



For specific questions or more information feel free to call us at (904) 683-4992.

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## BEARDED DRAGON CARE SHEET

\*Do not handle your bearded dragon until it is eating on its own regularly for at least a week.\*

**Heating:** Make sure their temperature never drops below 75 degrees Fahrenheit at any time; this is especially important for babies as they are much more sensitive. The temperature gradient should be from about 105 degrees in the hotspot to 75-80 on the cool side, this can be achieved by placing a heat lamp on one side of the enclosure. If your home is cold overnight, nocturnal heating may be required in the way of an infrared ceramic heat emitter, or an infrared heat bulb.

**UVB:** In addition to a heat bulb, bearded dragons require a UVB bulb. UVB is very important for your beardie, without a UVB bulb bearded dragons may become lethargic and develop various illnesses, one of the most common is MBD- or Metabolic Bone Disease, this is when the bones soften and deform from a lack of calcium and UVB. To ensure your dragon stays healthy and your UVB bulb is putting off the necessary rays, make sure to replace your 10.0 UVB bulb EVERY SIX MONTHS!

**Diet:** A varied diet is key to a healthy dragon.

- Salad: Offer daily.
  - Mustard Greens, Turnip Greens, Collards, Romaine, Spring Mix, but **AVOID** Iceberg and Spinach
  - Veggies such as Cucumber, Zucchini, Squash, Bell Peppers, **AVOID** high quantities of fruit, the sugar can be toxic
- Insects: A baby/ juvenile bearded dragon can eat 6-12 bugs daily to every other day, while a yearling/ adult bearded dragon should only have bugs 1-2 times a week.
  - Mealworms, Superworms, Hornworms, Crickets, Discoid Roaches, Waxworms, Black Soldier Fly Larvae
- Supplements:
  - Calcium powder on both salads and insects
  - Multivitamin (optional)
  - Pumpkin puree can be used as a laxative for a constipated beardie if soaks aren't helping (optional)

**Soaks:** Baby bearded dragons should be soaked 1-2 times a week in lukewarm water up to their bellies for 10-20 minutes. Adult bearded dragons can be soaked once a week or once every other week. If your dragon is not eating greens well, then soak more frequently. Bearded dragons typically will not drink from still water, which is why they need to be soaked and given greens daily to avoid dehydration.

**Vet Care:** If you notice your bearded dragon is lethargic, not eating, losing weight, struggling to move or breathe, consider reaching out to any of the following vets:

- Exotic Bird Hospital on Beach Blvd. (904) 256-0043
- Riverside Animal Hospital Downtown (904) 388-3494
- Birch Island Veterinary Center on Philips Hwy. (904) 717-6840
- Forever Vets Animal Hospital on Bartram Market Dr. (904) 490-8228

# **Ball Python Care Sheet**

Scientific Name: *Python regius*

Native to: West Africa

Maximum Length: 3-5 feet

Life Span: 15-20 years

**ENCLOSURE SIZE:** Baby Ball Pythons can be housed in a 20-40 gallon terrarium. As they get older, a bigger terrarium will be needed. Adult ball pythons will need an enclosure at least 3-6 feet long, depending on how large they grow. Make sure the terrarium is big enough for the python to exercise. Provide plenty of ventilation and a secure hiding place on each side. Pythons love to climb and are great escape artists. Provide a hiding area that is big enough for your python to fit into, and sturdy branches for climbing.

**SUBSTRATE:** Zoo Med Cypress Mulch is our recommended bedding for ball pythons, due to its ability to hold moisture and help increase humidity. Aspen bedding does not hold humidity, and therefore is not a good option for ball pythons. Do not use cedar shavings or bark chips as they can be toxic to reptiles.

**TEMPERATURE AND LIGHTING:** Temperatures in a Ball Python enclosure should be around 88°F on the warm end and the cool end should be around 78° F. An overhead light during the daytime works as a primary heat source. For night time heating use a red light or a ceramic heat emitter.

**FOOD AND WATER:** It might take your new Ball Python a little bit of time to adjust to its new surroundings. Avoid handling your Ball Python until it has eaten on its own a couple of times. In the beginning, some Ball Pythons can be stubborn eaters. Some ball pythons will eat frozen, and others may only eat live. If you feed it live food, be sure to supervise the entire feeding, as live food can bite or injure your python. Provide a bowl of water large enough for the python to soak in. Empty, clean, and refill the dish when it is dirty.

## **THINGS TO LOOK OUT FOR:**

- **Bluish/Cloudy eyes:** This means your snake is about to shed. Avoid handling or feeding during this time. Ensure the snake has a humid area and large water bowl to help them with shedding. Sheds should come off in one, solid piece. If your ball python is shedding in pieces, the humidity is too low. Increase humidity by spraying down their enclosure and using Sphagnum Moss inside their hot side hide.
- **Bubbling from the nose or dripping saliva from the mouth.** These are signs of a respirator infection, usually caused by their enclosure being too cold or too dry. Increase heat and humidity, and seek antibiotics from a veterinarian.
- **Mites!** Mites are small bugs that gather in a snakes scales and around their eyes. If your snake is sitting in its water bowl for extended lengths of time, but isn't in shed, this can be an indicator of mites. Mite spray is available in our store and we can walk you through the process of getting rid of them.

