



www.stripedbandits.com

## IT'S BABY SEASON!

*Can anybody  
take me home?*



It's once again that time of year. Yep, the babies are coming!

While this is an exciting time for expectant parents, it is also a frightening time for some that aren't sure they are ready for their new baby. It happens to all of us, even those that have been through it before. Rest assured, help is near.

To begin, here are a few items you may want to have on hand before the baby arrives.

Thermometer

Eye Dropper and syringes for giving meds

Karo syrup or pancake syrup - helps with seizures

Children's Benadryl Liquid Form

Smart Water or Pedialyte - replaces electrolytes and helps with dehydration

Laxatone - laxative, helps with rectal prolapse

Activated Charcoal - for accidental poisoning

Rubbing alcohol - sterilization of wounds

Cotton balls, Q Tips, gauze and bandages

Quick Stop - stops bleeding

KY Jelly, Vaseline - helps with rectal prolapse

Preparation H - helps with rectal prolapse

Bach's Rescue Remedy - reduces stress

Emergency phone numbers - You'll be surprised how hard it is to find a number you know by heart when there is an emergency.

Skunks don't like noise so make sure your baby has a quiet place to rest. You may need to confine baby to a single room in the beginning. Too much space can be overwhelming for a tiny baby. Once he learns his surroundings and becomes better with his potty habits, you can slowly start introducing him to new areas.

The most important choice you will make for your baby's long term health is his diet. You need to start your baby off right by feeding the best species appropriate diet possible. By feeding the proper diet, you will eliminate a lot of inflammatory diseases (the number one killer of our skunks).

At the end of this newsletter is a quick start chart to help you make wise decisions regarding your baby's diet.

By now you should have gotten down on your hands and knees looking for all the places a tiny baby can fit. If you haven't done so already, now is the time to skunk proof your home!

Vaccinations – Despite popular belief, skunks do not need feline vaccinations. Some feline vaccinations have been linked to cancer, so it's not wise to give them. The only vaccine your baby will need is the canine distemper. If you need to vaccinate your baby against rabies, realize that this will not protect your pet in case of a bite. It will only protect your pet from contracting rabies, but the authorities will still have it tested because there are no approved rabies vaccines for skunks. Please discuss your baby's vaccine requirements with your vet.

There is much more information that can not fit on this newsletter, so if you have any questions, please join us at <http://stripedbandits.proboards.com>.

## JUVENILE SEIZURES

These are some things that we tried and have worked for us and other skunk owners. This is not intended to replace proper veterinary care, however since most seizures occur at home, away from the vet, it is helpful to know what to do. Most seizures in skunk babies are from low blood sugar and a low protein diet; however, worms can cause seizures as can a bump on the head, a reaction to shots and meds, and a few other things. Have blood work done if your baby is having seizures. It may not show up if it is low sugar, but having the blood tested can rule out other things.

Seizures are scary for both babies and their parents. They seem to take on different forms such as stiffening of the body and just falling over, shaking, choking noises, foaming from the mouth, and lethargy - walking as if in a stupor or drunk. During and after the seizure the baby can be disoriented so hold and speak softly to him/her during this time. It is not unusual for a seizing skunk to lose control of their bladder and bowels. Seizures can last anywhere from a few seconds to a few minutes or more. Sometimes, just before a seizure they can seem disoriented. At the onset of a seizure swab the inside of the baby's mouth with a q-tip dipped in Karo syrup (or pancake syrup - Do NOT use honey). Do not use your finger as baby may bite. When the seizure is over, hold the baby if at all possible, wrapped in a blanket until he/she revives. Speak softly and soothingly to him/her. This can be just a few minutes to more than an hour. If you are not home when the seizure occurs, the skunk will usually come out of it on his/her own. When a baby comes out of a seizure they are very hungry. Feed them and let them eat until full. Above all, DO NOT PANIC! Some skunks can have only one or two seizures in their lifetime, while others can have multiple seizures in a single day. They can go for days or weeks between seizures.

### Some things to keep on hand

Take a baby food jar and wash it really well, punch holes in the top and fill with karo syrup. Put the q-tips in through the holes of the lid and keep in a handy place.

Liver Support Factors

Yeast free Chromium

Valerian Root

Clean blankies to wrap your baby in.



Some things to help prevent seizures:

Feed your baby small meals every 4-6 hours. Do not give fruit, including fruit flavored yogurt. Tomatoes have also triggered a seizure. Make sure your baby is getting good sources of protein such as crickets, worms, pinkies. Keep baby from getting over excited. Some skunks have been known to go into a seizure while pacing waiting for their food to be prepared, or wrestling around with another skunk or pet, and any other things that can cause high stress. Yeast free chromium can be helpful in regulating blood sugar levels. Valerian Root can also be helpful in controlling seizures.

