

**Found a baby squirrel?** Don't panic; just follow the instructions below on how to care for a baby squirrel. We also have [Baby Squirrel Kits](#) with everything you need. Below is a list of items you can buy locally until your order from Henry's arrives. If you need more help, give us a call at [\(321\) 626-1897](tel:3216261897).

## EMERGENCY SHOPPING LIST:

1. **Large plastic container** and flannel or fleece for bedding.
2. **No-shut-off heating pad** (in a pinch, make a "Rice Buddy").
3. **Digital scale** to weigh the baby squirrel (you feed by weight).
4. **Syringes** to feed with (in a pinch you can use an eye dropper).
5. Either (1) **Esbilac® Puppy Formula Powder** (not liquid); or (2) **Homemade Goat Milk Formula** (3 tablespoons goat milk, 3 tbs yogurt, 2 tbs heavy cream, 1/2 egg yolk; makes 1/2 cup formula). See Page 3 for more info.



**First you warm him, then you hydrate him, then you feed him.**

**Do not use KMR®, human baby formula, condensed milk, scalded milk, GNC® puppy formula, soy/almond milk, Pet-Lac®, kitten formula, Whiskas® Cat Milk, "Milk Replacer Plus," breast milk, regular milk, etc. Use the Esbilac® Puppy Milk Replacer Powder or Homemade Goat Milk Formula for now, then order [Fox Valley®](#) formula online.**

***Make sure fluids/formula are very, very warm. Baby squirrels will not drink liquid that is only slightly warm!***

## CHECK THE BABY SQUIRREL'S CONDITION:

1. Is the baby skinny? Can you see his ribs? A starving baby needs smaller feedings at first (see Page 3 for more information).
2. Is the baby dehydrated? Pinch the skin on the belly and count how many seconds it takes for the skin to go back down flat. 4 seconds or more could be life-threatening (see Page 2 for more information).
3. Is the baby injured? Check for cuts, bruises, swelling.
4. Check for fly eggs. These look like small grains of beige-colored rice. Remove them immediately or they will hatch into maggots and eat the baby alive. Check eyes, inside ears, and around the anus (see Page 5 for more information).

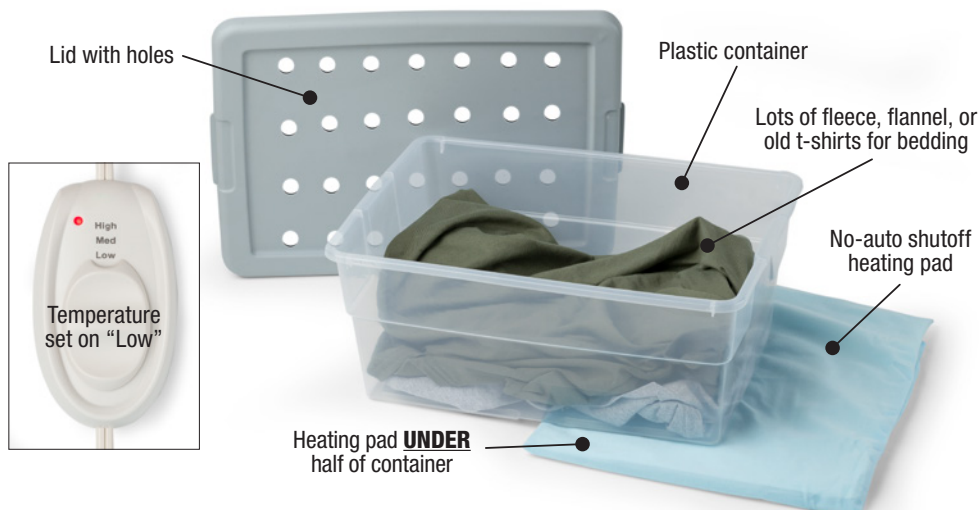
**An injured, emaciated, or very dehydrated baby squirrel needs extra care, so call us.** You can see pictures of healthy and not-healthy babies on Page 6.

## STEP 1. SLOWLY WARM THE BABY SQUIRREL

You can begin warming the baby squirrel in your hands. Or make a "rice buddy." Fill a sock with 1 cup of dry uncooked rice or beans and microwave for 30 seconds. Squish the sock to ensure there are no "hot spots." Place next to baby and cover him; reheat every 2 hours. To keep the baby squirrel warm all night, use a no-auto-shutoff heating pad.