# Aquatic Turtle Care Sheet

## Basic Information

Lifespan: 20–40 years

Adult Size: 5-13 inches depending on species

Behavior: Semi-aquatic, basking turtles

Activity Level: Diurnal (active during the day)

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## Enclosure Setup

Tank Size

- Hatchlings: Minimum 20–40 gallons to start (they grow quickly!) Most aquatic turtles will outgrow commercial fishtanks and require custom tanks or outdoor enclosures.

Water Depth

- Provide at least 1.5–2x the turtle's shell length in water depth
  - Ensure easy access to basking areas via a ramp, dock, or rock pile.
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## Temperature & Heating

Water temperature:

- Hatchlings: 78–80°F
- Adults: 74–78°F
- Basking area: 88–95°F
- Use a submersible heater (with guard) for water and basking lamp above the platform
- Night temperatures can drop to 70°F, but avoid drastic changes as they can lead to respiratory infections and other illnesses.

Lighting:

- UVB lighting is essential (10–12 hours/day) for calcium metabolism and shell health
  - Use a 5.0 UVB bulb and replace every 6–8 months
  - Position basking lamp and UVB over the dry dock, not the water
- 

## Water Quality

- Powerful canister or submersible filter recommended (turtles are messy)
  - Partial water changes weekly (25–50%)
  - Dechlorinate tap water
  - Maintain pH around 6.5–8.0
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## Basking Area & Land

- Create a dry basking dock using floating platforms, turtle docks, cork bark, or custom ramps
  - Must support the turtle's weight and allow them to fully dry off
  - Position heat/UVB light overhead
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## Diet & Nutrition

- Commercial turtle pellets (e.g., Mazuri, ReptoMin, Zoomed)
- Protein (2–3x/week): earthworms, crickets, shrimp, feeder fish (occasionally)
- Vegetables (daily): dark leafy greens (collard, dandelion, romaine), duckweed, aquatic plants

Supplements:

- Offer calcium (with D3) regularly
- Cuttlebone in the tank is a great calcium source

Feeding Schedule:

- Juveniles: Daily
  - Adults: Every other day
  - Remove uneaten food to prevent water fouling
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## Cleaning

- Use a gravel vacuum or siphon for cleaning
  - Spot clean solid waste daily
  - Deep clean tank & filter monthly
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## What to Avoid

- No gravel or small stones (choking hazard)
  - No glass heaters without a guard
  - No overcrowding – leads to stress and disease
  - Avoid feeding only meat or iceberg lettuce
  - Never release pet turtles into the wild
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## Common Health Issues

- Shell rot: From dirty water or poor basking
- Vitamin A deficiency: Puffy eyes, poor appetite (fix with diet)
- Respiratory infection: Lethargy, wheezing, tilted swimming (requires vet care)
- Metabolic bone disease (MBD): From lack of UVB or calcium

**Vet Care:** If you notice your turtle is lethargic, not eating, losing weight, struggling to move or breathe, consider reaching out to any of the following vets:

- Exotic Bird Hospital on Beach Blvd. (904) 256-0043
- Riverside Animal Hospital Downtown (904) 388-3494
- Birch Island Veterinary Center on Philips Hwy. (904) 717-6840
- Forever Vets Animal Hospital on Bartram Market Dr. (904) 490-8228

# Leopard Gecko Care Sheet

Common name: Leopard gecko

Scientific Name: *Eublepharis macularius*

Life span: 15–20 years or longer

Origin: Arid and semi-arid regions of Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, and Iran

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## *Enclosure and Habitat*

### Tank Size

- Juveniles: A 10-gallon tank is sufficient for a single young gecko.
- Adults: A 20-gallon long tank (minimum) is recommended for one adult. Leopard geckos are solitary and should not be housed together.

### Substrate

- Safe options: Paper towels, sand soil mixture, Forest Floor, Reptisoil, and slate tiles.
- Avoid: Reptile carpet, it houses bacteria and odor.

### Hides and Enrichment

- Provide at least three hides: a warm hide, a cool hide, and a moist hide for shedding.
- Hides should be snug and secure to help the gecko feel safe.
- To create a moist hide, add some damp sphagnum moss under a plastic or ceramic hide. This will help with shedding.
- Enrichment items such as rocks, branches, and artificial plants create a stimulating environment.

### Temperature and Heating

- Leopard geckos are ectothermic and rely on external sources for heat regulation.
  - Warm side: 88–92°F
  - Cool side: 75–80°F
  - Night temperatures: Should not drop below 70°F
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## *Feeding and Nutrition*

### Diet

- Leopard geckos are insectivores, feed primarily live insects. Variety is key to a healthy lizard.
- Feeders: Crickets, mealworms, discoid roaches, waxworms, black soldier fly larvae, and hornworms.
- Cover the bugs in a layer of calcium powder before feeding to enable healthy bone development.

### Feeding Schedule

- Juveniles: Feed daily, 10-12 bugs, you can do a combination of insects or alternate which bugs you feed on different days.
- Adults: Feed every other day or 3–4 times per week.

### Water

- Always provide a shallow dish of fresh, clean water.
- Change water often and ensure the dish is not so deep that a gecko could drown.

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## *Handling and Temperament*

- Leopard geckos are generally calm and tolerate gentle handling.
- Allow new geckos to acclimate for at least 1–2 weeks before handling.
- Avoid handling during shedding or immediately after a meal.
- Support the gecko's entire body and move slowly to avoid startling them.