On a positive note, most babies outgrow their seizures by the time they are a year old.

If your baby has a seizure, you can contact us for help.



## Did You Know?



One of the oldest American skunk fossil specimens, discovered in the Mojave Desert, is 9 million years old.

# Featured Baby

## A Story about Ashlar

We wrote this story as new skunk parents and have changed our diet drastically since then, using more accurate, up to date information. This is our story about our first week home with our first baby Ashlar.

### June 19 - 20, Thursday, Friday

It has now been 14 hours spent with Ashlar. Unlike baby ferrets, which take to a human immediately in a relaxed manner, I have learned today it takes little progresses at a time to gain his trust. First, removing him from the carrier I had a glove on, not because I was nervous of him, but because it had been saturated with the stress and shyness spray, and I didn't want to accidentally jerk if he did decide to nip. Poor little thing was so scared, you could literally see it in his face. After he explored for about 20 minutes he fell asleep in his cave. I retrieved him 10 minutes later and laid him on the bed and curled around him while he slept for about 2 hours. When he woke he was skittish and would spray and curl into a ball if you touched him. He ate, explored, fell asleep. I got him about 20 minutes later and he would curl tight but still sleep. Two hours later he woke, licked my arm a few times, but was skittish if I touched him. He ate, explored and slept. This time when I got him he curled for 2 seconds, then stretched into my hands and kind of nuzzled. As he slept he would snuggle into me and even smacked into my belly and was laying on his back, head hanging between my fingers. He woke later, sniffed and smacked my fingers. He didn't even curl as I cuddled him and lowered him to the floor. He has now been exploring for about 30 minutes, and will stop and stare at me and is even starting to come up to me. Can't tell you how great this makes me feel.

### June 21, Saturday

Ashlar is still a very scared little boy, but slowly starting to come around. Friday night, he didn't wake up until around 11:00 pm to eat, and he hadn't been eating very well, so I was worried. From Day 1, he loved his Skunkie D, but he wasn't eating the veggies very well. After receiving some good advice, I chopped his food very fine and he ate! I had been chopping his food in the blender, and that didn't do it good enough. Once I used the food processor, I got the results I wanted. Tonight, he woke around 7:30, so his schedule is starting to straighten out. I have made him a pouch to carry him around in while I'm doing chores. Any time I am not moving around, I keep him on my lap or snuggled up to me on my chest. He still poofs quite a bit. He poofs every time you pick him up, or if he is on my chest or lap, every time I reposition him. A motorcycle passed on the street below us and it woke him up and he poofed. He is awake for longer periods now, but it's still in the middle of the night.

### June 22, Sunday

He is waking up earlier each day. Today he woke around 2:00 pm. We are still mashing his veggies for him and mixing the skunkie d in with it. He eats until he's had enough and he stops. I know he will surely stop doing this as he gets bigger, but for now it's nice. He is very slowly getting less poofy. He still startles very easily, but now we can actually walk into the same room as him without him arching up and running off.

### June 23, Monday

I got my first kiss today!!! He was lying on my chest sleeping and he woke up and was just sort of looking around. I started speaking softly to him and before I knew what was happening, I was getting chin kisses! He is already starting to recognize his name. If we call him by name, he will stop briefly, then resume what he was doing.