**The perfect setup for a baby squirrel** (see picture below). A cardboard box will dehydrate him. Towels will catch his nails. He will chill and die without a heating pad. Heat lamps will dehydrate him. Reptile warmers don't get warm enough. Place a heating pad **UNDER** half the container, not inside, to avoid overheating.

Place the baby squirrel on the bedding and cover him with one flap. Once the baby is warm, go to Step 2.



## TIPS FOR SUCCESS:

- Keep lid securely on container at all times.
- Use plenty of bedding so the baby can get away from the heat if he gets too hot or burrow down for warmth if he gets cold.
- Keep household pets and small children away from the baby squirrel.
- Don't leave the baby outside or on a porch; bring him inside.

## STEP 2. REHYDRATE THE BABY SQUIRREL

**How to Check for Dehydration:** Pinch the skin on the back of his neck and also on the belly and count how many seconds it takes to go back down flat. 1-2 seconds is moderate dehydration; 4 seconds or more can be life-threatening.

**NOTE:** This test is not always reliable in hairless babies or emaciated babies; assume every baby squirrel is dehydrated when you first find them. Rehabbers should keep [Fox Valley Electro-Stat Powdered Electrolyte](#) on hand.

### Homemade Rehydration fluid:

- 1 cup warm water
- 1 tablespoon honey, molasses, or sugar

**Note:** If you use Pedialyte®, dilute half-and-half with water.

**Syringes:** Use a quality o-ring syringe, with or without a nipple, 1 ml or 3 ml (cc) size. An eyedropper can also work in a pinch. Never use pet nursers, doll bottles, or syringes larger than 3 cc. Quality o-ring syringes cost less than 50 cents each and will save the baby's life.

**Our Baby Squirrel Kits include o-ring syringes, along with everything else you need to take care of a baby squirrel.**

**How to Heat the Fluid:** Fill a coffee mug with hot water. Fill the syringe with cold fluid and place it in the mug for a couple of minutes. Squirt a drop on the inside of your wrist. It should feel very warm but not hot on your skin. You can also mix formula in a small glass container and place it inside a bowl of hot water.

**Proper Feeding Position:** Hold the baby upright in your hand. A baby that can walk can also drink sitting up or lying on his stomach. Don't let the baby get cold. Keep him wrapped up while he eats.

**Feeding Technique:** Place the syringe tip on the baby squirrel's lips (from the side) and squeeze out one drop for him to taste. Let him swallow one drop before squeezing more. GO SLOW! It sometimes takes time for them to catch on. Newborn babies are fed drop by drop. With older babies you can squeeze slowly for one second, wait for him to swallow, then squeeze again.

If fluids dribble out his mouth or nose, you're going too fast. Stop and tilt the baby's head down so the fluid drains out (support his head and neck). Then wipe his nose and mouth with a tissue. Start over, slower. The baby could be at risk for aspiration pneumonia, which is fatal unless treated with antibiotics.

**How much hydration and for how long?** Initially, the baby can have as much hydration fluid as she will take. With severely dehydrated babies, offer fluids every half hour. Very weak baby squirrels may only be able to take a few drops at a time, given every 15 minutes. Keep doing the pinch test to track your progress.

**When I can I start feeding formula?** You should see the baby "perk up" once the dehydration starts to improve. If the baby squirrel isn't badly dehydrated, you can begin formula feeding within an hour or so. Even if the baby is badly dehydrated, you will need to begin formula feeding within 3 hours, but you should dilute the formula 3-to-1. See Page 3 for more details.

Once you start formula, continue to give hydration IN BETWEEN FEEDINGS until the baby passes the dehydration test. Continue to check for several days, as it can take a few days to fully recover, and dehydration can come back.

## HOW TO FEED A BABY SQUIRREL:



**Note:** If the baby is firmly latched on to the nipple, never pull the nipple out of the baby's mouth. This can cause suction and force fluid into the inner ears, causing infection. Let the baby let go.

## STEP 3. HOW TO FEED A BABY SQUIRREL

Once the baby squirrel is warm and has had some hydration fluid, you are ready to start feeding. What do baby squirrels eat? Formula, also called “milk replacer.”

### Formula Recommendations for Different Ages:

- Pinkies less than 10 days old: Homemade Goat Milk Formula for 10 days, then switch to [Fox Valley 32/40](#), then switch to [Fox Valley 20/50](#) by 4 weeks old.
- 10 days old to 2 weeks old: either Esbilac Puppy powder or HGMF until you receive your Fox Valley 32/40, then switch to Fox Valley 20/50.
- 4 weeks and older: Esbilac or HGMF until you receive your Fox Valley 20/50.

