

SQUIRRELS

A baby squirrel showing any of the following symptoms is NOT healthy and therefore needs help:

1. Obvious signs of illness or injury like visible wounds, a bloody nose, injured limbs, twitching/shaking, or discharge from its eyes, nose, or mouth.
2. Known contact with a cat or dog, even if no injuries or puncture wounds are visible.
3. Bugs or fleas crawling on the baby, or fly larvae clinging to its fur (These look like little grains of white rice).

If the squirrel shows any of these symptoms or you think it may be otherwise sick or injured, call **Greenwood Wildlife Rehabilitation Center at (303) 823-8455**. Please be careful when handling wildlife. Use thick, gardening-type gloves and cover the animal with a t-shirt or pillowcase. When in doubt, do not attempt a capture.

If the baby shows NO symptoms of illness or injury, it may be possible to reunite the baby with its mother. Follow the instructions below to attempt a reunite.

How to Reunite a Baby Squirrel with Its Mother

It is very important to give mother squirrels every opportunity to find and continue to care for their baby. If the squirrel seems healthy, it should be left out for at least one full day during daylight hours for the mother to claim it. It is possible that she is still around but has become temporarily separated from her baby. Mother squirrels will retrieve their babies one at a time and take them to the original or an alternate nest provided they can find their young.

IMPORTANT: Do not leave baby squirrels outside overnight – the mother will not be out looking for her baby after dark, and the baby will be vulnerable to predators.

Step 1: Contain the baby in a box with a clean towel on the bottom.

The box should be just deep enough so that the baby cannot crawl out. Line the box with a clean pillowcase or t-shirt. Make sure there are no holes or fringe to prevent injury to the baby. Make sure to wear thick gloves when picking up the baby to avoid getting bitten or scratched. Cover the baby with a t-shirt when picking it up. Keeping the animal covered minimizes the stress of being handled and offers you some protection.

Step 2: Give the baby a heat source.

Babies can die from hypothermia, and mother squirrels typically will not retrieve cold babies. The best thing to use is a heating pad set on **LOW** under half of the box, because it provides a nice consistent source of heat. You may have to run an extension cord to the area. If you don't have a heating pad, you can use chemical hand warmers, such as Hot Paws, a rice sock, or a plastic bottle filled with hot tap water. The hot water will need to be replaced frequently as it cools. Tuck these under the linens in the box with the baby squirrel. **DO NOT place an uncovered heat source directly in contact with the baby.** Always cover the heat source with a t-shirt or linen.

Step 3: Leave the container in the area where the baby was found.

Place the box at the base of the tree that is suspected or known to be their home. If the tree has been

trimmed or completely cut down, place the box underneath the nearest tree as the mother will be most likely to look for it nearby. If there is no shade over the box, place a flat piece of cardboard over half of the box to give the baby shelter. This technique can also be used if it is raining or snowing lightly.

What if it rains or snows? In heavier rain or snow, try placing a plastic bin on its side and tucking the box inside for shelter. In the case of stormy weather, keep the baby in the box and bring it inside until the weather clears; mom won't be looking for it in the middle of a storm. As soon as the weather clears, put the baby back out where it was found. If there is less than one hour of daylight left, move them inside overnight, keeping them in the container with the heat source. The following morning, call **Greenwood Wildlife at (303) 823-8455** for further instructions.

Step 4: Check to see if the mother has retrieved the baby.

Stay far away from the area so that you do not scare the mother. Return to check the box periodically. Hopefully, the mother squirrel will return and take her baby back to the nest. Squirrels are excellent mothers and take good care of their young. If you have disturbed a nest and frightened a mother squirrel, you might see the squirrel run away from the nest or her baby. **DON'T PANIC!** There is a very good chance that she will return and continue to care for her young. Even if the baby has fallen from the nest, its mother can pick it up by the scruff of its neck and take it back to the nest.

NO FOOD OR WATER!

People often think that feeding an orphaned baby will make it feel better, but doing so can actually endanger its life. Here are the reasons why:

1. If the animal is dehydrated, emaciated, or suffering from trauma, it won't be able to digest food. If it tries to do so, it could bloat or go into shock.
2. Baby animals can easily inhale food or liquid into their lungs by accident, a situation which can quickly lead to pneumonia and possible death
3. Foods that are not a normal part of the animal's diet, like cow's milk or other milk replacers, can cause serious digestive problems.

Transporting

1. Make sure that the box containing the animal is secure on the seat or floor of your car.
2. Keep the car warm and quiet (no radio, minimal talking) while you travel. Avoid sudden stops and sharp turns.
3. NEVER let anyone, especially a child, hold the animal on his or her lap during the trip. It is very important to think first about what the injured animal needs and the fact that contact with people is stressful for the animal. Once the animal arrives at a rehabilitation center, it will be treated by experienced staff and volunteers who will ensure that it receives the best care possible.

Nuisance Squirrels (READ THIS BEFORE CONTACTING PEST CONTROL COMPANIES)

Contrary to popular belief, live-trapping a wild animal and relocating it elsewhere is not a good way to

solve problems with wildlife. In the State of Colorado, you must get permission from Colorado Parks and Wildlife to trap nuisance wildlife. While it may seem like a humane option, it usually ends up being a slow death sentence for the animal. It also leaves your property vulnerable to ongoing wildlife conflicts, and here is why:

1. Wild animals removed from their home territory have trouble adapting and often can't survive in their new surroundings.
2. Babies are usually left behind and will die without their parent's care.
3. It doesn't work moving one animal out because it just opens up space for another one to move in.

Baby squirrels left behind after a mother has been relocated are usually orphaned. Call Greenwood Wildlife Rehabilitation Center at (303) 823-8455.

Contact a humane wildlife removal service.

Bugs and Beyond at (303) 746-1129

The Critter Man at (720) 219-8041

Jack Murphy with Urban Wildlife Rescue at (303) 340-4911 or www.urbanwildliferescue.org (FOR ADVICE ONLY)