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## *Cleaning and Maintenance*

- Spot-clean enclosure daily; remove uneaten food and feces.
- Deep clean the entire enclosure and replace substrate monthly or as needed.
- Disinfect water and food dishes weekly.

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## *Health and Common Issues*

### Common Health Problems

- Impaction: Often caused by ingesting loose substrate or oversized prey. Signs include lack of appetite and lethargy.
- Metabolic Bone Disease (MBD): Common in geckos lacking calcium and vitamin D3. Symptoms include weak limbs and a rubbery jaw.
- Respiratory infections: Caused by poor husbandry, particularly low temperatures or high humidity. Symptoms include wheezing and mucus around the nostrils.
- Parasites: Manifest as weight loss, runny stools, or visible worms in feces. Require prompt veterinary treatment.

### When to See a Veterinarian

- Persistent loss of appetite
- Obvious injuries
- Rapid weight loss or dehydration, weight loss will be very apparent in the tail.
- Labored breathing
- Unusual lumps or swelling
- Lethargic

**Vet Care:** If you notice your leopard experiencing any of these symptoms, consider reaching out to any of the following vets:

- Exotic Bird Hospital on Beach Blvd. (904) 256-0043
- Riverside Animal Hospital Downtown (904) 388-3494
- Birch Island Veterinary Center on Philips Hwy. (904) 717-6840
- Forever Vets Animal Hospital on Bartram Market Dr. (904) 490-8228

# Tortoise Care Sheet

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## *Sulcata Tortoise:*

Adult Size: 2-3ft, 80-120lbs

Lifespan: 50-70 years

## *Redfoot Tortoise:*

Adult Size: 10-18 inches

Lifespan: 50-70 years

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## *Enclosure and Habitat*

### Indoor Enclosures

- Size: A minimum of a 40-gallon enclosure is required to start for a baby tortoise.
- Substrate: Use a mixture of organic topsoil and play sand, or cypress mulch. Avoid pine or cedar shavings as they can be toxic.
- Lighting: Tortoises need 12-14 hours of light daily. Use a UVB bulb (10.0 strength for most species) to help produce vitamin D3, vital for calcium absorption. Your UVB bulb will need to be replaced every 6-8 months to ensure it is still emitting proper rays.
- Heating: Create a temperature gradient by placing the heat lamp on one side of the enclosure. The basking area should reach 90-100°F, while the cool side should be around 70-75°F. Avoid letting the temperature drop below 70°F since baby tortoises are very sensitive to extreme changes in temperature.
- A humid hide can be helpful

### Outdoor Enclosures

- Security: Use sturdy walls (at least 12 inches above ground, and bury 8-12 inches below to prevent digging escapes).
  - Shelter: Provide a weatherproof hide from rain, sun, and predators.
  - Plants: Include edible weeds and grasses; avoid toxic plants (e.g., foxglove, oleander, buttercup).
  - Sunlight: Natural sunlight is the best UVB source. Ensure part of the enclosure is shaded to prevent overheating.
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## *Diet and Nutrition*

- Staple Greens: Offer dandelion greens, collard greens, turnip greens, mustard greens, any of the hardier greens work best. Avoid spinach and iceberg lettuce. Rotate varieties to ensure a balanced diet.
- Grasses and Hay: Many species, especially Sulcatas, need fibrous grasses and hay as staple foods. Tortoise hay is a great addition to their diet.
- Vegetables: Limited amounts of carrot, squash, pumpkin, and bell peppers can be offered occasionally.
- Fruits: Feed fruits like strawberries, melon, or mango sparingly to Mediterranean species; Red-footed tortoises can have a bit more due to their natural diet.
- Supplements: Dust food with calcium powder 2-3 times a week, calcium powder helps their bones and shell grow properly. A reptile multivitamin can be offered once a week.
- Water: Provide fresh, clean water daily in a shallow heavy bowl. Tortoises should be soaked weekly (more often for young tortoises) in lukewarm water for hydration.

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## Care and maintenance

- Your tortoise should be soaked in lukewarm water up to its neck 1-2 times a week for 10-20 minutes. This will help keep their shell clean and hydrated and make sure they drink enough water.
- Remove any poop from the enclosure as you notice it, tortoises poop frequently so a deep clean of the enclosure should take place every 3-4 months.

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## *Handling and Socialization*

Limit handling to reduce stress; always support the body fully and avoid dropping. However, a good way to interact with your tortoise is to handfeed them greens and let them take supervised walks around your floor. Wash hands before and after handling to reduce risk of spreading bacteria (like Salmonella).

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## *Health and Well-being*

### Common Health Issues

- Shell Rot: Caused by bacterial or fungal infections. Prevent by keeping enclosure clean and dry.
- Respiratory Infections: Symptoms include wheezing, runny nose, or lethargy. Check for drafts and maintain proper humidity and temperature.
- Metabolic Bone Disease (MBD): Results from calcium deficiency or lack of UVB. Prevent with correct diet and lighting.
- Parasites: Regular fecal checks with a reptile veterinarian can catch this.