If you use Esbilac, we recommend adding one teaspoon of heavy whipping cream to each 1/2 cup of mixed formula, as it is too low in fat. HGMF works the BEST for tiny pinkies in our experience.

### Homemade Goat Milk Formula Plus (HGMF+):

- 3 tablespoons goat milk
- 3 tablespoons plain yogurt
- 2 tablespoons heavy cream
- ½ egg yolk

You can buy goat milk at most grocery stores. If you can't find fresh goat milk, you can use canned or powdered.

**Note:** Canned or powdered milk must be mixed with water FIRST according to label directions. Do not use HGMF+ for more than a few weeks at a time as it is not fully fortified with vitamins/minerals.

Be alert for bloating, diarrhea or constipation, and take immediate action. See Page 5, “Common Problems” or call us at (321) 626-1897 if you need help.

**Make sure formula is very warm. Baby squirrels will not drink formula that is only slightly warm... they will starve to death!**

### DO NOT USE:

- Esbilac or other puppy formulas.
- KMR (kitten formula)
- Human baby formula
- Hartz®, Pet Lac®, or GNC® formula

## FEEDING SCHEDULE

Age	Amount for Each Feeding*	How Often	Night Feeding
Birth to 1 week	.75-1 cc	Every 2 hours	Once
1-2 weeks	1-2 cc	Every 3 hours	Once
2-3 weeks	2-3 cc	Every 3-4 hours	If needed
3-4 weeks	4-5.5 cc	Every 3-4 hours	If needed
4-5 weeks	6-9 cc	Every 4 hours	No
5-6 weeks	10-12 cc	Every 4 hours	No
6-7 weeks	12-14 cc	Every 5 hours	No

\*These are estimates for Eastern Gray Squirrels. Amount fed should be based on weight of baby (see **5%-7% Feeding Rule** below).

### Mixing, Feeding and Storing Formula

1. Each night, mix up the amount of formula you will need the next day. With powdered formula, use very warm water, stir well. Place in the refrigerator.
2. In the morning, stir the formula and draw up enough syringes of cold formula for your first feeding of the day.
3. Microwave a coffee mug of water until it is hot (but not boiling). Then dunk the filled syringes in the hot water. They will take around 30 to 60 seconds to heat up.
4. Take one syringe out, tilt it to mix the formula within the syringe, and test it on your wrist before feeding.
5. If the formula in your syringe gets too cool while feeding, re-dunk it and pull out another syringe.

**5-7% Feeding Rule: Start at 5%, THEN WORK UP TO 7%** Weigh the baby on a scale in GRAMS; multiply that number by 5% (.05) or 7% (.07) and that will be the number of cc's (or ml's) to feed per feeding. Go up to 7% after a few feedings, unless the baby is emaciated. For emaciated babies, you may have to start at less than 5% and work up to 7% more slowly.

Do not overfeed or increase feeding amounts too quickly! Baby squirrels will overeat if you let them and get diarrhea or bloating, which can be fatal. Weigh the baby every day at the same time to determine if they are gaining or losing weight and adjust the formula amount as needed.

### EXAMPLE:

Squirrel weighs 50 grams  
 $50 \times 5\% = 2.5$  (Using a calculator, it's  $50 \times .05 = 2.5$ )  
 So you feed 2.5 cc's per feeding

(continued on next page)

**Potty Time:** A baby squirrel less than 5 weeks old will need to be stimulated to poop and pee. Use a warm, wet cotton ball, Q-tip, the corner of a Kleenex, or your finger, and flick lightly across the genital area. Some babies may need stimulation before and after feeding. A few may eat better if you potty them in the middle of a feeding.

**Don't use cheap syringes that stick; use quality o-ring syringes and go slow to avoid aspiration!**

## STEP 4. WEANING A BABY SQUIRREL

Try to continue feeding formula until at least 16 weeks old. At approximately 6 weeks old, you can start to introduce solid foods. What do you feed a baby squirrel? His first solid food should be squirrel blocks. We recommend [Henry's Healthy Blocks](#), which are all-natural and 100% nutritionally complete. You may want to cut the blocks into smaller pieces. Offer a fresh piece of block each day until he begins nibbling. Now is the time to add a water bottle to the cage.

Once the baby squirrel is able to chew well, you can introduce vegetables from the [Healthy Diet for Pet Squirrels](#). For the first couple of weeks, you should remove any seeds, pits, skin, or strings, as these can cause choking. You can also introduce small sticks or branches for him to gnaw.

