

## **Pam Sprague's Squirrel Instructions**

This is an automatic reply in response to your request for help with an injured or orphaned squirrel or other animal that you have found. While the following instructions may say 'squirrel', they really apply to any injured or orphaned animal you have found. The Squirrel Connections can help you locate a rehabber for any wildlife that you find. Be sure to include what type of animal you have when you get in touch with them. Please do not hit reply to respond to this email as it will only get you another copy of this same email as this is being sent out automatically. If you included any information in the email sent to this address, it has not been read as stated on the web site as this is an auto-responder for Emergency Care Information only.

If you have found an injured adult use **EXTREME CAUTION** as their bites can cause severe damage. Contact your local wildlife agency to locate a rehabber immediately for assistance or you can visit the web page: <http://www.squirrel-rehab.org/connections/index.html>

If you fill out the form for one of the Squirrel Connections and do not hear back from them within 24 hours, please email me at [pam@squirrel-rehab.org](mailto:pam@squirrel-rehab.org) and let me know your city, county, state and area code and I will try to locate someone within your city or calling area.

If your state is not listed on the page in the previous paragraph, **PLEASE** look at the bottom of the page as there is a link there to a site that has a listing of wildlife rehabilitators from every state and Canada and other countries also. The URL to the site is: <http://www.tc.umn.edu/~devo0028/contact.htm> While there may not be any listed for your city, you can email the ones closest to you and ask them to help you locate someone. They should have information about the licensed rehabilitators in their state.

If you still cannot find anyone, you can e-mail me at [pam@squirrel-rehab.org](mailto:pam@squirrel-rehab.org) and let me know your city, state and area code and I will try to locate someone for you.

If you have written to me to locate a rehabber for you, separate from this, here are some emergency care instructions that you can use until I get back to you.

If the nest has been blown down, please see the section at the bottom of this email about a fallen nest to see how to try and get the mom to take the babies back. You will need the information in the next few paragraphs before trying to get them back to their mom, so read that part first before going to that section.

**WARNING: THE CARE INFORMATION BELOW IS ONLY INTENDED TO BE USED FOR LESS THAN 24 HOURS, ANY LONGER AND YOU ARE PUTTING THE SQUIRRELS LIFE AT RISK.**

### **GETTING THE BABY WARM**

Before trying to give the young squirrel anything to eat, you must first get him warm.

Make sure that you warm him slowly and make sure you monitor his warming so as not to overheat him. The normal temperature for a squirrel is 99 degrees, which is close to that of our own temperature of 98.6 degrees.

Place the squirrel in a box or plastic container with a clean cloth in the bottom of the box (preferably a cloth baby diaper or baby receiving blanket, NO TOWELS) and place a light cover over the squirrel. The reason I say "no towels" is the squirrels will get their toenails hung in the loops and either rip out a toenail, break a toe, or break a foot trying to get loose.

I use the see thru Rubbermaid boxes to put my squirrels in. I cut out sections of the lid and place screen over the holes and use duct tape to tape the screen in place from the outside of the box. This allows the squirrels to get air and keeps them in the box. I use bigger boxes as the squirrels grow and need more room to roam around. Make sure that the boxes you use have a lid that locks on.

Put a heating pad under one half of the box with a towel folded twice between the box and the heating pad. If the squirrel is unable to move on his own, you will need to monitor the temperature of the squirrel very closely so he does not overheat. When he is warmed up, he should feel warm to your touch. A healthy, fully grown squirrel that has plenty of cover to snuggle under will not need the heating pad once he has reached his normal body temperature.

If you do not have a heating pad, you will need to take a jar with a tight fitting lid and fill it with hot water and then wrap the jar in a towel and place it in the box close to the baby. The problem with doing this is the water will have to be changed out very often as you do not want the water to become cold as it will chill the baby. You DO NOT want the baby to get cold.

DO NOT USE any other alternative sources of heat like a stove, only use the 2 methods listed above.