### Veterinary Care

If you notice your tortoise experiencing any of these symptoms, consider reaching out to any of the following vets:

- Exotic Bird Hospital on Beach Blvd. (904) 256-0043
- Riverside Animal Hospital Downtown (904) 388-3494
- Birch Island Veterinary Center on Philips Hwy. (904) 717-6840
- Forever Vets Animal Hospital on Bartram Market Dr. (904) 490-8228

## New Caledonia Gecko Care Sheet

This care sheet covers basic care for Gargoyle, Crested, Leachianus, and Chahoua Geckos.

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### *Enclosure and Habitat*

- Baby Geckos can be started in a 12" x 12" x 18" enclosure. Adults can live in an 18" x 18" x 24" enclosure or bigger. Being arboreal geckos, they need a lot of vertical space.
  - New Caledonia geckos are solitary and do better on their own.
  - Give them plenty of branches and plants to climb and hide under.
  - Substrate: Reptisoil, EcoEarth, Forest Floor, or a mixture of the three can be used as substrate for your gecko.
  - You can get food and water bowls that attach to the glass of the enclosure, so they are suspended off the ground.
  - Geckos do well in temperatures between 70-80°F, they do not need supplemental heating or lighting unless house temperatures drop below 70°F.
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### *Diet and Nutrition*

- Geckos will eat a varied diet of insects and a premade diet.
  - For their premade diet we recommend Repashy or Pangea. It is 2 parts water to 1 part powder diet, blended to a paste, this should be offered nightly to every other night.
  - Insects: 10-12 crickets once a week as a protein source and enrichment is recommended. A calcium/ multivitamin supplement can be sprinkled on the crickets as an added boost.
  - Mist your gecko 1-2 times a day, they will lick the water off the leaves and glass; this is where they will get most of their hydration, but a water bowl should also be present.
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### *Handling*

- New Caledonia geckos can drop their tails as a defense mechanism from stress because of this it is important to never grab them by the tail. Avoid restraining them when you hold them, try to keep an open hand and let them walk through your hands to get their energy out.
  - Being arboreal geckos, they can be very jumpy, when you first begin holding your gecko it can be helpful to hold them over your bed or table to avoid any injuries if they jump out of your hands.
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### *Veterinary Care*

If you notice your gecko experiencing lethargy, dehydration, appetite loss, or injury, consider reaching out to any of the following vets:

- Exotic Bird Hospital on Beach Blvd. (904) 256-0043
- Riverside Animal Hospital Downtown (904) 388-3494
- Birch Island Veterinary Center on Philips Hwy. (904) 717-6840
- Forever Vets Animal Hospital on Bartram Market Dr. (904) 490-8228

# Chameleon Care Sheet

Essential Guidance for Keeping Chameleons Healthy and Happy

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## Habitat and Enclosure

### *Enclosure Type and Size*

- **Screen Cages:** Chameleons require excellent ventilation. Screen cages are preferred over glass terrariums as they reduce humidity buildup and provide fresh air, minimizing respiratory problems.
- **Minimum Size:** For an adult chameleon, a vertical enclosure of at least 24" x 24" x 48" is recommended. Bigger enclosures promote natural behavior and better thermal gradients. You can start a juvenile chameleon in an 18" x 18" x 36"

### *Substrate*

- **Bare Bottom:** Easiest to clean and prevents impaction hazards.
- **Bioactive Substrate:** Advanced keepers might use a bioactive setup with a drainage layer, organic soil, and live plants to mimic the chameleon's natural environment.
- **Paper towels:** easiest to clean, works well for quarantining an animal.
- **Reptisoil, coco fiber, Forest Floor:** easy to clean and maintains humidity well.

### *Climbing Structures*

- **Furnish the enclosure with sturdy branches, vines, and live or artificial plants.** Chameleons are arboreal and need ample vertical and horizontal pathways for climbing and basking.
- **Safe plants include Pothos, Ficus, Hibiscus, and Schefflera.** Verify all plants are non-toxic and pesticide-free.

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## Lighting and UVB

- **UVB Lighting:** Essential for calcium metabolism and bone health. Use a linear UVB bulb (5.0 or 10.0, depending on the species and enclosure height) and replace it every 6-8 months as its effectiveness decreases over time.

## Heating and Temperature Gradient

- **Basking Spot:** 85-95°F during the day, created with a heat lamp at the enclosure's top.
- **Ambient Temperature:** 72-82°F .
- **Night Temperature:** Drop to 70°F to replicate natural conditions. Most chameleons tolerate moderate nighttime cooling.
- **Use digital thermometers at multiple heights or a temp gun to monitor temperatures.**

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## Humidity and Hydration

- **Humidity:** Maintain at 50-70% for most species (Panther chameleons prefer slightly higher).
- **Misting:** Mist the enclosure 2-3 times daily with dechlorinated water. Automated misting systems or drip systems are highly recommended.
- **Chameleons rarely drink from standing water;** droplets on leaves stimulate drinking behavior.

## Diet and Nutrition

### Main Diet

- Chameleons are primarily insectivorous. Feed a variety of insects such as crickets, discoid roaches, black soldier fly larvae, silkworms, and hornworms.
- Panther and Veiled chameleons may consume some fruit or leafy greens, but insects should form the bulk of their diet.

### Supplementation

- Calcium: Dust insects with calcium powder at every feeding for juveniles, and every other feeding for adults.
- Multivitamin: Provide a reptile multivitamin with vitamin A (not beta carotene) once or twice a month.

### Feeding Schedule

- Juveniles: Feed daily (10-15 appropriately sized insects).
- Adults: Feed every other day (6-8 insects per feeding).

