

VIRGINIA OPOSSUM (VAOP)

Weaning Stage Phase 1 Diet - up to Weight 110 Grams

PHASE 1 DIET IS TO BE OFFERED IN ADDITION TO GAVAGE FEEDING

Single Serving:

Prepare in a small shallow dish or lid:

- 15-20 ml VAOP prepared Esbilac formula
- Add ¼ teaspoon yogurt
- Add 1 teaspoon mashed VAOP Phase 1 Diet
- Add 1 teaspoon mashed banana or applesauce
- Sprinkle diet with crushed eggshell and Beta-Glucan
- **Increase diet amount next feeding if dish is empty.**
- **Phase One infants are allowed to lap as much as they want. Refresh Phase 1 diet frequently.**
- **One Esbilac formula frozen cube = ~ 26 ml.**
- Provide small shallow non tip bowl/lid of water.
- Do not leave Phase 1 diet in incubator over night.
- See night diet protocol.



**PHASE ONE INFANTS DEHYDRATE RAPIDLY.
PROVIDE SQ FLUID SUPPORT PRN**

VIRGINIA OPOSSUM (VAOP)

Weaning Stage Indoor/Outdoor Phase 3 Diet 200-454 g

For multiple opossums:

Use medium size shallow bowl with

- 60 ml VAOP formula
- 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups Phase 3 VAOP Diet Prep
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup chopped fruit
- 2-3 teaspoons chopped fish or hardboiled egg with shell
- Sprinkle Beta-Glucan and crushed eggshell on top of food

Follow Opossum Feeding Schedule for Phase 3 animals.

Date and freeze excess diet amounts for future use.

Expiration: 2 days after preparation. 2 days after thawing.

Increase diet as weight increases.

NO MORE THAN 10% OF TOTAL DIET. UNLIKE MAMMALS, TOO MUCH PROTEIN CAUSES METABOLIC BONE DISEASE.



VIRGINIA OPOSSUM (VAOP)

Phase 4 Juvenile Diet - 454 Grams to Release

Phase 4 opossums must be housed alone.

Prepare in non-tip bowl:

- ~1 cup Phase 3-4 VAOP Diet Prep
- 4 Tablespoons chopped fruit. Grapes, blackberries, blueberries orange slices, bananas, raspberries are favorite options.
- 2-3 Tablespoons protein - chopped fish or hardboiled egg with shell
- Sprinkle crushed egg shell and Beta-Glucan on top of dish.
- **Once a week substitute one whole mouse for protein.**
- If bowl is empty, increase diet quantity at next feeding.
- Provide 1 large non tip bowl of water.
- **Protein should be no more than 10% of the food.**
- **Enrichment recommended to encourage foraging.**



Virginia Opossum Diet Base – prepare and freeze

Prepare with the following;

4 cups Purina Cat Chow Complete

Moisten with a scant 1 cup of warm water

Stir mixture frequently to keep the bottom from being soggy and the top not moist enough.

When moistened well, add:

3 ¾ cups chopped veggies such as zucchini and summer squash

1 large sweet potato, microwaved to cook, then mash and add to the above.

Once thoroughly mixed, put into Ziploc baggies.

Label baggies with;

VAOP Diet Prep

Date:

Quantity:

Note; 1 cup = 16 TBSP = 48 tsp.

VIRGINIA OPOSSUM (VAOP) DIET PREP FOR ALL PHASES

Refer to each Phase Diet protocol to add appropriate amount of formula, fruit, protein.

Use 1 cup Purina Complete moistened cat chow for all phases 1-4

- Phase 1 & 2 diets: Add 1 Cup finely chopped zucchini or summer squash only.
- Phase 3 & 4 diets: Add 1 Cup vegetables chopped in small pieces.
- Phase 3 & 4 diets: Vegetables can include broccoli, pea pods, green beans, carrots, cooked sweet potato, kale and collard greens. No spinach.
- Combine all ingredients and put in a labeled sealed container or freeze in baggies until needed.

ALL VAOP DIET PREP EXPIRES AFTER THREE DAYS. NUTRITIONAL VALUE DEGRADES.



Phase 1 and Phase 2



Phase 3 and Phase 4



VIRGINIA OPOSSUM (VAOP) DIET PREP

Phase 1 diet prep (<~100g babies)

Use one large mixing bowl with:

- 7 cups Purina Complete cat chow moistened with 1 cup water
- 7 cups zucchini or summer squash **finely chopped**.



Phase 2 diet (~100g - ?)

Use one large mixing bowl with:

- 7 cups Purina Complete cat chow moistened with 1 cup water
- 7 cups zucchini or summer squash chopped **in small pieces**.



- *Combine all ingredients and put in a covered container or freeze in baggies until needed.*
- *Label container/baggies as VAOP Diet Prep and include date of preparation.*

VIRGINIA OPOSSUM FEEDING AND REHYDRATION PROTOCOL

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS WEIGHT	FORMULA FEEDING SCHEDULE	ENVIRONMENT AND REHYDRATION
36-45 grams Eyes closed or partially open. Beginning to fur. Possibly lapping	5-6 Feedings-gavage 1.5-2.2 ml Offer Phase 1 diet	High humidity incubator approx 87° F, 70% H SQ fluid support, 7% BID, TID Fostering recommended.
46-55 grams Well furred, increasingly active, probably lapping	4 Feedings-gavage 2.3-2.7 ml Offer Phase 1 diet	High humidity incubator 87° F 70% H SQ fluid support 7% BID, SID
56-70 grams Eyes open, fully furred, active, eating, lapping	3 Feedings -gavage 2.5-3.5 ml Offer Phase 1 diet	Incubator or small cage w/low heat support. SQ fluid support 7% BID, SID
71-90 grams Very active, climbing. Self feeding.	2 Feedings-gavage 2.5-3 .5 ml Phase 1 diet	Small cage/container with low heat support. SQ fluids PRN
91-115 grams Transitioning/weaning	1 Feeding-gavage 4-5 ml Transition to Phase 2 Diet at 110 grams	Low heat support Hydration begins to stabilize SQ fluids PRN
116-200 grams Juvenile	Phase 2 Diet	Monitor weight, diet and hydration
201-350 grams Indoor Juvenile-adult transition	Phase 3 Diet	Monitor weight and diet
350-454 grams Juvenile-Adult transition	Phase 3 Diet	House separately
454 grams to release	Phase 4 Diet	House separately

Fecal observation is an important part of feeding protocol.

OPOSSUM INCUBATOR NIGHT MUSH BOWL

Formula should not be used in the opossum incubator overnight mush bowl.

Formula spoils rapidly at incubator temperatures and should also be refreshed at day feedings

Mush Bowl Ingredients:

2 Teaspoons moistened cat chow

1 Tablespoon apple juice

1 Teaspoon yogurt

Preparation:

Mash moistened cat chow in a shallow lid

Add:

1 Tablespoon organic apple juice

1 teaspoon yogurt

Blend well.

Note: Increase quantities for multiple infants.



VIRGINIA OPOSSUM (VAOP) DIET PREP

Use moistened Purina Complete cat chow for all phases.

Phase 1 Diet Prep

3 cups Purina Complete moistened cat chow
3 cups minced zucchini or summer squash

Phase 2 Diet Prep

3 cups Purina Complete moistened cat chow
3 cups chopped zucchini or summer squash

Phase 1 Diet Prep vegetables must be very finely chopped (minced)

Phase 2 Diet Prep vegetables are finely chopped

