



WINN FELINE FOUNDATION

For the Health and Well-being of All Cats

637 Wyckoff Ave., Suite 336, Wyckoff, NJ 07481 • www.winnfelinefoundation.org
Toll Free 888-9MEOWIN (888-963-6946) • Local Phone 201-275-0624 • Fax 877-933-0939

Your Cat and Your New Baby

Patricia Joy Shea, DVM

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You can help your cat(s) get ready for a new addition to your family with some simple steps. The earlier you can begin to prepare the cat(s), the better, but you can probably still get the cat(s) comfortable with the presence of a newborn and the attention you will be giving your baby with just a few weeks of lead time.

Some behaviorists recommend replacing the door to the nursery with a screen door, so the cat can see what is going on and be a part of it without actually coming into the room. A screen door allows air and sound to circulate, but keeps the cat from entering the room.

If you currently share your bed with the cat(s) and want to discontinue this so the baby can share your bed, now is the time to start getting the cat(s) used to alternative sleeping arrangements. Offer comfortable "kitty cup" type beds, maybe lined with a "slumber pet" type cushion that reflects the cat's own body heat back to them, and get the cat used to spending more and more time in their own bed. Reward them with treats and/or petting when they use their own bed.

Gradual change is always best.

It is an "old wives' tale" (or "urban legend") that cats will smother babies or suck their breath; this is absolutely not true. But cats may be attracted to the warmth and coziness of the crib or bassinet, and infants are not strong enough to keep their rib cages expanding and contracting or to roll away if the cat lies on them, so when the baby is not supervised, a cat net should be placed over the crib, unless you have a screen door on the nursery entrance.

If you belong to a parents' group with members that have newborns or have friends with a newborn or slightly older baby, invite them to visit and let the cat(s) hear and see the baby. Feed the cat treats he or she likes and give the cat lots of attention while he or she is experiencing the sounds and sight of the baby.

You can order a CD of baby sounds from Amazon.com--"Baby sounds for pets"; play it frequently. Buy an infant-size baby doll from a thrift store and wrap it in a receiving blanket; play the CD and let the entire family sit together with the cat while you rock the doll and talk to the doll "baby" and the cat, again giving the cat treats and lots of attention. This will give the cat the idea that when he or she hears these sounds and you are spending time with the "baby", it's a good, happy time, and good things happen.

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The Winn Feline Foundation is a non-profit organization [501(c)(3)] established by The Cat Fancier's Association.
Member Combined Federal Campaign #10321



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Feliway plug-in diffusers (available at CatCare) disseminate a scent that only cats can smell; it is a synthetic version of the natural chemical (a pheromone) that cats put out through their cheek glands and it calms almost all cats. The cat(s) will likely sense increased and changed activity in the home before the baby's birth, and the Feliway diffuser(s) may help the cat(s) feel that although there are changed energies and activities in the home, everything is still OK.

If there is an opportunity, bring one of the baby's blankets home prior to the baby's arrival in the home, so the cat(s) can experience the baby's scent and enjoy some treats while they are doing so.

For more information:

There are a number of websites that offer additional information; you can access these easily through a major search engine like Google:

1. Indoor Pet Initiative--a project of The Ohio State University College of Veterinary Medicine. Once you find this site, click on "For Pet Owners: Cats", then "Feline Life Stressors", then "Comings and Goings", then on "Introducing Your New Baby."
2. Pet360.com--search this site using "babies and cats"; additional information regarding how to help toddlers and older children handle and play gently with cats is available on this site also.
3. www.CatChannel.com--search this site using "babies and cats"

Just as you are preparing for your baby's birth, your cat needs to prepare too. Establishing a solid, calm, and loving relationship between your cat(s) and your new family member is a rewarding, "win-win" endeavor for both the cat(s) and your family, and will create a lifetime of happy memories for you and your child.

Please Note: The Winn Feline Foundation provides the feline health information on this site as a service to the public. Diagnosis and treatment of specific conditions should always be in consultation with one's own veterinarian. The Winn Feline Foundation disclaims all warranties and liability related to the veterinary information provided on this site.

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