



Wet Pets N Critters

Aquatic Turtle Care Guide

(Red-Eared Slider / Yellow-Bellied Slider)

Turtles are fascinating pets. Many of us remember catching them as kids, and they're still a popular choice in pet stores. Their unique appearance and behavior make them stand out from other animals.

Diet

Aquatic turtles are mainly carnivorous and need a **protein-rich diet**. A high-quality **pellet food** is a great staple and is available at our store.

Vitamins and Supplements

Turtles need calcium and other minerals for a healthy shell and bones. Most commercial diets already include these nutrients. However, adding a **cuttlebone** to the tank is a good idea—it provides calcium and helps keep your turtle's beak trimmed.

Treats and Feeding Tips

Offer occasional treats like **mealworms, crickets, earthworms, or feeder minnows**. For best results, feed your turtle in a separate container to reduce waste in its main habitat. Let the turtle eat and then wait for it to defecate before returning it to the tank. This keeps the water cleaner.

Housing

- **Tank Size:** A 10–20 gallon tank is suitable for a baby turtle. As your turtle grows, upgrade to a larger tank.
- **Water:** Fill the tank about halfway and use a **water conditioner** before adding your turtle.
- **Basking Platform:** Turtles need a dry area to climb out of the water.
- **Lighting:** Turtles need both heat and UVB light. Use a **basking light (UVA)** for heat and a **UVB light** (LED or fluorescent) to help them absorb calcium. Replace UVB bulbs as recommended (usually every 6–12 months), even if the bulb is still working.
- **Temperature:**
 - Water: 76–78°F (a submersible heater may be needed).
 - Basking spot: 85–90°F (adjust the basking light to achieve this).
- **Filtration:** A filter helps keep the water clean. Submersible filters are a good option. If you use gravel, avoid small pieces that turtles could accidentally swallow.

Sanitation and Care

Change **50% to 100%** of the water **weekly to monthly**, depending on tank size and turtle load.

General Maintenance

- Check water and basking temperatures daily.
 - Replace UVB bulbs as recommended.
 - Change filter cartridges about every **6–8 weeks**.
 - Clean filters and parts every few months.
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Health

Turtles are hardy when cared for properly. Regular checkups aren't needed, but watch for signs of illness:

- Shell should be smooth and hard.
 - Eyes should be clear and open.
 - Skin should look healthy with no signs of infection.
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Handling and Cleaning Safety

Reptiles can carry **salmonella**, so always wash your hands thoroughly after handling turtles or cleaning their tank.

- Keep turtles away from the kitchen.
 - Supervise young children around turtles.
 - Never start a siphon by mouth—fill the siphon with water, use your finger to hold one end, place it over a bucket, then release.
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Supplies Checklist

- Aquarium or tank
- Screen top
- UVB bulb (LED or fluorescent)
- Basking light
- Submersible heater (if needed)
- Water conditioner
- Filter
- Basking platform
- Cuttlebone (optional)
- Gravel (optional)
- Vitamin/mineral supplement (if needed)