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

# *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

# *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.

# *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.

# *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.

# *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