

# Introducing your new baby to your cat...



A new baby in your home is reason for great joy and excitement. It can also be an exciting time for your cat as well...

Here are some guidelines to provide a smooth transition for your cat as you introduce the newest member of your family. The Human Society of Atlantic County recommends that you never leave any cat, even your own, unsupervised in the presence of any infant or child.

## Some words about Toxoplasmosis...

- Outdoor cats can become infected with the toxoplasmosis parasite by eating infected small mammals or birds. This is another excellent reason why your cat should not roam outdoors.
- The toxoplasmosis cysts are shed in the feces of infected animals. Since stray or outdoor cats often use gardens as a litter box, you should make sure to wear gloves when gardening. Wash home grown fruits and vegetables very well. Avoid rubbing your eyes until your hands have been completely washed and thoroughly sanitized.
- Do not feed your cat raw or undercooked meat.
- The fecal matter should be scooped from the litter box twice a day. Be sure to wear gloves when doing this or better yet have someone do it for you.

## Before the baby comes...

- Get your pet used to a regular, realistic schedule that will be kept when the new baby is present. Start the feeding and playtime schedules that your cat will experience when once the baby arrives.

- Schedule several short periods of time when you will attend only to your pet. Make this time part of your daily routine. This will become quality time for your pet to interact with you. Use this time to pet, play with, massage, groom and talk to your cat. You may find that this time with your pet will relax you as well...
- Make sure you cats claws are trimmed and kept short at all times. Learn how to trim claws now and do it often.
- Set up the baby's sleeping and diaper area as soon as possible. Start using baby lotion, baby powder, diaper cream, and other baby objects now. Let your cat explore these things by sniffing, nosing or pawing them. Do not let your cat put their mouth on or drag away any of these objects. Then, several weeks before the baby arrives, make the surfaces unwelcome by placing double sided adhesives. Cats tend to avoid sticky surfaces, and by the time the baby arrives your cat will be in the habit of avoiding the areas you have designated them to.

### When the baby is born...

- Have someone bring home some articles of clothing that the baby has used. Your cat will learn the new clothing smells as part of the routine and that there is an infant involved.
- If someone other than a familiar family member or friend will be caring for your cat during your hospital stay with the new baby, arrange for the new caregiver to start his or her duties before the baby is born. Ideally, your cat should stay at home and not go to someone else's house. But if that is not possible, arrange for the cat to make trips to its temporary home before the baby comes. This will help to reduce your cat's stress levels with gradual changes.

### When the baby comes home...

- When you come home with the baby, you will need help. Someone should hold the baby while you go in and greet your cat. You have been missed, and you should be able to greet your pet and pay attention to them without having to tell them to go away, or having them inadvertently jumping on you while you are carrying the baby.
- You should introduce your new baby to your cat once the initial excitement of you coming home has subsided.

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