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## Handling and Behavior

- Chameleons are solitary and easily stressed by frequent handling. Limit direct contact; instead, let them explore your hand at their own pace.
- Watch for signs of stress: very dark or very bright coloration, gaping, hissing, or retreating. Respect their boundaries for optimal health.

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## Health and Wellness

### Common Health Issues

- Metabolic Bone Disease (MBD): Caused by insufficient calcium and/or UVB. Symptoms include weak limbs, jaw deformities, and tremors.
- Respiratory Infections: Poor ventilation, high humidity, or cold temperatures contribute to respiratory problems. Signs include wheezing, bubbling from the nose, and lethargy.
- Parasitic Infections: Regular fecal checks by a reptile veterinarian are recommended.
- Dehydration: Symptoms include sunken eyes, wrinkled skin, and poor appetite. Increase misting and seek veterinary advice if these signs appear.

**Vet Care:** If you notice your chameleon is lethargic, not eating for excessive periods of time, losing weight, struggling to move or breathe, consider reaching out to any of the following vets:

- Exotic Bird Hospital on Beach Blvd. (904) 256-0043
- Riverside Animal Hospital Downtown (904) 388-3494
- Birch Island Veterinary Center on Philips Hwy. (904) 717-6840
- Forever Vets Animal Hospital on Bartram Market Dr. (904) 490-8228

# Hognose Snake Care Sheet

Your Comprehensive Guide to Keeping Happy and Healthy Hognose Snakes

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## Quick Facts

- Lifespan: 12–18 years (sometimes longer with excellent care)
  - Size: 14–36 inches (females are typically larger than males)
  - Activity: Primarily crepuscular (active at dawn and dusk)
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## Enclosure Requirements

### *Size and Setup*

A single Western hognose snake should be housed in a secure enclosure with a minimum size of 20 gallons (e.g., a 30" x 12" x 12" terrarium). Height is less important than floor space, as these are terrestrial snakes.

### *Substrate*

Hognose snakes love to burrow. Choose a substrate that retains humidity and allows for digging, such as:

- Aspen shavings (most popular due to its safety and ease of cleaning)
- Coconut fiber
- Reptile sand
- Paper towels or reptile carpet (for quarantine or medical setups)

Avoid pine or cedar shavings, as their oils can be toxic.

### *Hides and Decor*

Provide at least two hides—one on the warm side and one on the cool side. You can also include:

- Branches for climbing and enrichment
- Artificial or live plants for cover
- Rocks and cork bark for additional hiding spots

Ensure all decor is stable and free of sharp edges.

### *Temperature and Heating*

Hognose snakes require a thermal gradient:

- Warm side: 85–90°F
- Cool side: 70–75°F

Use an under-tank heating pad regulated by a thermostat or a heat bulb and fixture to achieve these temperatures. Avoid heat rocks, as they can cause burns. Nighttime temperatures can drop to around 70°F.

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## Cleaning and Maintenance

- Spot-clean waste daily.
- Replace water daily and disinfect the dish weekly.
- Deep-clean the enclosure monthly: remove the snake, replace substrate, and sanitize all surfaces and decor.

## Diet and Feeding

### *Food Items*

- Hatchlings: Pinky mice every 4–5 days
- Juveniles: fuzzy/ hopper mice every 5-7 days
- Adults: Adult mice every 7–10 days

## Handling and Temperament

Western hognose snakes are famous for their dramatic defensive displays—puffing up, flattening their necks, and even playing dead. Despite this, they are rarely aggressive toward humans. With regular, gentle handling, they become calm and tolerant. Give your snake 7-10 days without handling after you first take it home.

- Support the snake's body fully when handling.
- Move slowly and confidently to avoid startling your snake.
- Handle for short periods (10–15 minutes) at first, gradually increasing as the snake becomes accustomed to you.
- Avoid handling during shedding or immediately after feeding.

## Health and Common Issues

A healthy hognose snake is alert, has clear eyes, and eats regularly. Watch for the following symptoms:

- Lethargy or refusal to eat not associated with shedding or breeding
- Unusual swelling, lumps, or injuries
- Wheezing, bubbles at the nostrils, or frequent yawning (potential respiratory infection)
- Discharge from eyes or mouth
- Consistently retained shed skin

**Vet Care:** If you notice your snake is lethargic, not eating for excessive periods of time, losing weight, struggling to move or breathe, consider reaching out to any of the following vets:

- Exotic Bird Hospital on Beach Blvd. (904) 256-0043
- Riverside Animal Hospital Downtown (904) 388-3494
- Birch Island Veterinary Center on Philips Hwy. (904) 717-6840
- Forever Vets Animal Hospital on Bartram Market Dr. (904) 490-8228

## Safety and Venom

Hognose snakes possess mild, rear-fanged venom used to subdue prey. Their venom poses little risk to humans, most people experience no reaction, though some may develop mild localized swelling if bitten. Always wash hands after handling your snake and use caution if you have known allergies.

# Corn Snake Care Sheet

(*Pantherophis guttatus*)

Size: 3-5 feet

Life Span: 15-20+ years

## Enclosure & Habitat

### *Enclosure Size*

- Juveniles: 20-gallon long tank (30" x 12" x 12" minimum)
- Adults: 40-gallon tank or larger (36" x 18" x 18" or larger)

A secure lid is essential, as corn snakes are adept escape artists.

