



PODCAST TRANSCRIPT

Canine Master on Pet Life Radio - Episode #19 What to Expect From Your Dog When You're Expecting a New Baby

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Hi, welcome to Canine Master on Pet Life Radio. Today, we're going to talk about bringing that newborn home, that newborn baby and how to adjust your dog and your family life to this new addition to your family.

It's always a big concern with so many people that I talk to. They're always asking me, "Oh my gosh Chris, my wife's pregnant or I'm pregnant and we're really concerned about how Chuckles is going to do when we bring him home with a newborn baby." And the thing is you really need to prepare for this in the right way.

If you've prepared for this in the right way, you'll make it an easy transition and you're not going to have a lot of issues. But if you are thinking that your new dog hasn't been around a lot of babies and hasn't seen a baby, or never even heard a baby cry, you're just going to bring that dog home. Well, you may find that it's little bit of stressful. So you want to make this, the introduction of your new family member, your brand new baby into the home as stress free as possible. So I'm going to talk to you guys a little bit about how to do that, how to make this a stress free situation for you and for your dog, and how to make this successful.

So what do I expect when I'm bringing my dog home? Okay. So up to this point, your dog probably has been the most important part of your family, maybe you and your partner, but after that it's that dog. That dog is like your little baby. And I can't tell you how many times I see people like they think the dog is going to be the biggest part of their life and that the dog's role will stay the same.

Well, unfortunately folks, it generally doesn't happen that way. Many times, we think the dog is the most important thing. In my own life, my wife, we had a dog named Elsie, and when we first brought my son home named Sawyer, she thought that Elsie would still be the most important thing in her life. Well, when we brought home Sawyer, unfortunately, Elsie sort fell by the wayside. Not that he wasn't important, but gosh, there you are. You're breastfeeding, you're up all night long, and all of a sudden here comes Elsie looking for that attention. And it was like, "Whoa, I don't have time for you Elsie. I have this newborn baby." So we got to prepare the dog in advance, so that we don't have issues like jealousy, which

can happen if the dog's not prepared. Making sure the dog is used to baby sounds. We'll talk about that. So there's a lot of things that you can do to really set this up in the right way.

One of those things is routine. Let's talk about routine. Right now, I don't know whether you work or you're at home and you don't work, but think about what you do with your dog every day. Your dog comes up to you and you pet it, your dog barks at you and you go and grab a toy and throw it for it. Your dog brings up a toy, nudge, nudge, push, push, and you take that toy out of the dog's mouth and you play catch. The dog, in many times, is in control of the interactions. He's saying, "Pet me now. Play with me now. I want to go out. I want to go in. Oh, take me for a walk." Brings you his leash. All of these things that you're doing with your dog now, you take your dog on a walk in the middle of the day, you take your dog on a walk at three o'clock. All right, now the baby comes home. Well, think about what happens when you bring a baby home.

The first thing you do when you bring a baby home is you're not getting a lot of sleep. So you're trying to get sleep when you can, and your baby is going to probably be on a schedule. You're going to feed that baby at the same times. Every few hours you're doing a feeding, and now the baby's in your arms. And your baby starts to demand more of your time. Well, what I tell people to do is before the baby comes home, and I try to do this a few months, so if you know you're delivering in May, maybe you start this in January or February. And what you do is you start to think of what your schedule like might be like.

For instance, let's say that you are going to be a stay at home mom. And let's say that right now, you're at the beck and call of your puppy. Okay, well when you have your dog, when the baby comes home, you might start to ignore the dog at the times that you and your partner think that you will not be able to pay attention to the dog, such as during the day. Maybe you start only walking the dog at six o'clock when your husband comes home, when your partner comes home, and your partner can take over and say, "Okay, I'll watch the baby now."

So what you do is you start planning in advance with your partner, these are the times that I'm going to have free time. And let me tell you something, taking that walk with your dog after you've been with the baby all day long, maybe the best time ever. But start doing this before the baby's there. And if the dog is trying to get your attention, do one of two things, ignore the dog and that's probably ... So start ignoring the dog. And I know this is really hard, but start ignoring the dog during the times that you think you'll be really concentrating on your baby. And then when your partner comes home, you can say, "You know what? It's six o'clock when you usually get home, Henry." My partner or whatever his name is, or her name is, "I'm going to take my dog for a walk. Take Dave for a walk."

So then you go and you take your dog for a walk, and that's the time that you get the dog used to. And pretty soon the dog starts to understand that you know what, you don't pay attention to him or her during the day. And when the baby comes, we start to not have this jealousy. All right. So that's a really good thing to start a few months before the baby comes.

