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4 Things Enzymes

Pet skunks need a species appropriate diet to live a long, healthy life. Because there are no processed pet foods recommended for feeding skunks, this leaves pet skunk owners with the task of formulating a diet for their pet. There are 4 very important things to be aware of when you are planning your skunk's diet. These 4 things must be present in adequate amounts for your skunk to be healthy. If they are left out or not provided in sufficient quantities, the skunk may not die but is less likely to live a long and healthy life.

Enzymes are types of proteins that behave as catalysts, starting or speeding up a chemical reaction in living organisms. Enzymes are behind almost every function of all cells, organs, bones, muscles, and tissues in the body.

There are 3 main categories of enzymes: metabolic enzymes, which are produced by the body; digestive enzymes, also produced by the body but mostly by the pancreas; and food enzymes.

Metabolic enzymes are responsible for the repair and maintenance of all the body's organs and tissues and for removing cellular debris.

Metabolic enzymes work within the cells to regulate nerve function, muscle contractions and produce energy.

Digestive enzymes break food down so the body can assimilate nutrients. Digestive enzymes are secreted from the pancreas into the stomach and small intestine. The most common digestive enzymes are protease, which digests protein; amylase, which digests carbohydrates; and lipase, which digests fat. Without digestive enzymes, food would not be digested completely and would putrefy in the intestines. This would release bacteria into the body and lead to serious health problems. Since proper digestion of food requires enzymes, the demand for enzymes for digestion takes priority over metabolic enzymes.

Depending on how, what and how often the skunk is fed, a higher requirement for digestive enzymes may cause deficiencies in metabolic enzymes. Since the metabolic enzymes are necessary for all bodily functions, a deficiency can lead to an enlarged, overworked pancreas, heart or other organs.

Food enzymes come from fresh, raw foods. They work like digestive enzymes by breaking down the various nutrients into proteins, carbohydrates, and fats but because they are in the food itself, they start working sooner to start digestion of the food before it arrives in the intestines. Food enzymes are sensitive to temperature. Cooked foods, processed foods, and irradiated foods lose 100% of their enzymes. Raw fruits and vegetables that are picked before they ripen and frozen foods that are heated before packaging, will likely be deficient in enzymes. Raw poultry and meat contain lipase to digest the fat. Cooked meat does not which is why pancreatitis is rarely found in skunks fed a raw diet and common in those fed processed foods.

Many veterinarians believe the 2 primary causes of diseases are either genetic or from the pet's exposure to a toxic environment. This may be true to some extent but is by no means the entire story. Enzymes are involved in every metabolic process in the body including maintenance of the immune system. Skunks fed a raw, species appropriate diet are unlikely to suffer enzyme deficiencies with the exception of older skunks

as enzyme production slows down with age. Certain health conditions are closely related to enzyme deficiencies such as digestive issues, heart disease, obesity, accelerated aging, and various degenerative diseases. Partially digested proteins can be reabsorbed into the skunk's bloodstream causing allergies or other illnesses.

Since enzymes are needed for the body to absorb nutrients, once absorbed, a signal is sent to the brain that sufficient nutrients are present and this works like a switch to control hunger. When the skunk's body is deficient in enzymes, it will not be able to absorb the necessary nutrients and therefore will not receive the signal that controls hunger.

Tests of both animals and humans have shown low levels of lipase in obese subjects. Without sufficient lipase, fat levels build and are stored in the body. When lipase is present at adequate levels, the digestive system is better able to break down the fat rather than store it.

One of the many myths about pet skunks is that they always want to eat. Skunks are by nature opportunistic feeders. This means they search for food, they eat the food and then they go sleep it off. While no self respecting pet skunk will turn down a favorite snack if offered, it is not normal for the domestic skunk to always act hungry. Skunks always searching for food are either being fed a diet lacking in vital nutrients, or are unable to utilize the nutrients due to lack of enzymes. A diet containing cooked or processed foods would be a combination of both reasons. Many of the behavior issues seen in domestic skunks are a direct result of the type of diet fed. The skunk will act out if it is not getting vital nutrients or some will sleep more and not interact with people at all.

