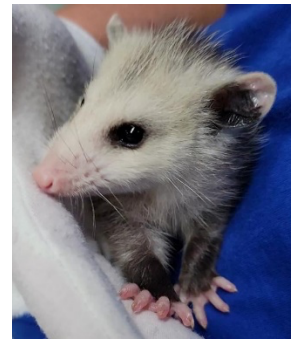




## Found an Orphaned or Injured Baby Opossum?



### Virginia Opossums

- Breeding occurs once or twice a year anytime between late winter and summer. After a short gestation period of around 13 days, the young are born as tiny little embryos, barely larger than a bee.
- Typical of marsupials, the females have a fur-lined pouch on their abdomen. The newborns must crawl up to their mom's pouch on their own. There, they attach to mom's nipples and spend about 2 months nursing her milk. You may not see the babies at all if mom is out walking around at this stage.
- When babies get to be about 3-4 inches long (the size of a mouse), they leave the pouch and start riding around on their mom's back. Unfortunately, they may fall off without the mother noticing and get left behind!
- This doesn't mean opossum moms are bad; it's natural behavior for opossums to be wanderers. They move from place to place and usually don't look back.
- At around 3-4 months of age, the young will leave the mom to hunt for food on their own and establish their own territories.
- If you find a baby/young opossum by itself, first OBSERVE. Look around for the mom before deciding it is orphaned. If you don't see the mom, then determine the size of the opossum. The general rule is if the baby/young opossum is over 7 inches long (not including the tail), they're old enough to be on their own. If they're less than seven inches long (not including the tail), they are orphaned and cannot be left on their own.

### When to call for help:

- If the mom is no where to be found and the baby/babies are less than 7 inches (not including the tail)
- If the baby is sick, injured or cold
- Is the mom is sick or injured, even if the babies are ok, she and her babies will need a wildlife rehabilitator



Always wear  
gloves when  
handling wildlife!

