



## Found an opossum?

*The advice on this website is meant to be information that you can use at your own discretion. Please call us if you still have questions or have any other concerns. [View the full disclaimer.](#)*

**If you feed the opossum, only give it pedialyte.**

Is it injured, sick or a baby?

*If the opossum does not appear to be sick or injured, and is longer than 7 inches from nose to rump, not including tail – leave it be. It's a juvenile on their own for the first time. While they may appear small and helpless, they are best left alone. If it appears to be sick or injured, or is shorter than 7 inches from nose to rump, start with step one:*

### **1. Contain the Animal**

Handling the opossum as little as possible, gently place it on a soft towel or t-shirt and place it into a container with a lid that allows air in and out. If it is a baby, provide a source of warmth:

- Fill a water bottle with warm water, cover it with a sock and place it near the baby (propped so that it doesn't roll onto the baby). Refill with warm water every few hours.
- Place a hot wet washcloth in a ziploc bag and place it under a tshirt under the baby. Just make sure it's not

too hot or you can easily burn a baby.

**2. Place the container in a warm, dark, quiet place.**

**3. Contact Us**

Is it trapped in a dumpster or hole?

Take a sheet or other long piece of fabric and secure it to the top of the container. Lower the free end into the container so that the opossum can climb up it to get out. You can also use a long board or ladder.

Is it a dead mom with babies in the pouch?

It can sometimes be tricky to remove small opossums from the mother's pouch, particularly if she's been deceased for a while. If you do not feel confident in doing so, you can bring us the deceased mother with the babies still attached so we can remove them.

**1. Remove the Babies**

Remove the babies from the pouch by breaking the suction at the teat first rather than just pulling to remove them.

**2. Contain the Animal**

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**Opossum Facts**

*Adapted from the National Opossum Society.*



Opossums will hiss or growl and show their 50 sharp teeth when frightened; but, in reality, they are gentle and placid– they prefer to avoid all confrontations and wish to be left alone. They are usually slow moving; when frightened and unable to flee, they may fall into an involuntary shock-like state, “playing ‘possum”.

### **Description**

The Virginia Opossum is North America’s only marsupial mammal

(female has a pouch). The female carries and nurses her young in her marsupium until they are about 2 to 3 months old; then they are carried on her back another 1 to 2 months whenever they are away from the den.

Opossums are approximately the size of a cat. They have grey to black fur; black eyes; pink nose, feet and tail; black ears; and a pointed nose.

One of the shortest lived mammals for its size, an opossum lives approximately 2 to 4 years. They are killed by many predators: humans (and cars), dogs, cats, owls, and larger wildlife.

### **Diet**

Opossums are omnivorous: they eat insects, snails, rodents, berries, over-ripe fruit, grasses, leaves, and carrion; occasionally they also eat snakes, ground eggs, corn or other vegetables.

### **Habitat**

These solitary and nocturnal animals are able to live wherever water, food, and shelter exist. At home in trees; an opossum uses its prehensile tail to help stabilize position when climbing— it does not, however, hang by its tail.