DO NOT leave the babies outside, you must bring them in the house and place their box in a room that is separate from the rest of the house where it is quiet. A bathroom usually works well as you can close the door to keep out any pets or children you may have in the house.

## CHECKING FOR EXTERNAL INJURIES

Check for external injuries, head injuries, broken bones, respiratory problems or signs of internal injuries. All of these problems need to be taken care of by a veterinarian IMMEDIATELY. Bites, scratches, and very shallow cuts should be flushed with a solution of 1 part hydrogen peroxide to 3 parts water and then covered with a triple antibacterial cream (I use Neosporin Plus). Apply 2 to 3 times a day until healed. (1% Betadine solution may be substituted for the hydrogen peroxide)

Unfortunately cat bites and any cat related injury are common in squirrels. Any animal that has been bitten by a cat (you may not see teeth marks) should be seen by a veterinarian and started on a course of antibiotics. The cat carries a bacteria called pasteurella in its saliva and that bacteria is deadly to a wild animal if antibiotics are not administered within the first 24 hours.

Not all vets are trained to treat wildlife, as they are not like cats and dogs, and this is why it is VERY important to get the squirrel you have to a rehabber. Rehabilitators have vets that have been trained to treat wildlife and know the proper medications and dosages that wildlife can receive. Also veterinarians are not allowed to treat wildlife unless it is brought in by a licensed rehabilitator as it is illegal to have wildlife in your possession without the proper permits which most vets do not have. As rehabilitators we can allow the veterinarian to work off of our permits to treat or give medicine to the animal.

### CHECKING FOR PARASITES

You also need to check to see if the squirrel has any external parasites. There are two main ones to look for: fleas and maggots.

Fleas are usually not a life threatening problem but they can lead to serious problems if they are not removed. If they are left untreated, they can lead to serious dehydration over a long period of time. They should be removed immediately to prevent them from multiplying and spreading.

If you just have one baby that has them, it is probably easier to pick them off by hand or to use a small flea comb. You can have a small container with water and put the fleas in that as you remove them.

If you happen to have any Adams Flea Powder (DO NOT use any other brand), you can sprinkle a small amount in your hands, rub your hands together and then rub your hands over the baby, being careful NOT to get it near their face. NEVER SPRINKLE THE POWDER DIRECTLY ON THE BABY, always put a small amount in your hands first and then gently rub them over the baby. Any fleas that move to the babies head can be picked off by hand.

Maggots must be addressed as soon as possible. A baby squirrel that has been laying on the ground does not have their mom to keep parasites removed and so you will have to perform this task. Maggots and maggot eggs have to be removed by hand. You should look in ALL body openings for the maggots. Most people will have Hydrogen Peroxide on hand and this should be mixed as follows: 1/4 part hydrogen peroxide and 3/4 parts water and use this mixture to flush out the wounds to remove the maggots and eggs.

Maggots are nothing more than fly larvae from the few specialized flies that eat only dead tissue, usually 3/8 inch to 3/4 inch in length and pale in color. It only takes a short

period of time before they make their way to the major organs.

If you do not wish to deal with these parasites yourself, you MUST get the babies to a rehabber ASAP as these parasites cannot go untreated.

#### HOW TO TELL IF THE SQUIRREL IS DEHYDRATED

To check to see if the squirrel is dehydrated, very carefully pinch the skin together between the shoulder blades. If the skin stays pinched and is very slow to fall back down, the squirrel is dehydrated.

#### HOW TO REHYDRATE AND WHAT NOT TO FEED

Most squirrels when you get them have already been without several feedings, so it is safe to assume that they are dehydrated and you can start them on a rehydrating solution, plain Pedialyte is what I use.

Make sure you warm the Pedialyte slightly and use a 1cc or 3cc syringe without the needle (DO NOT USE A PET NURSER OR BOTTLE as they will drink too fast and get it in their lungs which will result in pneumonia.) to give the Pedialyte to the baby. This MUST be refrigerated after opening and the whole bottle should be discarded after 72 hours.

