

# Potbellied Pigs and Dogs

## (Excerpts from Archived Articles)



Pigs and dogs can get along, but for the pigs sake they should **NEVER** be left alone together. They should always be supervised. Now why do we say this?

Dogs are predators by nature and pigs are prey. If something upsets the dog, and it is the pig, it is natural for the dog to attack. And sometimes it is the pig that starts things, but the dog will finish it.

They should **NEVER** be fed close to each other. If you are not going to be around, make sure you have your dog and pig separated. We know of one pig who almost

had his face ripped off by a dog. This happened over food. So, if you are going to have a pig(s) and a dog(s), just know that you **MUST** supervise them constantly. **NEVER LEAVE THEM ALONE TOGETHER!**

While some dogs do well when pigs are young, there comes a time when the dog has something the pig wants (like food) and pig will not back off like another dog. Then there is a problem.

While some dogs tolerate the pig, they also get their blood in an uproar when or if that piglet starts screaming. Even the best natured dog can lose it with a pig. Not that the pig doesn't ask for it because they won't back off, but that's of no help to the pig when the dog decides he has had enough.

Almost every week there are E-Mails of a dog somewhere who has killed or hurt a pig. Many times it is a dog and pig that have lived together for years. But, something happens and the pig pays the price.

Even the most well-behaved dog can blow his cool and the pig **WILL** pay the price. Then there are dogs that will run a fence with the pigs on the other side and literally run the piglets to death. That pig scream is an open invitation to a dog. There are people that have lucked out, but the luck may not be everyone's and again it's not worth the risk. Anytime you put two species together with one being predator and one being prey you can have problems.

Potbellies normally adjust quite well to joining a home with other pets. Being herd animals they tend to adopt the other animals in the household as part of their herd. Cats are rarely affected by the introduction of a pet pig. But dogs can be a different matter. Some dogs, not all, have a great sense of the "hunt". They see it as their natural job. It is best to **NEVER** leave a pet pig alone with the family dog until there is no question that the dog and the pig are friends. It should be remembered that pigs and dogs speak different languages and use different methods to express what they are thinking. The piglet may misinterpret the good intentions of the dog and the dog may frighten the piglet by just trying to play with it.

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Sometimes the pet dog decides that it is his "job" to hunt down and attack the pig. The new pig owner needs to be prepared to ward off the dog's attack, should one occur. Potbellied pigs have no defense against dog attack. They are not as agile as dogs and cannot stand up on their hind legs to fight back like the dog. Because it is a prey animal, the pet pig does not fight back. Running is the pig's only defense in this situation. A running pig can cause the dog to flip into his perceived role as a hunter. The dog will chase the pig. Should this occur, it is imperative to stop the dog immediately and to train the pet dog not to chase the pig. Not all dogs respond in this manner. Certainly a non-aggressive pet dog can be trained to not chase or hurt the piglet. Occasionally the hunting instinct in the dog is just too great and the pig and the dog are forced to lead separate lives. This all depends on the nature of the dog and the training by the pet owner. On the other hand incidents of the pig harming the dog is very rare. It is suggested that the safest combination is when the dog's nature is not predatory or aggressive.

In all situations, the unfamiliar dog is the one to be concerned about. The pet pig should be provided a secure fenced area that will protect it from the dangers of a stray dog. When you are out in public or at someone else's home, where you are not sure how the dog will act, it is wise to have a good pig harness and lead on the pig. At the first sign of aggressive behavior or too rough "playing" by the dog, the pet pig needs to be removed from the dog's presence. The harness and lead will help the pet owner do this. An aggressive situation can turn badly very quickly, so it is better to be overly cautious than to ignore the possibility of a hurt or killed potbellied pig; many pigs have been injured or even killed by dogs. Some of our members have rescued pigs with ears & tails torn off, deep gashes, some pigs are blind or deaf due to dog attacks. Please, even if your pig(s) and dog(s) seem to be getting along great, you never know when the dog will turn on the pig. Be advised, we hear stories all the time of pigs and dogs who have "always" gotten along ... until one day....



*Just a few examples of what can happen when pigs are mauled by dogs*