### June 24, Tuesday

Ashlar has started to play!!!! Yippie!!! When I got home from work Vamp informed me that Ashlar had started the kisses on her chin....severe aahhhhh! Well I'm off work for a few days so tonight was my first night in a few days to stay up late with him (he is still being a nocturnal baby...he really doesn't care for the light...Typical Vampire hehehe!) Well I took him outside in his little pouch and just kind of walked around with him (very busy nose) till he started to get a little squirmy then I brought him back in and made him din-din. (By the way he is a very good boy. He eats all his veggies and skunkie-D before he touched the applesauce and grape that was on same plate). All the while I lay on the floor next to him with my hands close to him without touching him. After he had had his fill, he smacked at me poofed and darted off. I let him just run around for a bit, then he curled up in his favorite spot by the couch, and I picked him up and snuggled him. After about 5 minutes he crept up my chest and gave me my first kisses on my chin....aaahhhh. He suckered me in, then he grabbed my lower lip with both paws and kissed my lip...still being suckered in... I kissed his nose a few times and he rubbed against me....then the Vampire came out. Play had begun. He tapped my chin with his paws, kissed then nibbled it, then backed down my chest and patted my chest with his feet. I patted his feet then rubbed his ears. Foolish me stopped. He patted my chest again. I repeated the earlier, plus rubbed the bridge of his nose, the back of his neck, his feet and tail. Once again being the stupid human, I stopped. He had no part of this now. His pats turned into gentle digging on my chest then he charged up me, kissed my chin, grabbed my lip, kissed and nibbled my lip. OK so now he gets the kisses on the nose, the rub of the feet, full body massage, rub the feet and kisses all over. This all repeated for about two, maybe three more times, then I got poofed and he showed interest in being put down. So I put him down and he went back to his spot by the couch and went to sleep. Got to go now, Ashlar has woken up again and is charging my feet. He is still kind of clumsy. He gets to my feet fine but he has a problem with the back up thing...so after only a few steps he decided to charge again. Well he's tired of charging me and is now beating up Mamma. Mamma is a stuffed toy hedgehog the same size as Ashlar.

### June 25, Wednesday

Well I can be the first to brag both Vamp and myself had a fantastic skunkie day. We get the stomp-scratch-charge, we can pet, cuddle, massage, and tickle belly without having to hold him, he just leans into the hand, and rolls onto his back for belly rubs. He has still done the light nips to me, I did the firm NO, and the NO BITE, but unless I am really mad no one take me serious (ask Vamp). Ashlar doesn't. He knows that I'm not really mad at him. Fortunately I did discover that hissing at him, no matter the volume does the trick. I liked that he responded to the soft hiss, he just stopped in mid nip and rolled into my hand, belly up and just stared at me with a WHAT THE ... kind of look. Of course 2 seconds later he POOFed (one of very few today) ran away about two feet, then came back for more play...NO BITE I MIGHT ADD.

### June 26, Thursday

It's been one week today. He is now waking up when I wake up, anywhere between 6:30 and 8:00 am. He has learned the cutest trick! While I am preparing his breakfast, he goes to the rug where we put his plate. If his plate isn't there, he circles around where it's supposed to be. Then he comes to me and scratches my foot. Then he goes back to the rug and circles, then back to me and scratches my foot. He does this until I put his plate down. He ate all his meals at a fairly regular interval and is now playing with us quite well. We can pick him up without him being startled. We can hold him for longer periods without him wanting down. He is still quite nippy when he plays, but we are working with him on that. He climbed up the sofa today. So now we have learned to play up the sofa, down the sofa. He follows our every step like a puppy. He now knows his name very well and will turn and face you if you call his name. No poofs today.



You can contact us if you need to re-home your skunk.  
We can help you at no charge if you want to adopt a skunk.