Give 1cc, or any part of 1cc that they will take, every 30 minutes for the first two hours. After the first two hours, you can go to every 2 hours and give 1cc of Pedialyte at each feeding. If they do not take it all that is ok, but at least try to get them to take part of this amount every two hours. (NOTE: Yes the Pedialyte must be given every two and one-half hours, even if it is through the night but not for more than 12 hours as Pedialyte is NOT a substitute for the real formula that they need.)

This will keep the baby hydrated and you will not be feeding it anything that is bad for it. Make sure you keep the Pedialyte in the refrigerator and warm up just what you need to feed before every feeding. By feeding the Pedialyte you are doing for them what we would do to rehydrate them and you should note again that the Pedialyte is ONLY for rehydration and it does not take the place of food. The squirrel has to be rehydrated BEFORE they can be given any kind of other food by a licensed wildlife rehabilitator.

DO NOT FEED THEM MILK OR HUMAN INFANT FORMULA of any kind. Feeding can actually cause death by pulling fluids from the system of a severely dehydrated animal in order to process the food that you feed it. The baby must be rehydrated first before giving any food.

#### WASTE ELIMINATION

You will need to help the baby eliminate their waste. The easiest way is to take a kleenex and turn the baby over and wipe over the genital and anal area lightly with the

kleenex until they relieve themselves. Sometimes this can take up to 2 minutes, so be patient. You should have a box of kleenex on hand because sometimes they can go through several. You should do this about every 4 hours.

## LOCATE A REHABILITATOR

At this point you **MUST** locate a rehabber, by visiting the page <http://www.squirrel-rehab.org/connections/index.html>. If your state is NOT listed on that page, then contact me, [pam@squirrel-rehab.org](mailto:pam@squirrel-rehab.org), let me know what you have and I will try to help you locate one in your area. In order for me to help you, I must know the city and state that you live in. If you live in a small town, please give me some larger towns that are located close to you as the map I have does not show all cities and towns. Or you may visit this web site <http://wildliferehab.virtualave.net/contact.htm> for a listing a rehabbers across the United States and Canada.

When you get in touch with the rehabber, make sure that you tell them how you found the squirrel and what you have done with him/her so far. It is important that the rehabilitator know everything that you have given them to eat so that they will know what to do from that point forward.

## IF THE NEST HAS FALLEN DOWN

If you just find the baby on the ground and did not see or hear it fall or know which tree it came out of, chances are the mom is not going to come and get it. You should go ahead and follow the information above and locate a rehabber and do not try to get the mom to take it back.

It might be possible to reunite the babies with their mom if it is a matter of a nest falling out of the tree, depending on why it fell and IF she is still in the area. The mom usually has a backup nest to take their babies to if they are given the time.

I usually give them 2 hours to come back and get them. If the babies are cold, they will need to be warmed first. The instructions on how to warm the babies were given at the beginning of this email.

If there are cats or dogs or other predators around, it is a good idea to get a small berry basket or small cardboard box that you can attach to the side of the tree and put the babies in. I always put a small blanket in the box that does not have loops on it, a t-shirt would work or a baby receiving blanket, if it is not raining, and then place the baby squirrels in on top. If it is raining, try picking up some of the nesting material and placing it in the box and make sure that there are a few small holes in the bottom so the water will run thru. This is why a berry basket is usually good to use. Then walk away and keep watch from a distance to see if the mom comes back to get them.

While waiting to see if the mom will come back, now is the time to try to locate a rehabber in your area. You can let them know that you have gotten the babies warm

and are trying to let the mom come back and get them if she will.

If you cannot see the tree from inside the house, go back every 45 minutes to one hour to see if she has come and gotten them. If they have gotten cold, you will need to re-warm them and place them back in the box. If at the end of 2 hours, she has not come back, it is time to get back in touch with the rehabber and get the squirrels to them.

Thank you for taking the time to care about the little one that you have found.

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State and Federal Permits, IWRC, NWRA