Proteolytic enzymes have proved effective in reducing pain and improving mobility in skunks with degenerative joint or disc problems. Serrapeptase has been used not only for pain but to remove inflammation. It is as effective as NSAIDs which are not recommended for skunks due to the dangerous and sometimes deadly side effects. Abnormal cells have a coating of fibrin that protects them from the immune system. Research has shown that some enzymes can dissolve the fibrin shield and reduce them to a form the body can safely dispose of as waste. Viruses also have an exterior protein coating. Certain enzymes can disrupt this outer protein wall and render viruses inert by inhibiting replication. Enzymes containing Serrapeptase work like internal filters to clean the circulatory system, and can lower viral loading which is why it is recommended for skunks with ADV.

How do you know if your skunk is getting enough enzymes? If you are feeding a diet of fresh, raw or live foods, most likely they are. Older skunks may benefit from enzyme supplementation as enzyme production slows down with age in all species. Any skunk with an illness or injury would benefit from enzyme supplementation. Make sure your vet is aware if you supplement your skunk's diet with enzymes as certain enzymes may increase drug availability.

Experts believe living creatures are born with a finite amount of enzymes meant to last a lifetime. Mother Nature intended that reserve be replenished through proper nutrition and eating habits. A diet deficient in enzymes can cause up to a 30% reduction of an animal's lifespan.

Maria Ellis
October 26, 2009



Did You Know?



The word *skunk* is a corruption of an Abenaki name for them, *segongw* or *segonku*, which means "one who squirts" in the Algonquian dialect.

Featured Product

Supplement Profile: Dr. Goodpet Digestive Enzymes



Some skunks may benefit from enzyme supplementation even when fed the best of diets. Dr. Goodpet enzymes are made from human grade ingredients. They are lactose free and contain only pancreatic enzymes and probiotics from natural plant sources. In many cases, Dr. Goodpet enzymes can be used instead of more expensive animal based pancreatic enzyme supplements making them a cost effective substitute.

Plant based enzyme products may benefit the older skunk, and skunks with health conditions or allergies. Dr. Goodpet makes both a canine and feline formula. Either are fine for skunks but the canine enzymes come in a 7 oz container versus the 4 oz container of the feline enzymes. The feline enzymes also contains more than 4 times the amount of lipase than the canine enzymes.

One teaspoon of Dr Goodpet Canine Enzymes contains:

Protease 16666 HUT
Amylase 2000 DU
Acidophilus 66 mill
Lipase 8.02 IU
Cellulase 9 CU

Recommended dosage for pet skunks who need enzyme supplementation is 1/4 teaspoon mixed with food for each meal. Please let your veterinarian know if you are using this or any other supplement.

Maria Ellis/ November 3, 2009

Featured Skunk

Tex

I received a call for a rescue who lived on Merritt Island just a couple of days after I lost another rescue (Toffee) to cancer. The young woman told me her boyfriend received orders from the Navy to go to Hawaii where skunks are illegal. I really didn't think I was ready to take in another rescue so soon so I told her that I would foster Tex and find him a loving forever home. I picked Tex up in Clermont and his previous mom told me she noticed he had developed a limp that morning. Tex didn't appear to be in any pain at the time however, when I got him home and put him down on the floor he was not putting any weight on his left rear leg. I called the vet in Gainesville and put him back in the car and off we went. It turned out Tex had a broken leg....so...since he had to be put to sleep to fix his leg he was neutered the same day. His first day with me was quite eventful for the poor little guy. I consider myself very fortunate that he didn't instantly hate me. Needless to say, I fell in love with this spunky little guy within.....oh.....about ten seconds, so he stayed with me. The cast on his leg did not slow him down a bit, I was calling him Thumper because of the sound he made running all over the house.

Tex has been a totally delightful addition to my little family; I know how special he is but you could have knocked me over with a feather when he took Grand National Champion.



Photo by Pam Raines

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

Your skunks don't have to be left out of the Thanksgiving festivities! Here's a fun tip we do with our kids every year. Mini peppers are plentiful at this time of the year. Cut off the top and fill one pepper per skunk with nut pieces and worms. It's nutritional and fun. Don't forget to take plenty of pictures.

Mary Vice
November 2, 2009



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

Feeding Tip of the Month

Fast Food Tip

Ever need a quick meal for your skunks? Stop by a pet store that carries reptile supplies and pick up some pinkies or fuzzies for your skunks. Pinkies are tiny feeder mice usually still hairless which is how they got the name. Fuzzies have fur so they are a bit older and may be a better choice for larger skunks. Some pet skunks will do better with more of the smaller rodents than 1 larger rodent.

