

DETERMINING THE AGE OF A BABY ~VIRGINIA~ OPOSSUM



1-2 DAYS OLD

bean-sized, forelimbs more developed than hind limbs

15 DAYS OLD

Hind limbs more developed, ears starting to develop



1 MONTH

Hair becomes visible, eyes and mouth still closed

50-71 DAYS OLD

Eyes begin to open, mouth closed at corners, well-furred



76-80 DAYS OLD

Mouth open, eyes open, well-furred, can freely leave and re-enter pouch

CREATED BY: SARA COLIN

Information: Cutts, H., Krause, W. J., & Leeson, R. (1978). General observations on the growth and development of the young pouch opossum, *Didelphis virginiana*. *Neonatology*, 33(5-6), 264-272.



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80-100 DAYS OLD

Weaned from mother, independent and can be released

~OPOSSUM FACTS~

- A female opossum can produce up to 3 litters of babies per year, with an average of 2 litters per year.
- A litter typically consists of 7-12 opossums. On average, the mother has 13 nipples in her pouch, which limits the number of offspring that can survive.
- When determining the age of a baby opossum, its better to assess them via their physical appearance and developmental stages rather than via weight.

WHY?

Baby opossums tend to be heavier at their various life stages when hand-reared in captivity than when raised by their mother in the wild. Their weight will also vary depending on the number of siblings and amount of milk produced by their mother.

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Information: Hulse, T. K., Palotay, J. L., & Dhindsa, D. S. (1975). Development of the neonate opossum (*Didelphis virginiana*). *Neonatology*, 27(3-4), 177-183; <https://www.2ndchance.info/raiseopossum.htm>

