

# WILDSIDE VETERINARY HEALTH CENTER

## CARE SHEET: SKUNK



Owning a pet skunk can be a unique and rewarding experience, but it's important to remember that skunks have specific needs and considerations that must be met to ensure their well-being.

Before getting a pet skunk, it's crucial to check local laws and regulations regarding skunk ownership, as they may be illegal or require special permits in your area.

### 1. Housing:

- Skunks are generally kept free range indoors - the house should be proofed to avoid climbing, escaping, digging, and chewing of electric cables.
- But when alone skunks need a secure, escape-proof enclosure with ample space. This could also be a skunk-proofed room.
- Provide a sleeping area by using either a cardboard, plastic box or a dog kennel containing fleece blankets.
- Indoor enclosures should be at least 6 feet long, 4 feet wide, and 3 feet high.
- Outdoor enclosures should be larger, escape and predator-proof.
- Ensure proper ventilation and protection from extreme temperatures.
- Skunks can be litter box trained.

**2. Enrichment:** Skunks are intelligent and active animals, so provide plenty of mental and physical stimulation.

- Include toys, tunnels, and climbing structures.
- Rotate toys to prevent boredom.

### 4. Diet:

- Skunks are omnivores with a varied diet.
- Feed them high-quality commercial skunk food, supplemented with fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Feed adult skunks twice daily and only offer the quantity of food that they can consume in 5 to 15 minutes.
- Avoid feeding them foods high in sugar or fat.
- Provide fresh water at all times.

Here is an example of diet for an adult pet skunk - *please keep in mind that every animal is different and this diet will not work for every skunk:*

- 45g/day (about 50% of the diet) - Pellets (we recommend Mazuri Insectivore (5MK8))
  - If a different pellet diet is used, extra supplementation may be necessary.

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- 45% - Vegetables (broccoli, green beans, peas, carrots, squash, zucchini - they should be fed only enough so that they eat all their pellets per day because if they are leaving pellets then most likely they are eating too much of the other items in the diet).
- 5% - fruits (berries are the best option, but use this for training purposes - not for free feeding as it's too high in sugar and too low in fiber and would contribute to their obesity problem)

*We ask that you weigh your pet skunk monthly to keep track of their weight gain so we can adjust their diet accordingly.*

#### **5. Socialization:**

- Skunks can be social animals but may become aggressive if not handled properly.
- Always handle skunks with care to avoid being bitten.
- Start socialization from a young age to create a bond.
- Handle them gently and regularly.
- Supervise interactions with other pets and with children.

#### **6. Veterinary Care:**

- We are very excited to help with your skunk's veterinary needs.
- Skunks are prone to parasites, nutritional deficiencies, dental disease, obesity and heart disease, so yearly wellness exams should include a complete physical exam (which may need to be under sedation or anesthesia), fecal exam, blood work and radiographs.
- Skunks require yearly vaccinations and possibly deworming.
- Spaying or neutering is essential to prevent unwanted behavior.
- Most pet skunks are already sold descented.

#### **7. Hygiene:**

- Skunks are generally clean animals.
- Regularly clean their enclosure and provide fresh bedding.
- Groom them as needed, including nail trimming and brushing.

Owning a pet skunk is a long-term commitment that requires dedication and responsibility. It's crucial to research thoroughly and be prepared for the challenges and responsibilities that come with keeping a wild animal as a pet. We are here to help you ensure the best possible care for your pet skunk.