The next thing you want to do is elevation. Okay. One of the most dangerous things you can do is let your dog be elevated above your baby. So in a bassinet when you come home, don't ever put that baby on the floor. That's a bad idea because if the dog is over it, the dog

... I've seen some bad things happen that you want to make sure that the baby's always put on an elevated surface.

So if you're one of those people that lets your dog be on the couch, guess what folks? Time to win the couch. So before the baby comes, weeks, months in advance, win the elevated areas; couches, beds and chairs. Get them on the floor. Your dog should not be allowed on beds, couches, and chairs because that's where you're going to stick the bassinet. And that's where the baby's gonna to be. So that's really important.

The other thing is you don't want your dog sleeping in bed with you when you have a brand new baby. There's suffocation issues that can happen. If you're breastfeeding or you put the baby in that bed and the dog jumps up there and lies against the bed, we have some suffocation things that can happen. So it's dangerous and this is something that really needs to be done folks before that baby comes home.

All right, one more thing. Where's the baby's room? If the baby's room ... You're making that baby's room and you have a bassinet in there and let's say you have the crib, you set up that baby's room well in advance from when that baby comes home. And what you're going to do is you're going to teach that dog not to go into the baby's room. You see, it's really important that you never leave your baby unsupervised with the dog, and we're going to talk about that in a little bit about when we bring home the baby. So it's really important that you start winning that bedroom. The baby's room is off limits to the dog starting several months before the baby comes home. So prepare that baby's room a little bit earlier than you normally would have and teach the dog, he can't go in that room. You can put a little piece of blue painter's tape across the threshold and, "Uh-uh" every time he goes over, get him out, get angry at him when he's in the room, and he's going to start realizing that that baby's room is off limits.

Okay. When the baby comes home, the baby's going to cry. He's going to "coo coo" and he's got to make all those sweet baby sounds. Well, if you think about it folks, the high-pitched baby cries and sounds actually can activate a predatory instinct in the dog.

Now, this is kind of scary? And I'm not trying to scare you, but you got to know this. A dog can sometimes see a newborn baby as a predatory object. And what they'll do is they'll actually go after the baby. Now, it's rare, but I've seen it happen in my career I think twice, but it can happen.

So what you want to do is you want to go out ... There's baby tapes out there online of sounds of babies. Maybe you have a friend that has a baby. Take your recording device, take your iPhone and record the baby crying, put it on a loop of some sort. Let the dog start to get used to the sounds of babies' cries, and sounds well before the baby comes home. And I, again, would do this several months before. I would get that dog used to the baby sounds.

You might try seeing how your dog reacts to a baby before the baby comes home. So maybe you have a friend or a sibling that has a newborn baby or a young baby. Have that person come over your house and have that person come over and see how your dog reacts to that baby. I would not put the baby on the floor and let the dog and see what the

dog is going to do. I would definitely get a sort of a read on how my dog is reacting to a baby.

We're talking about bringing that newborn baby home with your dog at home already and replacing one of your babies for another, your dog baby for your human baby.

All right, well one of the things that we also want to talk about is feeding your dog. When your dog eats, how does he react when a baby is nearby or let's say, how does your dog react when you are close to the dog when it's eating? If your dog is one of those dogs that gets all tense when you go near it. Well, we got to start working on that because that's a bad thing that if your baby starts crawling, walks over to the dog while it's eating, we can have a bad situation.

We talked on previous shows about food guarding and you might want to refer back to one of my shows where I talk about the shaking can, walking up, and dropping a biscuit. You can actually go back to that show, but you want to make your presence around the food bowl a very good thing. So dropping in treats when the dog's eating sort of better treats. So if your dog's eating, you go near the bowl, drop in a piece of hotdog, so he likes the presence of you near his bowl.

The other thing you want to do is sometimes, occasionally, if your dog is not used to it, just sort of bump him or touch him when he's eating. If your dog starts to tense up, then you should probably go to seek out canine behaviorist to help you with some food or bowl guarding issues before your baby comes. But it's definitely something you want to get your dog used to.

One of the things I always say is let your dog get used to eating his food in different places. If he is a food guarding dog, again, check out a canine behaviorist and get working on it. But if he's not, if he doesn't have issues, when he's eating, go and touch him, bump him, pick up the ball, stick in some better food, put it back down. Get him used to being a little bit disturbed every once in a while, and being disturbed means great things happen. Putting better treats in there would be a really important thing to do.

Okay. So here's the big day. Your baby's coming home. You're prepared, you're keeping the dog off the furniture, you've got your baby room all set up. And now what you're doing is you're ready to bring that baby home. And so what do you do?