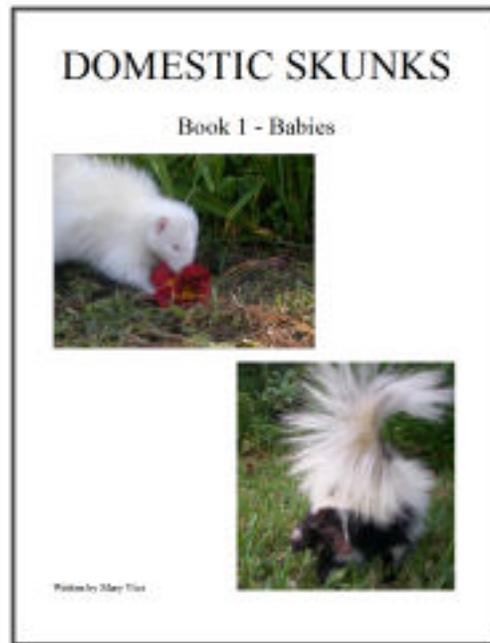
Unlike people fast food, feeder mice are extremely healthy for skunks. Both pinkies and fuzzies contain high quality protein, easily digestible fats which will convert to energy, Vitamins A and E, and Calcium and other minerals from the bones. Because they are very young, the bones are still soft and not a danger to the skunk.

Skunk owners with more than 1 skunk, may find it more economical to purchase frozen feeder mice available online. Please allow the meal to come to room temperature before feeding.

Now Available For Purchase! Domestic Skunks, Book 1 – Babies

~ Testimonial from a happy customer ~

I love your book. I'm getting my first baby skunk in the next 2 weeks and I can't wait. Your book is the best I've seen. Please can you email me when you have books 2, 3 and 4.
Many thanks,
Patricia



\$15.50 each (includes domestic USA postage)

Contact me at stripedbandits@yahoo.com or

Paypal your payment using the stripedbandits@yahoo.com account.

Question for Ashlar



Q: After trimming Tink's nails for the first time, we noticed that it appeared that she had something like Athletes Foot on one of her front paws. Does something need to be done about this?

A: It can be difficult for Ashlar to address issues in subjective terms, but he will always give it a try because he loves to help his fellow skunkies (as long as they don't hog the bed). Although skunks, commonly ones that spend a lot of time on carpet, can have dry paw pads, this does sound like something that should be addressed, especially if Tink is a rescue from an unknown or dubious background. Tink could have a possible fungal or bacterial infection or an old wound that didn't heal properly. It should be identified by a vet so proper treatment can be given. Ashlar sends his best to Tink for a full and speedy recovery.

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

Go to www.stripedbandits.com and fill out the question form.

THE 21ST ANNUAL SKUNKS AS PETS SHOW

Grand National Champion **Tex Raines**



Photo by Pam Raines

2nd Place – Nutmeg Hoch
3rd Place – Cotton McKeen

Best Female

1st Place – Nutmeg Hoch
2nd Place – Belle Bean
3rd Place – Gizzy Lowery

Best Male

1st Place – Tex Raines
2nd Place – Cotton McKeen
3rd Place – Marius Hancock

Age Categories

Junior – Less than 1 year, Adult 1 – 5, Senior 6 – 10

Best Color

Albino

Place	Senior	Adult	Junior	Overall
1 st	N/A	Benjamin Cober	Petal Collum	Petal Collum
2 nd	N/A	Bella Hoch	N/A	Benjamin Cober
3 rd	N/A	N/A	N/A	Bella Hoch

Dark Eyed White

Place	Senior	Adult	Junior	Overall
1 st	Ritchie Collum	N/A	N/A	Ritchie Collum
2 nd	Aurora Bean	N/A	N/A	Aurora Bean
3 rd	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Blonde

Place	Senior	Adult	Junior	Overall
1 st	N/A	Cotton McKeen	N/A	Cotton McKeen
2 nd	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
3 rd	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Champagne

Place	Senior	Adult	Junior	Overall
1 st	Simon Slade	Woody McKeen	N/A	Simon Slade
2 nd	N/A	N/A	N/A	Woody McKeen
3 rd	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Light Brown