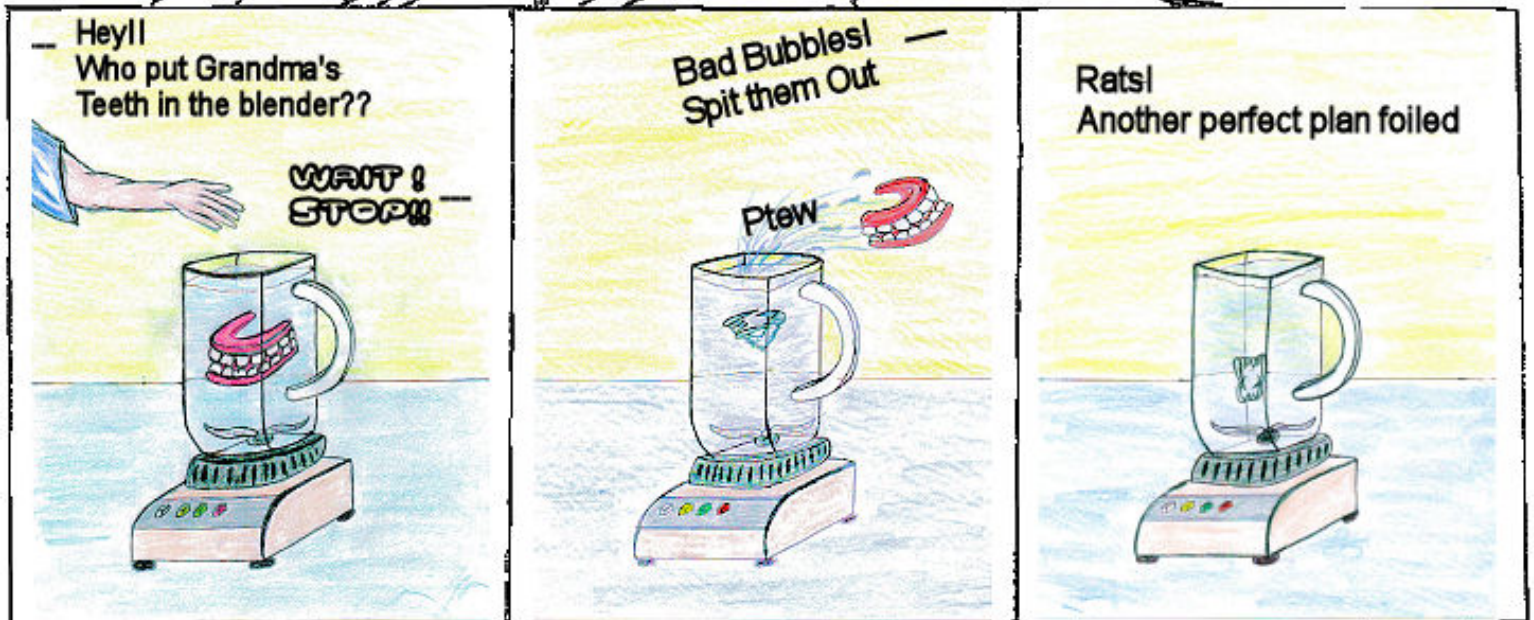
## Fun Tips

Skunks are extremely curious creatures and it can sometimes be hard to keep them entertained. It is important to keep your skunk active for their physical and mental well being. A good way to keep them busy is to get a children's plastic swimming pool and fill it with plastic balls. Hide a healthy treat in the pool and let the skunks have fun trying to find the treats.



If you would like your skunk to be featured in our newsletter, send a story and pictures to:  
[StripedBandits@yahoo.com](mailto:StripedBandits@yahoo.com)

## Bubbles the Piranha in



*The Adventures of the Invisible Man and his pet skunk Stripe*

*By F. J. Cottrell*

## RECTAL PROLAPSE

JJ was a kit that was in a pet store in Florida, along with 2 others that were rescued and brought to a foster home until he could be found a forever home. He was picked up by his mom Linda on the Friday before the skunk show. JJ had the biggest prolapse she had ever seen. At the show with many fellow skunk owners around, she was told to keep him quiet and leave him alone because stress would only add to the problem.

By Sunday, she was very worried and scared. Linda was still at the show and nowhere near home and her vet. Many people tried to help JJ but nothing worked. Taking JJ to an emergency clinic was an option, but knowing most emergency clinics are not familiar with skunks, his mom thought it was better to wait until Monday where he could receive proper medical help. Well meaning people were telling Linda to give JJ fiber to "fill out the intestines". Maria called Dr. Case for his advice and he advised against giving JJ fiber.

JJ was taken to a vet on Monday that although Linda had never gone to, came highly recommended and she felt comfortable with. She explained to the vet that she lived out of state and didn't want JJ to suffer. The vet put in a purse stitch and sent her home with records so her home vet would have JJ's history.

Linda was given a lot of grief about JJ having the purse stitch done, but it was a last resort and JJ needed it. When she got home, Linda asked her own vet about giving him fiber and was told NO, that his prolapse needed to relax and to put him on strictly baby food for several weeks, after which he was slowly introduced back to a normal diet.

Today JJ is fully recovered and happy and healthy.



Prolapse can be caused for different reasons. Improper diet, worms and intestinal distress are a few. Some are more serious and persistent than others. If you can not resolve the prolapse quickly on your own, you should consult your veterinarian immediately.

Some methods that have worked to get prolapses to retract are using a cold water compress or a mixture of sugar and water in your hand and "sitting" the baby on the water mixture. Preparation H is also useful. The area should always be cleaned before trying to put the prolapse back in. You do not want to introduce dirt into the intestine as it retracts back in.

**Now Available For Purchase!**

**Domestic Skunks, Book 1 – Babies**

**\$15.50 each (includes postage)**

Contact me at [stripedbandits@yahoo.com](mailto:stripedbandits@yahoo.com) or

Paypal your payment using the [stripedbandits@yahoo.com](mailto:stripedbandits@yahoo.com) account.



**Question for Ashlar**

Do you have a question you would like answered in a future issue?

Go to [www.stripedbandits.com](http://www.stripedbandits.com) and fill out the question form.

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## Skunk Show Reminder

Skunkie Fun Day is being held on October 10, 2009

Givhan's Ferry State Park, Ridgeville, SC

For information and registration form contact Landa Berry at [mberry2@sc.rr.com](mailto:mberry2@sc.rr.com).