All right. A lot of people will tell you, go bring home one of the baby's diapers. Well, I could tell you something right now, I've never seen that work. You bring home the baby's diaper and what does the dog start doing? It starts chewing at the diaper with a gel inside and ingest it and get sick, that's a bad idea. What I would do is grab maybe some of the blankets and let them get used to the smells. And I would also make sure that my baby is coming home at a time where my house is all set up for the baby. And again, we talked about getting that baby room all set.

So here we come, the baby's coming home. You need another person to help you. Put the dog on a leash. That's the first thing. And have someone hold the dog on the leash, bring the

baby into a room that is not a normal room that the dog is in, such as maybe you don't use your living room very much in your house. If you can do it that way, that's the best way. And you introduce the baby to the dog in a room that he doesn't usually hang out in. Okay? So if you have the dog's normally in your kitchen and your den, try the living room, the formal living room, and introduce them in there.

You're going to put the baby on an elevated area, you're going to sit on the couch, and you're going to have your partner hold your dog on a leash and bring them into the space.

All right. You're going to watch your dog. You're going to watch and maybe have your dog sit down or lie down a few feet from your baby. You're going to have the dog lie down a few feet from your baby, maybe have him do a sit and you're going to talk very nice to your dog. Now, it's really important you guys to stay calm and relaxed when that baby comes in into the house, and stay calm and relaxed when the dog walks into the room. If you seem anxious or nervous, guess what? Your dog is going to pick up on that and may think that you're not doing okay and could become agitated. So it's really important that you're breathing calmly that you're going, "Oh, hi." You know, "Hi Sammy, here comes my new baby. And this is Isabel." And Isabel's sitting right here, and you're going to put Isabel on your lap and here comes Sammy and your partner's going to gradually bring the dog closer and closer.

Now, if the dog starts to what we call, target, starts to whine, gets anxious. He starts lunging a bit forward, we got to stop because you may need a canine behaviorist to help you interpret it. Maybe we're moving too far too fast. You need to make sure that your dog seems excited a little bit, but not over the top excited because that can mean a little bit of predatory stuff's going on. So again, if the dog seems a little bit calm, you might go over and pet the dog and then sit back down to the couch, putting your baby on your lap and then have your partner gradually go closer and closer and let the dog give a sniff, a sniff, a sniff, and then take the dog away. So make it really brief in the very beginning. And while the dog is sniffing the baby, I want you to do that jolly routine.

That jolly routine is a sing songy kind of voice. Don't hold your breath when the dog is smelling your baby because that will make the dog think you're nervous and it can be reactive. So you're going to do this. Here comes your dog over to your little daughter Isabel, "Oh, hi. What a good girl. Oh, you're such a good girl. You are such ... Oh, isn't she nice?" And you're just singy songy kind of tone with your dog and sweet like it like you're talking to your baby, but you're also talking to your dog. And all of a sudden, your dog's going to start to realize this is a good thing. Little sniff, sniff, sniff, and then have the dog walk away. And then after a little bit of time, maybe your partner sits down with your dog, have the dog come over to the baby again, sniff, sniff, sniff.

And I would do this a few times over the next day or so. And once you start to see that the dog is not really intrigued or intense on the baby, but starting to be more relaxed, you can sort of give it a little bit more space. Gradually extend the amount of time that the dog is with the baby. You can't just let the dog be with the baby unless you are absolutely sure that your dog is great around babies. So many of us don't know that. All right?

And then the other thing is, is that when your baby is sleeping, you want to make sure it goes into the crib or into the bedroom and the dog's not allowed in there. It is also very important you never ever, ever, ever leave your dog and your baby unsupervised in the same room or where your dog can get to the baby when unsupervised. Bad things can happen in an instant. You need to make sure that you never leave your dog alone with your baby. Okay? So if you see some intensesness or inappropriate behaviors, one of the things I do is that if a dog starts getting a little bit like sleeping next to the baby, a little bit intense, I actually will actually shove that dog away from the baby, teaching the dog that that baby is mine.

So if the dog starts going up to your baby and he does a sniff, that's fine. Sniff, sniff, sniff. It gets really intense sniffing. Take your butt, go up next to your baby and shoved the dog away with your legs a little bit forcefully, showing that dog that this is my baby and not yours. That's really important. So you're making the baby an extension of you. Okay? Again, folks, if you are in doubt of what your dog is doing, get yourself a canine behaviorist to interpret it.

Supervision is the new normal here. Supervising the baby at all times means that your dog would never be left alone with your baby for any amount of time, for any reason. So if you need to go and get something, shut the door, put your dog in a crate and do that. And another thing you guys, a crate or an X pen area is a great thing to have in your back pocket.