### *Substrate*

- Reptisoil; Naturalistic dirt substrate that can hold humidity.
- Paper towels: Great for ease of cleaning, especially for hatchlings or during quarantine.
- Coconut fiber or cypress mulch: Suitable for humidity control, but avoid pine or cedar, which are toxic.

Spot clean soiled areas daily and replace all substrate every 3-4 months.

### *Temperature & Heating*

Corn snakes require a thermal gradient.

- Warm side: 85°F
- Cool side: 75°F
- Nighttime temps: Can drop to 70°F, but not lower.

Use an under-tank heating pad regulated by a thermostat, heat bulb, or ceramic heat emitter to achieve this. Do not use heat rocks, as they can cause burns.

### *Humidity*

Maintain humidity at 40-60%. Provide a larger water dish or mist the enclosure lightly during shed cycles. Proper humidity helps ensure healthy shedding and respiratory health.

### *Hides and Enrichment*

Provide at least two hides, one on the warm side and one on the cool side so your snake can regulate its body temperature while feeling secure. Add branches for climbing, artificial or live plants, cork bark, and tunnels for enrichment and stimulation.

## Shedding

Corn snakes shed every 4-8 weeks, depending on age and growth. A blue or opaque appearance indicates an impending shed. Increase humidity and provide a moist hide to help.

## Handling & Temperament

Corn snakes are gentle and rarely bite. Allow a new snake a week or more to acclimate before handling. Begin with short, gentle sessions and always support the snake's body. Avoid sudden movements. Younger snakes may be more nervous but usually become tame with patience.

# Feeding

## *Diet*

- Hatchlings: Pinky mice
- Juveniles: Fuzzy or hopper mice
- Adults: Adult mice or small rats

## *Feeding Schedule*

- Hatchlings: Every 5-7 days
- Juveniles: Every 7-10 days
- Adults: Every 10-14 days

Do not handle your snake for 48 hours after feeding to avoid regurgitation.

# Health and Common Problems

## *Common Health Issues*

- Respiratory infections: Wheezing, bubbles from nose/mouth, lethargy, often caused by poor husbandry or low temps.
- Mites: Tiny black dots, excessive soaking; treat with reptile-safe mite sprays and clean enclosure thoroughly.
- Shedding problems: Retained skin or eye caps; improve humidity and provide rough surfaces for rubbing.
- Regurgitation: Often from feeding too large a meal, stress, or handling after feeding.

**Vet Care:** If you notice your corn snake is lethargic, not eating for excessive periods of time, losing weight, struggling to move or breathe, consider reaching out to any of the following vets:

- Exotic Bird Hospital on Beach Blvd. (904) 256-0043
- Riverside Animal Hospital Downtown (904) 388-3494
- Birch Island Veterinary Center on Philips Hwy. (904) 717-6840
- Forever Vets Animal Hospital on Bartram Market Dr. (904) 490-8228

# Pixie Frog Care Sheet

A Comprehensive Guide to the African Bullfrog (*Pyxicephalus adspersus*)

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## Enclosure Requirements

### *Enclosure Size*

- Juveniles: A 10–20 gallon tank is sufficient.
- Adults: A 40-gallon breeder tank (36" x 18" x 16") is recommended, as adults can reach lengths of 10 inches or more and weigh over 2 kilograms.
- Height is less important than floor space, as pixie frogs are terrestrial and rarely climb.

### *Substrate*

- Use a deep, moisture-retentive substrate such as coconut fiber, cypress mulch, or Reptisoil. The substrate should be at least 4–6 inches deep to allow burrowing behavior.
- Spot-clean regularly and replace fully every 1-2 months to prevent mold and bacteria buildup.

### *Heating and Temperature*

- Daytime temperatures: 75–85°F
- Nighttime temperatures: 68–75°F
- Use a heat bulb or ceramic heat emitter to maintain temperature.
- A digital thermometer is essential for monitoring conditions.

### *Lighting*

- Pixie frogs are primarily nocturnal and do not require UVB lighting, but a low-level UVB (2.0 or 5.0) can be beneficial for overall health.
- Provide a natural day/night cycle of about 12 hours each.

### *Humidity and Water*

- Maintain humidity between 60–80%. Mist the enclosure daily as needed.
- Provide a large, shallow water dish with fresh, dechlorinated water. The dish should be big enough for the frog to soak its entire body, but not so deep that it risks drowning.
- Change water daily to prevent bacterial growth.

### *Hides and Enrichment*

- Offer multiple hides using cork bark, rock hides, or logs to make the frog feel secure.
  - Live or artificial plants can help mimic a natural environment and provide additional cover.
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## Handling and Temperament

Pixie frogs are best admired rather than handled regularly. They can be defensive, especially when startled, and their powerful bite can draw blood. If handling is necessary (for cleaning or medical reasons), wear gloves and support their body gently but firmly.

- Wash your hands thoroughly before and after contact to avoid transmitting oils or chemicals to the frog and to protect yourself from salmonella.
- Do not handle for extended periods; frogs absorb substances through their skin, and stress should be minimized.

## Feeding and Diet

Pixie frogs are carnivorous and have a powerful bite. They will eat almost anything that moves and can fit in their mouth, including insects, rodents, fish, and even other frogs. Obesity is a common problem in captivity, so portion control is key.

