



Does my dog know I am pregnant?

Dogs are connected to their people and their daily routines. They know when the people wake up, when and where they do certain chores, and whether it is a workday or the weekend. How? It's quite simple: dogs are creatures of habit and they take into account the habits of those around them, too. Dogs have a keen sense of sight and smell that helps them to monitor life around them – including the changes that come with pregnancy.

Pregnancy creates hormonal changes that affect your emotions, your routines, and even your scent. Some reported changes from Moms-to-be are:

- Over clinginess
- Protectiveness
- Elimination related issues
- Aloofness
- Excessive attention seeking
- Anxiety (pacing, licking etc)

If you notice unwanted changes in your dogs' behavior here are some things to consider.

1. What exactly has changed? Has the dog's behavior changed, or have the family's activity level and routines been disturbed? Is your dog reacting to changes in your behavior?
2. How is this behavior change being reinforced? Dogs do what works for them. Why and how is this behavior working for your dog?
3. When did this change begin? Is the behavior new, or have you ever seen it before? If so, when?
4. Could there be any medical reason for the change in your dog's behavior? Allergies, aches and pains, and illness make us cranky, and they affect our dogs in a similar way. Could this have a bearing on your dog's behavior?

Each pregnancy is unique – from one woman to another or from your first pregnancy to the next. And although most pregnancies bring with them a great amount of joy, even "normal" pregnancies can be stressful. Family pets often react to this stress, and if the family is dealing with a difficult pregnancy, that stress is multiplied – for everyone.

Consistent leadership and training help to keep companion animals grounded throughout this wonderful and stressful time. You have a great deal to learn and do prior to the arrival of the baby; the good news is Dogs&Storks offers a great deal of support and information to help you prepare your dog for life with kids.

Visit us at www.dogsandstorks.com

IMPORTANT: If you notice a change in your dog's behavior that concerns you, contact your vet or a dog behavior consultant in your area right away.