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If there is a topic you would like to see on the newsletter, contact me at [stripedbandits@yahoo.com](mailto:stripedbandits@yahoo.com).

If you want to be removed from this mailing, please let me know at [stripedbandits@yahoo.com](mailto:stripedbandits@yahoo.com).

# FEEDING YOUR BABY



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 baby is getting a well rounded diet that includes enough calcium, taurine, vitamins, minerals, protein and good sources of fat. We highly recommend feeding sprouts to your baby, but some suggested veggies to start with are bell peppers (all colors), cubanara peppers, cucumbers, okra, green beans, lima beans, rutabaga, turnips, radishes, acorn squash, butternut squash, yellow squash (in season), zucchini, celery, cabbage (green & purple), kale, bok choy, romaine lettuce stalks, cauliflower & broccoli. Keep cabbage, bok choy, cauliflower, broccoli and turnips to a minimum as they contain goitrogens which interfere with calcium absorption, but they also have other good nutrients so should not be eliminated.

Notice there is no mention of corn, peas, carrots, tomatoes, sweet potatoes or fruit. These are not recommended to give to babies until you are sure you don't have a seizure baby. 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.

**Calcium** - It has been suggested that skunks need 250 mg of calcium a day. In actuality, 60 – 90 mg is a closer estimate. The important thing to remember about calcium is that it also 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 seems 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 sprouts/veggies 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 in a natural form and no one knows how much is actually being absorbed by the body. Always remember, you can give too much of certain vitamins and minerals! Do not give a calcium product meant for reptiles to a skunk.

**Taurine** - It is also suggested that skunks get a minimum of 250 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. The problem with 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 baby, you have no problem with feeding raw meat, but certain precautions have to be taken to ensure the safety of the meat if feeding raw.

**Protein** - There are a few different ways you can get protein into your baby. Our favorite is insects - meal worms, super worms, crickets and beetles – and pinkies. If you can't deal with insects, other forms of protein are nuts, turkey, chicken, eggs, beans, low fat cheese and peanut butter in small amounts. Animal proteins aren't the best choice for skunks and sometimes lead to pancreatic and liver problems if given too much.

**Vitamins** - No one knows just how much of each vitamin is recommended for domestic skunks, we just know they need them. Depending on the sprouts/veggies 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 multivitamin. Be careful of 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. 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 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 and Sea Salt (NOT regular table salt!) are good sources of trace minerals. You can also buy bottled trace minerals at most vitamin stores.

## Choose 1 from each category

### Protein – 1 Serving per day

Nuts	Cottage Cheese	Cheese	Egg	Insects
¼ teaspoon	½ teaspoon	1 teaspoon	Whole boiled	6 – 8 Mealworms
Raw, chopped			Whole raw	2 – 4 Superworms
& salt free				4 – 6 Crickets

### Fat – Choose 1 per day, except chicken neck

Raw chicken neck	Nuts	Flax Seed Oil	Linatone Plus	Extra Virgin Olive Oil
1 neck twice weekly	2 per day	¼ teaspoon	¼ teaspoon	¼ teaspoon

### Calcium – 1 serving per day, except egg shells (every meal) & Chicken Neck

Yogurt & Cottage Cheese should be full fat, not low fat or no fat. Full fat gives a serving of Vitamin A.

Yogurt	Cottage Cheese	Cheese	Egg Shells	Raw Chicken Neck
½ teaspoon	½ teaspoon	½ ounce	¼ teaspoon	1 neck twice a week

### Vegetables/Sprouts – 1 cup per day, split between 4 meals – Choose a variety

All Bell Peppers	Cucumbers	Okra	Green Beans	Rutabaga
Turnips	Radishes	All Squashes	Celery	Cabbage
Kale	Bok Choy	Romaine Lettuce	Cauliflower	Broccoli

This suggested chart is for babies only! No fruits are sugar vegetables are on here until "seizure season" is over.

After the age of approximately 4 months, meals should be cut back to ¾ cup of vegetables/sprouts a day, split between 3 meals. At around 6 months of age, depending on the metabolism of the skunk, meals can be cut ½ cup vegetables/sprouts, split between two meals. Healthy treats, such as strips of bell pepper should be hidden around the house for fun hunting that keeps them active.

If you have questions or need help, find further information at [www.stripedbandits.com](http://www.stripedbandits.com). You can contact us at [stripedbandits@yahoo.com](mailto:stripedbandits@yahoo.com).