Place	Senior	Adult	Junior	Overall
1 st	N/A	Marius Hancock	N/A	Marius Hancock
2 nd	N/A	Allessandra Hancock	N/A	Allessandra Hancock
3 rd	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Light Brown Chip

Place	Senior	Adult	Junior	Overall
1 st	NA	Jordan Perez-Ellis	N/A	Jordan Perez-Ellis
2 nd	N/A	Puffin McKeen	N/A	Puffin McKeen
3 rd	N/A	Flower Hoch	N/A	Flower Hoch

Light Brown Swirl

Place	Senior	Adult	Junior	Overall
1 st	Coke Collum	N/A	N/A	Coke Collum
2 nd	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
3 rd	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Dark Brown

Place	Senior	Adult	Junior	Overall
1 st	Oscar Perez-Ellis	Oreo Martin	N/A	Oreo Martin
2 nd	N/A	Mousse Dion	N/A	Mousse Dion
3 rd	N/A	Martin Gentile	N/A	Oscar Perez-Ellis

Dark Brown Chip

Place	Senior	Adult	Junior	Overall
1 st	N/A	Vincent Karp	N/A	Vincent Karp
2 nd	N/A	Shayna Perez-Ellis	N/A	Shayna Perez-Ellis
3 rd				

Dark Brown Swirl

Place	Senior	Adult	Junior	Overall
1 st	N/A	Nutmeg Hoch	N/A	Nutmeg Hoch
2 nd	N/A	Tex Raines	N/A	Tex Raines
3 rd	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Confetti

Place	Senior	Adult	Junior	Overall
1 st		Sage Butler	N/A	Sage Butler
2 nd	N/A	Cooper Dion	N/A	Cooper Dion
3 rd	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Smoke Chip

Place	Senior	Adult	Junior	Overall
1 st	N/A	Stevie Webb	N/A	Stevie Webb
2 nd	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
3 rd	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Smoke Swirl

Place	Senior	Adult	Junior	Overall
1 st	Coco Perez-Ellis	N/A	N/A	Coco Perez-Ellis
2 nd	Kodiak Bean	N/A	N/A	Kodiak Bean
3 rd	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Grey

Place	Senior	Adult	Junior	Overall
1 st	N/A	Gizzy Lowery	N/A	Gizzy Lowery
2 nd	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
3 rd	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Mahogany

Place	Senior	Adult	Junior	Overall
1 st	Bu Butler	N/A	N/A	Bu Butler
2 nd	Daisy May Collum	N/A	N/A	Daisy May Collum
3 rd	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Black

Place	Senior	Adult	Junior	Overall
1 st	N/A	Squirt Slade	Spanky Collum	Squirt Slade
2 nd	N/A	Merlin Reynolds	N/A	Pepe Reynolds
3 rd	N/A	Pepe Reynolds	N/A	Merlin Reynolds

Black Chip

Place	Senior	Adult	Junior	Overall
1 st	N/A	Simon Hoch	Rufio McElroy	Simon Hoch
2 nd	N/A	Davinci Hoch	N/A	Davinci Hoch
3 rd	N/A	Princess Reynolds	N/A	Princess Reynolds

Black Swirl

Place	Senior	Adult	Junior	Overall
1 st	Shamu Raines	Bebe Perez-Ellis	Belle Bean	Belle Bean
2 nd	Miracle Collum	Harley Potter	N/A	Harley Potter
3 rd	N/A	Sweet Pea Corlew	N/A	Shamu Raines

Unique

Place	Senior	Adult	Junior	Overall
1 st	N/A	Erin Collum	N/A	Erin Collum
2 nd	N/A	Sterling Collum	N/A	Sterling Collum
3 rd	N/A	Chantilly Collum	N/A	Chantilly Collum

Other Categories

Place	Best Tail	Friendliest	Talent	Costume
1 st	Rufio McElroy	Coke Collum	Bu Butler	Vincent Karp
2 nd	Bebe Perez-Ellis	Oscar Perez-Ellis	Vincent Karp	Daisy Hendricks
3 rd	Tex Raines	Cotton McKeen	Jules Karp	Emmalee Hendricks

If there is a topic you would like to see on the newsletter, contact me at stripedbandits@yahoo.com.

If you want to be removed from this mailing, please let me know at stripedbandits@yahoo.com.