter yourself:

- Wear gloves
- Wash your hands thoroughly afterward

Dogs and pregnancy

If you are pregnant and have a dog, ensure it can walk on a leash. Exercise your dog regularly to prevent boredom, which can lead to behavioral problems. Train your dog if any areas of your home will become off-limits once the baby arrives. Also, consider teaching your dog to stop jumping or barking excessively.

Pets and babies

Here are some basic rules to follow if you have both a baby and a pet:

- Never leave your baby's crib uncovered to prevent pets from jumping in.
- Never leave your baby or toddler alone with the family pet. Young children may unintentionally be rough, and pets may react by biting or scratching.
- Teach your child not to share food with pets.

Your baby and your pet

You must supervise all interactions between your pets and your baby. If you need to leave the room, take either your pet or your baby with you.

Teach young children about pets

Young children may love animals but do not naturally know how to care for them. Teach them the following rules:

Teach your child to wash their hands before eating, especially if they have been playing with a pet. They should also avoid allowing pets to lick their faces.

Do not approach an animal when it is sleeping, eating, playing, unwell, or in its bed or kennel.

Always ask permission before petting someone else's dog.

Be gentle with pets-most animals will respond gently in return.

Praise your pet when it interacts well with your child.

Tools And Assistance

For further guidance on caring for pets during pregnancy and the early stages of your baby's life, consult your pediatrician, vet, or parenting resources dedicated to pet safety and child development.