



PENGUIN VETERINARY CENTRE

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The Best of Care for All Animals: Birds and Wildlife Welcome.

About Tasmanian [red-bellied] Pademelon Joeys.

<u>Appearance</u>	<u>AGE?</u>	<u>Stage of Pouch-life</u>
Furless, toothless	0 – 4 ½ months	Stage 1
first fur, first teeth	4 ½ - 5 months	Stage 2
good fur & teeth, semi-solid faeces	5 – 5 ½ months	Stage 3
well-furred, solid faeces, still pouch-seeking “mini-adults”	6 – 7 months	Stage 4
	7 – 7 ½ months	*Pouch-Life Complete (but still ‘at heel’)
	8 - 9 months	*Weaning
	9 – 10 months	*Independent (‘dispersal’, & release)

A WARM ‘POUCH’ provides an in-pouch temperature of 32 – 35⁰C.

Young joeys cannot make body heat, so warm bedding is not enough.

You can try a micro-waved wheat bag, a hot water bottle, electric blanket etc, or your own body warmth (pop them under your jumper). Take care they do not chill overnight.

We sell electric heat pads that maintain a steady, comfortable warmth.

From Stage 4 (thick fur, pelleted faeces) the joey can use a ‘snuggle box’ filled with warm dry bedding at 28⁰C in a ‘safe-area’ so they can roam but not escape. Keep their pouch handy too, for security. Scatter suitable solid foods, & provide tussocks of grass, branches, etc for them to explore.

This is a dangerous time, when joeys start to roam but cannot maintain body-warmth for long.

If they roam too far they may rapidly chill, ‘go flat’ and die.

Their mum would have followed them around, but an artificial pouch cannot.

Please ensure they cannot roam far from their ‘pouch’ and that they can easily get back into it!

HYGEINE: (In nature, joeys are kept very clean by their mothers. They are unable to fight infection for themselves & rely on antibodies being continually provided in their mother’s milk)

Pouch-liners must be cleaned as soon as they soil.

For little pouch-dependent joeys, after each feed, gently stroke the belly with a downward motion to stimulate a bowel movement whilst it can easily be cleaned up.

Wash bottles and teats in hot water immediately after use.

Older (Stage 4) joeys want to leave the pouch for toileting, especially after a feed, & when they waken, so ensure independent pouch-access is available to them.

DIET

HOW TO FEED Feed young joeys in their pouch, propped on their backs like a baby
 Use a correct long narrow Wombaroo *macropod teat* (available from vets); it will fit deeply in the throat whilst not pressing onto the joey's narrow gum-line
 Teach joeys to lap as soon as practicable. Ensure they stay warm whilst feeding.

WHAT to FEED: NEVER feed marsupials cows-milk: it does not provide enough nutrition & the lactose sugars can blind them as well as causing diarrhoea & gastric upsets
 "*Wombaroo*" Kangaroo milks are best; choose the one that suits your joey's age.
 "*Biolac*" is good, and also graded to the joey's life-stage
 "*Divetelac*" is only efficient for joeys that are also digesting solid food & have pelleted faeces.

If at any time you need to change your joey's formula, do so gradually, allowing its system time to adjust. Either mix the new and old formulas together, or dilute the new one back to 1/2 strength, & then re-strengthen it over 2-3 feeds.

FIRST FEED Offer 5% glucose & electrolytes (e.g. "*Vytrate*") in pre-boiled water cooled to 35C
SECOND FEED (about an hour later): Mix up your chosen formula, diluted to 1/2 strength with Vytrate.
THIRD & SUBSEQUENT FEEDS Full strength formula
But if the joey's droppings become fluid, re-dilute to 1/2 strength and then re-strengthen more slowly.

HOW OFTEN TO FEED:

At first each 2 – 3 hours
 Once settled in ... each 4 hours whilst milk-dependent
 each 6- 8 hours when nibbling at solids & faeces have become pelleted
 each 12 hours when eating solids well, & weaning approaches.

HOW MUCH TO FEED: 15 -25% of the joey's metric body-weight each 24 hours .

So:

A 200g Joey will need 30 – 50ml each 24 hours;	A 1kg joey would need 150 -250ml
If being fed each 4 hours? then about 5-10 ml per feed	at 25-40ml per feed
When fed each 12 hours: then about 15-25ml/feed	at 75 – 125ml/feed

If a joey doesn't drink enough at each feed, feed it more often.

Do not overfeed, do not force-feed. Take things slowly and carefully. Let the joey adjust, & keep it warm.

If your joey remains reluctant to suckle, please return for advice & a check-up.

SUITABLE SOLIDS:

Make solid foods available as soon as the joeys get their first teeth. At first they will play with the food, then nibble it, then suddenly eat the lot. When a joey is eating solids properly, and is less dependent on marsupial-milk substitutes, its chances of survival increase.

Pademelons are browsers (leaf-eaters, like goats).

They will eat grass, but prefer clover (leaf, flower, stalk and root), berry fruits (flower, fruit, leaf), parsley, apple, diced carrot etc. & will nibble garden herbs Also, clover, paddock hay, chopped fruit, green veggies, diced carrot.

[**Bennett's wallaby** & the Grey **kangaroo** are grazers, choosing grasses, as do sheep]

WEANING

Formula can be thickened with *Farex Baby Cereal* and left in a bowl.

Add a few high-fibre pony, sheep, rabbit, or good-quality kangaroo pellets (do NOT use high-energy dairy feed, nor performance horse feeds).

When the joey is well grown,

enjoying a variety of solid foods,

has regular pelleted droppings

and is actively avoiding its pouch. then:

Feed the same volume of formula at regular times, but gradually (over 2-3weeks), make it more dilute, until at last it is only water ...

MEDICATION:

Check with your vet. Dependent on where you live,

how you house your joey,

and what other animals share its environment

You may need treatment/prevention for

coccidiosis,

salmonellosis,

toxoplasmosis,

hydatids or

gut worms.

Also, even quite small cuts can cause septicaemia; don't ignore wounds, swellings, lameness or a change in behaviour. Get your vet's advice.

RELEASE:

When they are due to 'disperse', MALE JOEYS will suddenly become aggressive: they bite, growl and kick. In the wild, they would now become fully independent. This is the best time to release them. Their self-sustaining instincts are in focus and they have their best chance of survival. If they remain captive, they will quieten, but they never quite re-settle. [Never house adult male pademelons together in close quarters].

FEMALE JOEYS do not have this sudden change of character, and remain friendly life-long.

Release them when they are fully weaned, independent and coping well.

Pademelons are sociable animals, moving in groups. They do not build or use nests, instead using scrub and tussock grasses for shelter and shade. It is best to socialise several joeys together at a "½-way house" & then release them as a social unit, into appropriate bushland early in the evening.

METHOD:

Contact wildlife rescue organisations, or Parks and Wildlife for further advice.

Before release, give the joey controlled access to bushland, making sure it can and wants to forage, and does instinctively flee from danger.

Preferably release them close to where they were found. Even though after this period of captivity they will probably not recognise their home, their genetic make-up will best suit them to that region.

Always choose an area known to support this species (get advice if uncertain). There must be suitable food, good shelter & others of their kind. Keep away from roads & urban areas.

Raising Pademelon Joeys: Penguin Veterinary Centre ph(03)64371331

We hope you find this information helpful and that you raise a healthy joey that is successfully released into the wild.

If you need further help, please phone for assistance. We do not charge for assisting wildlife.