

STD Information when you Receive your Dragon

When you receive your bearded dragon

When you purchase a bearded dragon, or any pet, it may take some time for it to become acclimated with its new surroundings and feeding schedule due to relocation stress. As long as their environment is set up correctly, and they are receiving the proper care, relocation stress should only last a few days as they become comfortable with their new surroundings. This usually takes 2-3 days but can last weeks in extreme circumstances. For younger dragons do not wait more than 3 days. Small reptiles can quickly deteriorate without proper nutrition and care due to their small size. Please check to see if the lighting & temperature are correct in the enclosure and call us. Usually Slight adjustments to the heating, lighting or enclosure are all that is necessary to correct the situation. If the heating, lighting, & nutrition are correct it may be necessary to bring them to a vet who specializes in treating reptiles, at your own expense. We take pride in our customer support and the health of our animals. We ask that if you notice any problems with any of our animals, please contact us immediately and as often as necessary. We will be happy to help at any time with your animal. We also provide detail care sheets on our web site to guide you in the proper care of your animal. We feel that if you follow the care sheets, your new friend should live a healthy, happy life. Our animals usually adjust easily, and we will be happy to talk you through this adjustment period with any questions or concerns you may have.

Relocation stress may be demonstrated by any/all of the following behavior. For more information on stress please check out the “Bearded Dragons & Stress” section on the resources page of our website.

1. **Loss of appetite;** it is normal for bearded dragons not to eat for 2-3 days when you first receive them. After 2 days you can try to feed them some “treats” to encourage them to eat. The treats can be super worms, butter worms, wax worms, apples, strawberries, etc. For a more extensive listing of proper greens & treats please check out the food classification chart on the resources page.
2. **Stress Marks;** Your dragon may display Stress Marks. These are dark lines or oval shapes that can appear on its belly and chin. It is normal and is a common sign on bearded dragons that you have just acquired. The stress marks should go away in a few days once it has become accustomed to its new home. Stress marks are completely normal and may also happen when your bearded dragon is cold, irritated, interested in something, and sometimes without any reason you can determine
3. **Decreased Activity;** If your new dragon is not very active and just lies around, it is usually a sign of relocation stress and should pass in a few days. In older dragons it may also a sign of brumination. A reduction in activity may also be caused by improper heating, lighting, or nutrition.
4. **Change in coloration;** A change in coloration, usually an overall darkening, can be a sign of stress. It may also indicate that your dragon is ready to shed. Bearded dragons also change color based on their moods and their temperature. If your dragon is cold, they will darken their bodies to absorb more heat. A dark

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beard may also be a sign of stress, but it is also a sign that they use for many other reasons.

5. **Avoiding Basking;** If your dragon does not bask for several days it may be a sign of stress. They may also stay in the cooler end of the enclosure or in their hiding spot. In older dragons it may also be a sign of brumination.
6. **Clawing at the enclosure;** You may notice your dragon clawing at the sides of the enclosure. This is usually caused by seeing their reflection in the glass and thinking it is another bearded dragon, or by actually seeing other bearded dragons in different enclosures. This can cause them to become stressed. If they are in an aquarium you can try to put a non-reflective background around the back & sides. It may also mean that the temperatures are too high since this will cause them to be more active. The last thing that could cause your dragon to claw at the sides of the tank is that your dragon may just want to come out and play with you.

It is important to remain patient during the first 2-3 days and keep the handling of your new dragon to a minimum until they get past the relocation stress period. Once they become acclimated, short periods of handling and hand feeding is usually all that is required to form a bond with your friend. Be careful, they may jump or try to escape and may fall and get hurt. Always remember to wash your hands before and after handling any reptile. Once they form a bond they may sit on your lap or shoulder for hours. Always remember they are animals and if given the chance will probably try to escape at some point. Always wash your hands before & after handling any animal. Many of the everyday chemicals that we use may be harmful to your dragon.

Some reptiles may also carry pathogens, most commonly salmonella which they can get from the food & insects they eat. This does not mean that they are infected, just that they carry the pathogen, most commonly in their excrement. This is one of the reasons why cleanliness & good housekeeping is so important. If you allow your friend to tromp through his poop & food, or remain in the bath after they have done their business, then they may become infected. This is the same pathogen that is in eggs and raw poultry, so it is no more dangerous than cooking breakfast or dinner.

Parasites are also common in reptiles, and may levels may jump during shipping and new environments due to stress. These are also usually from the insects that they eat. Usually a reptile can control and lower levels on their own through with stress reduction, proper care, and environment. We believe it good idea to get a fecal check by a qualified reptile vet after a month or 2 of receiving your dragon. This not only assures you of the health of your dragon, but also allows you to meet and talk with the reptile vet. No matter how well you care for your dragon, accidents may happen and you may find yourself in need of a vet who treats reptiles, this allows you to have one available who has already seen your dragon. We recommend only treating high loads of parasites since low levels do not usually harm the animal, and the medicines can sometimes harm them more. If your animal is eating well and growing well it most likely does not carry a high parasite load.