### Juvenile Diet

- Feed daily on a variety of gut-loaded insects such as crickets, roaches, locusts, and earthworms.
- Offer small pinky mice no more than once a week.
- Dust food with calcium and vitamin supplements twice a week.

### Adult Diet

- Feed 2–3 times per week.
- Suitable foods include large insects, nightcrawlers, occasional feeder fish, and pre-killed rodents (fuzzies or adult mice, depending on frog size).
- Rodents should be fed sparingly (no more than once every 2–3 weeks) to prevent obesity and organ issues.
- Calcium and vitamin supplementation should be provided once per week.

### Feeding Tips

- Use feeding tongs to avoid accidental bites, as their jaws are strong and they often strike with speed.
- Remove uneaten food promptly to avoid fouling the enclosure.

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## Health and Common Problems

- Obesity: Avoid overfeeding; maintain a feeding schedule.
- Metabolic Bone Disease (MBD): Ensure a balanced diet with proper calcium and vitamin D3 supplementation.
- Skin Infections: Maintain high enclosure hygiene; look for redness, swelling, or sores.
- Parasites: New frogs should be quarantined and checked for parasites by a reptile veterinarian.
- Respiratory Issues: Monitor for wheezing, bubbles from the mouth, or lethargy, which may indicate poor humidity or substrate conditions.

# Dart Frog Care Sheet

## A Comprehensive Guide to Keeping Healthy Dart Frogs

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### Enclosure Setup

#### *Enclosure Size:*

- A 10-gallon vertical tank is suitable for a pair of dart frogs, but larger enclosures (20 gallons or more) are recommended for groups or more active species. Vertical space is preferable to allow climbing and plant growth.

#### *Substrate:*

- A layered substrate mimics the rainforest floor and aids humidity. Start with a drainage layer (such as hydroballs or gravel), covered by a barrier mesh, then a moisture-retaining layer like coconut fiber. Top off with leaf litter and sphagnum moss for aesthetics and microfauna support.
- For a more simple substrate you can do Ecoearth or Reptisoil.

#### *Plants and Decor:*

- Live/ fake plants are essential, providing cover, climbing surfaces, and humidity control. Suitable live plants include pothos, bromeliads, philodendrons, and ferns. Cork bark, driftwood, and rocks can be added for structure, but avoid sharp edges.

#### *Temperature:*

- Maintain a temperature of 72-80°F (22-27°C) during the day and a slight drop at night, but avoid temperatures above 85°F (29°C), which can be harmful.

#### *Humidity:*

- High humidity (70-100%) is vital. Mist the enclosure once or twice daily, and use a glass lid to retain moisture. Automated misting systems or foggers can help maintain consistent conditions.

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### Water Quality

Provide a shallow water dish with fresh, dechlorinated water. Change the water daily, and clean the dish regularly to prevent bacterial buildup. Dart frogs also benefit from water features that mimic natural rain, such as drip walls or misters.

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### Feeding

Dart frogs eat a diet of small, live invertebrates. The most common feeder insects are:

- Fruit flies (*Drosophila melanogaster* and *D. hydei*)
- Pinhead crickets
- Springtails
- Isopods

Feed adult dart frogs once a day, offering as many insects as they will consume in 10-15 minutes. Juveniles may require feeding twice daily.

#### *Supplementation:*

- Dust feeder insects with a high-quality amphibian calcium and vitamin supplement (including D3) at least twice a week. A multivitamin supplement can be used once or twice weekly to prevent nutritional deficiencies.

## Handling and Temperament

Dart frogs are best observed, not handled. Their delicate skin absorbs chemicals and oils easily, so minimize contact to prevent stress and health issues. If handling is necessary (such as for enclosure transfer), use wet, powder-free gloves and move gently.

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## Health Monitoring

Regularly observe your frogs for signs of good health:

- Bright coloration
- Active, alert behavior
- Clear eyes and skin
- Steady appetite

Signs of illness include lethargy, weight loss, skin abnormalities, or refusal to eat. Address health concerns quickly, consulting a veterinarian experienced with amphibians.

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## Common Pitfalls and Solutions

- Low Humidity: Increase misting frequency or add a fogger.
- Inadequate Diet: Rotate feeder insects and supplement as directed.
- Stress: Avoid overcrowding, excessive handling, and sudden changes in environment.
- Escape Risks: Ensure the tank lid is secure, as dart frogs are skilled climbers.

# Axolotl Care Sheet

## Basic Information

- Common Name: Axolotl
  - Scientific Name: *Ambystoma mexicanum*
  - Lifespan: 10–15 years with proper care
  - Size: 6–12 inches (15–30 cm)
  - Origin: Lakes of Xochimilco, Mexico
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## Habitat & Tank Setup

### Tank Size

- Minimum 20 gallons for one axolotl
- Long tanks preferred over tall ones

### Water Temperature

- Ideal range: 60–68°F (16–20°C)
- Never exceed 72°F – heat stress is dangerous
- Use an aquarium fan or chiller if needed

### Water Quality

- pH: 6.5–8.0
- Ammonia/Nitrites: 0 ppm (toxic)
- Nitrates: < 20–40 ppm
- Filtration: Sponge filter or low-flow external filter
- Cycling: Fully cycle tank before introducing your axolotl
- Weekly 20–30% water changes with dechlorinated water