So if your dog is not used to being in an X pen or a crate, before the baby comes, I'm going to go back to that, but before the baby comes, maybe get them used to that crate again. All right? Get them reacquainted with the crate. And this is kind of going to be in area that maybe you got to mess with the baby or the baby you're going to put on the floor. Then I would have gates. Gates are also your new best friend. So gating areas off where the baby will be lying on the floor, use your baby gates to keep the dog out, not necessarily the baby from going in the other direction.

Okay, folks, we're going to answer some questions that you guys may have on bringing your baby home with your dog. Listen, there's one point that I want to talk about before we get into our questions and that is something I forgot. You know, you're going to be walking that baby in a stroller chances are, and it's really important that you teach the dog before the baby comes to walk behind you.

So what I recommend is, is getting a stroller before the baby comes home. It's so funny, I had a lady putting a doll in the stroller, walking the dog down before the baby came, and people thought that she was actually, "Oh my god, that poor woman, she's so excited about the baby, she's put a doll on the stroller and she's walking down the street. But what you do is you start walking the stroller around and you get your dog A. Used to the stroller. So the other thing that you can do is, is you want to teach that dog never to walk next to you, in front of the stroller, or next to the stroller. Because what happens if that dog sees a squirrel or a rabbit and you're holding on to the leash, you got the stroller, and your baby is in the stroller, and the dog runs in front and across and literally the leash and you, pull over the stroller. I saw it actually happen in front of me, folks.

I was walking on a quiet street and I had my dog and the woman was walking her dog with the newborn baby in a stroller, dog crossed in front to get to us, and knocked over the

stroller. Baby went tumbling onto the ground. Baby was okay, but boy was that a scary experience.

So one of the things you need to start doing first is getting the dog to walk behind you. And that may sound terribly hard to do, but one of the things you can try doing is using a clicker. I don't know if you guys seen this new product that I've created called I'm Gismo. Actually it was just on the Today Show a couple of weeks ago. You can go to caninemaster.com and check out the Gismo. The Gismo is an all-in-one leash walking device that makes leash walking easy, but also it comes with a bunch of connectables from a poop bag dispenser to a flashlight.

One of the things it has is the training kit, where you have your clicker in the front and your treat connectable and the in the back. And what you can do is you can use a clicker and treats to teach your dog to walk behind you. Check out caninemaster.com and check out the Gismo, and you can also check out some of our training videos, and you'll find that you really can teach your dog to walk behind you in a positive, motivational way. I highly, highly recommend you doing that.

Okay, so make sure you get your dog used to that stroller and walking behind you before that baby comes home, and you put that baby in the stroller and walk the dog at the same time. And one more thing, never tie the dog leash to the stroller. Bad idea. Very, very dangerous.

All right, Jaimee, what questions do we have today?

Jaimee: This question is from Amy from Canada, "Chris, we love your podcast. I'm expecting in June and I am so nervous that my dog will get jealous and she's been my only baby for the past eight years. How can I reassure her she is not being replaced?"

Chris: All right, so that actually comes back to my first point today, is that what you're going to do is you're going to find certain times during the day when you're going to pay attention to your dog. Maybe that is the six o'clock time, when your partner comes back from work, or maybe it's the time right before you go to work when you have a nanny coming to the house or your mom, your mom's coming to help out. You're going to have to come up with routines that you are going to establish well before the baby comes home and you're going to pay a lot of attention to your dog during those times. And then when those times are not happening, you're going to start to ignore your dog.

By doing this before the baby comes home, your dog will not see any change in that routine. And by doing that, your dog's going to know, hey, the baby has nothing to do with this routine. This routine was started months ago before the baby even got here. And then you should have no jealousy and the dog should feel absolutely safe at home.

Jaimee: Okay. Matt from Texas, "Hi Chris, my wife is expecting this summer and we have been considering getting a puppy now so that they can grow up together. Would you recommend getting the puppy before the baby comes or waiting until after?"

Chris: Well, I would tell you, getting a brand new puppy and a new baby around the same time is a bad idea because it's like having two babies in the house at the same time and both very demanding. It's like you're getting twins, but they're not on the same schedules. I think actually having twins is going to be easier than having a puppy and a baby.

