



	FEEDING YOUR “BABY” AT ANY AGE	
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There is one basic guideline you need to keep in mind when selecting your “baby’s” food. Keep it NATURAL, keep it SPECIES APPROPRIATE. You need to make sure your skunk is getting a well rounded diet that includes enough calcium, taurine, vitamins, minerals, protein and good sources of fat. Some suggested veggies to start with are bell peppers (all colors), cubanara peppers, cucumbers, okra, green beans, lima beans, radishes, acorn squash, butternut squash, yellow squash (in season), zucchini, celery, cabbage (green & purple), kale, bok choy, romaine lettuce stalks, rutabaga, turnips, cauliflower and broccoli. You can also grow your own sprouts to feed.

Notice there is no mention of corn, peas, carrots, tomatoes, sweet potatoes or fruit. These are not recommended to give to babies (under 1 year old) until you are sure you don’t have a seizure baby. High sugar veggies and fruits can trigger a seizure for them. You must remember what works for one skunk may not work for another. You may have to try different ideas to get one that works for you. We have had success making a veggie slaw as discussed below.

PROTEIN - 1 SERVING PER DAY

Nuts - 3/4 teaspoon raw, chopped or salt-free	Cottage Cheese - 1/2 teaspoon	Shredded Cheese - 1 teaspoon	Egg - whole egg boiled or whole raw egg; can also use quail eggs	Insects - 6-8 Mealworms; 2-4 Superworms or 4-6 Crickets
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FAT - CHOOSE 1 PER DAY, EXCEPT CHICKEN NECK

Raw Chicken Neck - 1 neck twice weekly	Nuts - 3/4 teaspoon raw, chopped or salt-free	Flax Seed Oil - 1/4 teaspoon	Linatone Plus - 1/4 teaspoon	Extra Virgin Olive Oil - 1/4 teaspoon
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CALCIUM - 1 SERVING PER DAY EXCEPT CHICKEN NECK

Yogurt - Full Fat - 1/2 teaspoon	Cottage Cheese - Full Fat - 1/2 teaspoon	Shredded Cheese - 1 teaspoon	Egg Shells - 1/4 teaspoon -	Raw Chicken Neck - 1 neck twice a week
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NOTE: Full Fat equals a serving of Vitamin A

VEGETABLES/SPROUTS - (SEE NOTES BELOW FOR AMOUNT BY AGE) - CHOOSE A VARIETY

All Bell Peppers	Cucumbers	Okra	Green Beans	Rutabaga**
Turnips	Radishes	All Squashes	Celery	Cabbage/Green or Red
Kale	Bok Choy	Romaine Lettuce	Cauliflower	Broccoli
Parsley	Cilantro	Carrots**	Sugar Snap Peas**	Sprouts
Brussell Sprouts	Zucchini	Lima Beans	Tomatoes**	Sweet Potatoes**

**High sugar content vegetables not recommended for skunks under 1 year old.

Vegetables – Skunks 1 to 5 months old should be fed 1 cup of vegetables split between 4 meals. No fruits or high sugar vegetables until “seizure season” is over i.e. 1 year old. At 6 months to 11 months, feed ¾ cup of vegetables/sprouts per day, split between 3 meals. From 1 year on ¼ cup of vegetable/sprouts, split between 2 meals – the decrease is to compensate for the snacks your skunks may get daily and keep your skunk from getting overweight. Healthy treats such as strips of bell peppers, sugar snap peas, etc. should be hidden around the house for fun hunting that keeps them active. NOTE: If you notice at any time that your skunk is gaining too much weight reassess his/her diet. If he/she is still getting more than ¼ cup of vegetables a day because they are under 1 year old, you can either decrease the amount of vegetables or the frequency of the feedings. If your skunk is over 1 year old, getting ¼ cup of veggies a day total and still gaining weight then you need to review what you are giving him/her for skunks, how much (especially the amount and type of snacks) and how often and decrease these.

NOTE: AN OVERWEIGHT SKUNK IS AT RISK FOR ALL KINDS OF HEALTH ISSUES ESPECIALLY HEART DISEASE, BACK PROBLEMS OR LAMENESS IN THEIR BACK LEGS FROM CARRYING TOO MUCH WEIGHT. THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS A “BIG BONED SKUNK”. THE MAJORITY OF ADULT SKUNKS ON AVERAGE SHOULD WEIGH BETWEEN 4 TO 8 POUNDS. INVEST IN A BABY SCALE AND MONITOR YOUR SKUNKS WEIGHT WEEKLY, KEEP A CHART. IF YOU DON’T HAVE A BABY SCALE FEEL THEIR BACK JUST ABOVE THE BACK LEGS WITH YOUR THUMB AND INDEX FINGER. IF YOU CAN’T FEEL AN INDENTATION LIKE A WAIST THEN YOUR SKUNK NEEDS TO LOSE WEIGHT. A FAT SKUNK IS NO LAUGHING MATTER AND CAN INCUR VERY COSTLY VET BILLS!

