

Injuries Involving Adult Opossums

Adults Struck by a Car

If an adult is struck by a car and is severely debilitated, capture it with a net or shovel, using heavy gloves. Transport it in a sturdy box or cat carrier. If the opossum is injured, but still capable of inflicting injury to a human (opossums have 50 teeth), then you should immediately transport the animal to a wildlife rehabilitator or call one for assistance.



Opossums Attacked By A Dog

Opossums have run-ins with dogs quite often due to the nature of them "strolling obliviously" through neighborhood yards in search of a free meal. When an opossum is attacked and can no longer defend itself through bluffing (baring his teeth/hissing nastily) or biting, it will go into a catatonic state known as "Thanatosis." Thanatosis is a defense mechanism that apparently makes the attacking creature believe the animal is dead with the hopes of it losing interest in "killing" it. The opossum will actually

appear dead when this happens. If the injuries are not severe, the opossum should be left alone to recover safely on its own. Meaning, remove the dog and people from the area until he "comes to". This may take a little while. If the injuries are severe, then the animal should be admitted. Capture with a net or shovel, using heavy gloves. Transport it in a sturdy box or cat carrier. Even if the opossum is injured, it is still capable of inflicting injury to a human.

Trapped In A Garbage Can

Many people find opossums digging through their garbage cans or eating food left out for pets. Always remove outside food and tightly "lid" your garbage cans to avoid this. If an opossum is trapped in a garbage can or similar item, knock over the can with a broom and leave the area. The opossum should disperse. If he has been trapped for an extended period of time, he may need to be rescued due to dehydration and starvation. If this is the case, the opossum will appear listless and non-aggressive acting.

Always contact a wildlife rehabilitator if you have any questions or need further assistance in rescuing the animal. For additional rescue information, see the [General Guidance](#) section of this web site.