### Substrate

- Bare bottom or fine sand only
- Avoid gravel, axolotls may ingest it and become impacted

### Decor & Enrichment

- Provide hides (caves, PVC pipes, aquarium-safe ornaments)
- Add live or silk plants for cover
- Avoid sharp edges and strong currents

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## Diet & Feeding

### Diet

- Carnivorous
- Feed a variety of:
  - Earthworms (nightcrawlers), Crickets (off tongs)
  - Axolotl pellets
  - Bloodworms (as treats)

### Feeding Schedule

- Juveniles: Daily
- Adults: Every 2–3 days
- Remove uneaten food to avoid water quality issues

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## Handling & Health

### Handling

- Avoid handling- axolotls are amphibians that can absorb toxins and oils from your hands into their skin which can cause illness
- Use a soft net or container to move them

### Common Health Issues

- Ammonia burns (from poor water quality)
- Fungal infections (white cottony patches)
- Impaction (from ingesting gravel or large food items)
- Floating (can indicate gas, stress, or illness)

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## Behavior & Compatibility

- Solitary but tolerant: Can house multiple axolotls of similar size in a large tank, but watch for aggression
- No fish tankmates: Most fish nip at their gills or get eaten
- Active at dusk/dawn, rest during the day

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## Quick Tips

- Always dechlorinate water
- Monitor temperature during hot months
- Avoid bright lighting – axolotls prefer dim environments
- Never mix different sizes or species in one tank

# Boa Constrictor Care Sheet

Comprehensive Guide to the Husbandry of Boa Constrictors

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## Housing

### *Enclosure Size*

- Hatchlings and juveniles (up to 3 feet): A 40-gallon enclosure is sufficient.
- Subadults (3-6 feet): A 4'x2'x2' enclosure is recommended.
- Adults (6-10 feet): Minimum enclosure size of 6'x2'x2', though larger is always better.

Boa constrictors appreciate both horizontal and vertical space, particularly younger snakes. Secure lids and doors are essential, as boas are strong and adept escape artists.

### *Substrate*

Popular substrate options include:

- Aspen bedding
- Cypress mulch
- Coconut husk fiber
- Reptisoil
- Paper towels or newspaper (for quarantine or ease of cleaning)

Avoid pine or cedar shavings, as aromatic oils can cause respiratory problems. The substrate should be absorbent, promote burrowing, and maintain humidity without molding.

### *Decor and Hides*

Provide at least two hides—one on the warm side and one on the cool side of the enclosure.

Branches, sturdy driftwood, and vines help mimic their natural environment and offer climbing opportunities. Add artificial or live plants for enrichment and security.

### *Cleaning*

Spot-clean daily to remove feces and uneaten food. Replace substrate entirely every 3-4 months, or sooner if soiled. Disinfect enclosure and furnishings with a reptile-safe solution such as diluted bleach, diluted vinegar, ammonia free glass cleaner, or reptile brand cleaners.

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## Temperature & Heating

Boa constrictors require a thermal gradient to regulate their body temperature.

- Warm side (basking area): 88–92°F
- Cool side: 78–82°F
- Night drop: Temperatures can fall a few degrees at night but should not dip below 70°F, try to keep enclosure warmer over night for babies because they don't do well with extreme temperature fluctuations.

Use heat mats, ceramic heat emitters, or radiant heat panels regulated by thermostats. Avoid hot rocks, which can cause burns. Always monitor temperatures with reliable digital thermometers.

## Humidity & Water

Relative humidity should be maintained between 50–70%. Mist the enclosure as needed and provide a large, sturdy water bowl for soaking and drinking. During shedding, increasing humidity to the upper range helps ensure a clean shed. Poor humidity management can lead to respiratory infections and incomplete sheds. Sphagnum moss can be moistened and added to the hide on the warm side of the enclosure to increase humidity.

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## Diet & Feeding

Prey items should be as wide as the thickest part of the snake's body.

- Hatchlings/Juveniles: Mice or rat pups every 7–10 days
- Subadults: Appropriately sized rats every 10–14 days
- Adults: Large rats or rabbits every 2–4 weeks, depending on size and activity

Do not overfeed; boas are prone to obesity in captivity.

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## Handling

Boa constrictors are generally calm and tolerate gentle handling well. Always support the body and avoid sudden movements. Limit handling for new arrivals for at least a week to reduce stress, and never handle after feeding or during shedding. Wash your hands before and after handling to prevent disease transmission.

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## Health & Common Issues

Regular monitoring for signs of illness is vital:

- Respiratory infections: Wheezing, bubbly saliva, open-mouth breathing
- Mouth rot: Swollen, discolored mouth tissue, pus
- Parasites: Mites, ticks, or unusual feces
- Inclusion body disease (IBD): Neurological symptoms, regurgitation, stargazing

Consult a qualified reptile veterinarian for any concerns. Regular health checks, quarantine for new arrivals, and good hygiene practices are key to preventing disease.

**Vet Care:** If you notice your boa is lethargic, not eating for excessive periods of time, losing weight, struggling to move or breathe, consider reaching out to any of the following vets:

- Exotic Bird Hospital on Beach Blvd. (904) 256-0043
- Riverside Animal Hospital Downtown (904) 388-3494
- Birch Island Veterinary Center on Philips Hwy. (904) 717-6840
- Forever Vets Animal Hospital on Bartram Market Dr. (904) 490-8228