Veggie Slaw – We use a food processor to make a veggie “slaw” that is the consistency of finely chopped cole slaw. We have found that this keeps the fussy eaters from only eating the veggies they want. The base mixture is made with green cabbage, red cabbage (about ¼ the amount of green cabbage), broccoli, cauliflower and then we alternately add some radishes, a carrot (when the skunk is older), yellow squash or green zucchini. For the yellow squash or green zucchini, we process them separately and drain them on a paper towel to get rid of excess moisture. The excess moisture tends to make the veggie slaw go bad faster. Once the slaw is mixed together we divide it into plastic containers that hold enough for 3 to 4 days for all our skunks. We have found that this also helps keep the mix fresher longer since the whole batch is not constantly exposed to air. For our adult skunks we feed 1/8 cup of the slaw twice daily. In the morning we put a sprinkle of the freeze dried meal worms on top with a few drops of olive oil. In the evening we feed 1/8 copy of the slaw with a sprinkle of finely shredded cheese on top and a few drops of olive oil.

Calcium – it has been suggested that skunks need 250 mg of calcium a day. In actuality 60 to 90 mg is a closer estimate. The important thing to remember about calcium is that it needs magnesium, phosphorus and Vitamin D3 to absorb properly. Too much calcium or calcium not given properly can lead to problems such as bone calcification, bone spurs & kidney stones. It can also lead to Metabolic Bone Disease which seem to be becoming quite prevalent in the domestic skunk community. You have a choice to make on how you will get enough calcium into your baby. You can go the more natural route by using crushed egg shell and dairy products to enhance the calcium in the veggies/sprouts you feed. You can get a good children’s calcium supplement and cut it in half. The up side of this is that it’s easy. The down side is that it is not a natural form and no one knows how much it actually being absorbed by the body. Always remember, you can give too much of certain vitamins and minerals but do not give a calcium product meant for reptiles to a skunk.

Taurine – It is also suggested that skunks get a minimum of 350 mg of taurine a day. Taurine is a water soluble amino acid and the excess is flushed out of the system. The only natural source of taurine is organ meat & muscles or canned mackerel. The problem is trying to go natural with taurine is that in order to preserve the taurine, the meat source must be fed raw. Heat destroys taurine so cooking the meat makes it useless as a good taurine source. Hopefully for the good of your skunk, you have no problem feeding raw meat, but certain precautions have to be taken to ensure the safety of the meat if feeding raw. If using the canned mackerel try to get one packed in water. If it’s back in brine rinse several times to get rid of as much salt as you can. There is also a powdered taurine you can get in the pet stores or on-line.

Protein – There are a few different ways you can get protein into your skunk. Our favorite is insects – meal worms, super worms, crickets, beetles – and pinkies. If you can’t deal with live insects, Rural King, Tractor Supply, Amazon, etc. now sell a freeze dried meal worm and crickets for chickens which are safe to give your skunk. If you don’t want to deal with insects at all, other forms of protein are nuts, cooked turkey, cooked chicken, eggs, low fat cheese, canned mackerel, and peanut butter in small amounts. While skunks need some protein, animal proteins aren’t the best choice for skunks and sometimes lead to pancreatic and liver problems if given too much. Using Fresh Pet, found in the refrigerator section of most stores, is acceptable.

Vitamins – No one knows just how much of each vitamin is recommended for domestic skunks, we just know they need them. Depending on the veggies or sprouts that you feed, your skunk may be getting enough vitamins in the diet already, but unless you do the research on each vitamin, you won’t know. This is why some people feel safer giving a multi-vitamin. Be careful on the fat soluble vitamins: A, D, E, & K. Excess does not flush out of the system and over dosing is possible, leading to all sorts of health problems.

Fatty fish is a source of Vitamin D. Food sources of Vitamin E include vegetable oils, nuts, dark green leafy vegetables, organ meats, seafood, eggs, and avocados (beware of the pit as it is poisonous). Sources of Vitamin K include beef liver, cheese, cabbage, turnip greens and other dark green leafy vegetables. If your baby is getting a well rounded diet, he/she is already getting these fat soluble vitamins from his food.

Minerals – Trace minerals can be a bit tricky to know if they are getting enough. Willard Water (dark), kelp, Sea Salt (not regular table salt!!!) are good sources of trace minerals. You can also buy bottled trace minerals at most vitamin stores.

If you have any questions, you can contact the rescue at floridaskunkrescue@verizon.net, 727-457-0473.