During the transition to solid foods do not give nuts, fruit, or treats of any kind. Concentrate on formula, blocks, healthy veggies, and wild foods. It's important they learn to love these healthy foods. Once the squirrel is eating her healthy foods well, you can add limited nuts/fruits/treats according to the Healthy Diet for Pet Squirrels. Follow this diet until the juvenile squirrel is released.

**All during this process, continue to offer formula until the squirrel weans himself at around 16 weeks of age. Never wean a baby squirrel off formula; let them wean themselves.**

## CARING FOR AN OLDER BABY SQUIRREL

By 10 weeks old, most babies are ready to graduate to a full-size cage. Make sure the bar spacing is no larger than 3/8 inch wide. If you have a tall cage, place a quilt on the bottom until he can climb well; if you have a two-level cage, you can block off the upper level. You'll need to hang a nest box or nesting cube in the cage so the growing squirrel will have a warm, safe place to sleep. He needs to learn to sleep up off the ground.

### Common Mistakes with Weaning-Age Baby Squirrels

- Giving nuts, seeds, and fruits as the first solid food. Introduce blocks first, then veggies.
- Weaning off formula too soon. Keep the baby on formula until at least 14-16 weeks old.
- Allowing household pets near the baby. Your dog or cat will kill a baby squirrel in a second.
- Taking the baby outside to "play." In the wild, babies are kept in the nest until 12-14 weeks old, so keep the baby safe inside until he's ready to begin the slow-release process.
- Releasing too soon. Baby squirrels do best if not released until 6 months old.
- Releasing too late in the fall. In cooler climates, babies that cannot be released by September must be kept over the winter.

### TIPS FOR SUCCESS:

- Blocks should be the baby squirrel's first solid food.
- Be careful to remove any seeds, pits, skin, or strings, as these can cause choking in a baby squirrel.
- Never try to wean a baby squirrel off formula; let them wean themselves.

### Number 1 Killers of Baby Squirrels

- Lack of no-auto-shutoff heating pad: Baby will chill and die.
- Wrong formula: Baby fails to grow or gain weight; develops diarrhea, constipation, bloating.
- Cheap syringes that stick: Formula gets into baby's lungs causing aspiration pneumonia.
- Syringes that are too big: Baby will eat too fast and get aspiration pneumonia.
- Overfeeding: Baby develops diarrhea/bloating.
- Underfeeding: Baby starves to death.
- Formula not warm enough: Baby doesn't eat the full amount and slowly starves to death.

If you need immediate help, you can call us at (321) 626-1897.

## STEP 5. COMMON PROBLEMS WITH BABY SQUIRRELS



**Bloating.** Can occur when a baby squirrel eats too much and/or too often, or from formula intolerance. The stomach should be rounded after feeding, but still soft, like a half-filled water balloon. It should deflate before the next feeding. If stomach feels hard or does not deflate, skip a feeding, hydrate, and decrease the amount of formula at each feeding or increase the amount of time between feedings. Stimulate to potty. Dipping the baby in warm water up to his armpits and gentle massage can also help.

**Clicking (aspiration pneumonia).** If formula comes out baby's nose, he may have inhaled some, causing aspiration pneumonia. Symptoms are loss of appetite, lethargy, and a clicking noise when the baby breathes. Hold the baby's chest to your ear and listen carefully. The clicking is with each breath, in and out. This must be treated immediately with antibiotics (Baytril, amoxicillin, or amoxi-clav) or the baby will die.

**Constipation.** It can take a day or so for the baby to start pooping after starting formula. If constipation persists, it could mean the baby is still dehydrated. In that case, give him warm apple juice in a syringe between feedings. If no results within 12 hours, give a little prune juice. Bathe the baby in very warm water, gently massage the belly and anal area while in the water.

**Diarrhea.** This can be caused by overfeeding, too frequent feeding, wrong formula, or parasites. Stop feeding formula for a couple of feedings and hydrate instead. If baby is less than 4 weeks old, you may need to switch to the Homemade Goat Milk Formula. Diarrhea can kill quickly so consult a wildlife rehabilitator, vet, or [The Squirrel Board](#).



**Fly Eggs or Maggots.** Fly eggs look like small grains of rice; they will quickly hatch into maggots, crawl into the baby's eyes, ears, mouth, or anus, and eat him alive. Remove all eggs/maggots immediately and check all orifices. Baby must be treated with Capstar within 24 hours. You can buy Capstar (11.4 mg) from us, or at your local pet store. Crush 1/4 tablet, dissolve in 1 ml water, and give orally by syringe once a day for two days. In addition, you can crush 1/2 tablet in 2 ml water and apply externally anywhere maggots/eggs are visible, especially ears, nose, eyes, or anus.