So what I would recommend doing is, because you don't have a dog now, what I would recommend doing is get settled with your new baby. After a year or two or three or maybe wait even longer, maybe you wait until your kids are five or six or seven, then get yourself a puppy. But make sure that everybody's settled in their new life with a baby and then when everybody is not stressed out and things are going well and you're not figuring out how to breastfeed and all that strenuous things that happen, then maybe find your time to get a puppy. And get the right puppy for you guys. Maybe you're not able to be as active as it used to be. Maybe you don't do as much mountain climbing as you used to. So you might be picking a new different type of dog than what you would have normally have picked when you were single and didn't have a baby.

Jaimee: Lisa from California, "Hi Chris, we have two dogs and are expecting our first child this fall. We are so excited, but want to make sure we are prepared for the changes. How will we know if our dogs are sad or distressed by the new baby?"

Chris: So let's face it, many times, when you bring home a new baby, unless you've done the exercise that I'm talking about, such as setting up routines well in advance, getting the dogs off of elevated areas, making sure that you've established certain rooms in your house as off limits, your dog maybe a little mopey. Because all of a sudden it's not about them anymore, it's about this baby.

So again, if your dog is sad, you're going to see them, they're going to be a little bit mopey. And if they're distressed, they're going to whine a lot, they're going to pace a lot. And if you start to see that your dogs are getting anxious, again, setting up these routines before the baby comes home is the best thing you can do.

However, if the baby's coming next week and you didn't do this, what I would do is I would get a dog walker to start coming in, in the middle of the day to help you or getting a babysitter to come help take care of the baby and you go out to have special times with your dog. Giving the dog a lot of exercise during this time so they're exhausted is a good thing. And another thing that I see a lot of times happening with my own facility, my own facility at Dog Gone Smart in Norwalk, is that we take dogs, that the dogs come for doggie daycare and the new mothers use doggie daycare as a great way of keeping the dogs occupied, especially in the first few months. So that's a really good way of doing it.

But you will see that sometimes your dogs will be sad or distressed. And I think if you can sort of tune in with your dogs and find new routines and have the dogs look forward to those, you'll see that it sort of quickly subsides.

Jaimee: Anthony from Florida, "Hi Chris, my wife is expecting next month. We have a wonderful rescue hound mix who we adore, our main concern is safety. What is the most important thing we should be aware of in keeping our baby safe around our dog?"

Chris: Well, couple of things, I mentioned it before, keep your dog off of elevated areas. Make sure that the dog is not doing a lot of licking of the baby. If your dog is one that licks, licks, licks, you don't want ... First of all, it's unsanitary, believe it or not. My grandmother used to say that dogs have the cleanest mouths in the world, but in actuality, dogs have a lot of bacteria. So you don't want the dog licking your baby's face. Shove the dog away like a linebacker, using your legs and push them away. Not in a mean way, but just get them away. I would make sure that your baby is never unsupervised with the dog. I would make sure that my dog doesn't stand elevated above my baby. And if I see any type of anxiousness or growling or barking or upsetness with the dog, with the baby, I'd get myself very quickly to a canine behaviorist, and then keep the dog separated from the baby until you can get the dog evaluated in the right way.

Jaimee: If you don't mind, I have a friend who's expecting and she was wondering what is the best way to include the dog in some of the daily routines such as nursing, feeding times, and diaper changing. Is there a way to include the dog in those experiences to share?

Chris: Well, I think taking the dog on a walk, but you got to be careful, when you're feeding the baby, a lot of times dogs can stand around the high chair and hang out. I tend to see that that can be a dangerous situation.

Jaimee: So should she put the dog in her spot?

Chris: Yeah, that's where I would use a crate or have the dog go to its spot, lie in its bed during feeding time. When changing the baby, you usually do that on an elevated surface or on the ... If you do it on the floor ... I'll tell you, I've changed my baby and all situations, my kids. But I always made sure my dogs were away.

When the baby's on its back, I made sure that my dog is away. I really think that when you're having time with your baby and you're preoccupied putting a diaper on, getting wipes, and you're going back and forth, you're not watching the dog. So I think it's best that when feeding time comes, when it's time for changing the baby, that those are times that the dog should be separated and not around the baby.

All right, well that's it for today and I really hope you found our show to be really interesting. I'd love to have you give me your comments and also to join the conversation. Make sure to visit caninemaster.com, where you can tell me all your feelings. You can ask me questions, you can ask me about your newborn baby. You can also visit our Canine Master Store, where you could get all of the Nanotechnology Dog Beds and you can get the Sleeper Cushions, and the Ninja Beds, and the Shammies, and the Dirty Dog Doormats, all of our products, including the new I'm Gismo Dog Walking Device. Also, send me your videos and your photos so I can see what's going on with your dog and help you to solve the problems with your dog.

Goodbye for now and see you next time on Canine Master Radio, where I will help you master the relationship with your dog.