**Hypoglycemia.** Caused by starvation or feeding too little too infrequently. Baby may arch his back, have spasms, or gasp for breath. Rub molasses, honey, or pancake syrup on its gums. You should see improvement within 30 minutes. Make sure your feeding amounts/schedule is correct.

**Feeding Trance.** While feeding, some baby squirrels will stop swallowing and open and close their mouth like a fish. This is not harmful but means feeding takes longer. Blowing lightly in her face or a gentle tap on the head can help. When she stops gulping, you can resume feeding.

**Nursing on Genitals.** Baby squirrels may nurse on genitals when they are housed together, causing redness, swelling, or scabbing on the tip of the penis. This is very serious as it can cause permanent damage to the urethra. Immediately separate them. If there's a scab, soak the area in warm water and gently remove the scab. Then apply some Neosporin®. If the baby is self-sucking, you'll need to apply some kind of bandage until you break the habit.

**Refuses to Feed/Blood on Nipple.** Baby squirrels teethe twice, once for upper teeth and once for lowers. Teething may cause the baby to suddenly refuse to eat, or eat less than normal, and you may see a little blood. This is normal and should pass after 24 hours.

**Smelly Urine.** Pee should not smell when the baby pees; this indicates a urinary tract infection. This must be treated with antibiotics; if left untreated, it will cause neurological symptoms, such as head shaking or tilting, loss of balance, etc.

### ! WHENEVER A BABY SQUIRREL ISN'T DOING WELL, GO BACK TO THE ABC'S:

Ask yourself:

- Is he warm?
- Is he hydrated?
- Is he being fed properly? (not too much or too little; not too often or too infrequently)
- Is the formula warm enough? Formula should be very warm — almost hot — or they won't drink enough.

**Then address those issues in that order!**

## STEP 6. IS YOUR BABY SQUIRREL HEALTHY?

The photos below will help you determine how old the baby squirrel is and whether he is in good shape. Eastern Grey squirrels generally have brownish/grayish fur and white belly fur; fox squirrels generally have tan or orange belly fur; red squirrels have a dark line down their sides where the belly fur meets the back fur; flying squirrels have a long flap of loose skin that they use to glide.

**Newborn:** Mostly pink, no eye slits visible, ears sealed flat to the head.



**1-2 Weeks:** Dark color on head and back, eye slits visible, ears coming away from head.



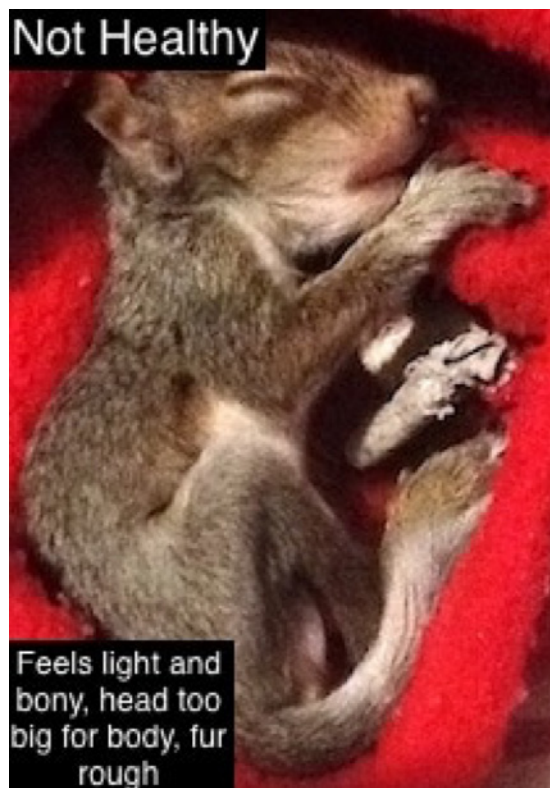
**3 weeks:** Short fur everywhere except on belly.



**4 weeks:** Thicker fur, eyes almost ready to open, lower teeth emerging



**5 weeks:** Fully furred including belly, eyes open, upper teeth emerging.



**Need help? You can call us at (321) 626-1897, or go to [The Squirrel Board](#) for help. The baby squirrel's life may depend on it.**

(Note: With immediate care and treatment, all of the sick babies in these pictures survived and were released.)

All product and company names are trademarks or registered trademarks of their respective holders. Use of them does not imply any affiliation with or endorsement by them.

HHP 2102007