



Maryland Avian & Exotics Veterinary Care

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Leopard Gecko Husbandry

Diet: Crickets should be staple part of the diet. Juveniles should be fed daily and the insects should be dusted four to five times a week with the calcium/vitamin D 3 powder supplement. A second multivitamin, including vitamin A, powder supplement is necessary once a week.

Adults should be fed every 2-4 days and the insects should be dusted with a calcium/Vitamin D 3 supplement at each feeding and every other week with a multivitamin powder containing vitamin A. It is not recommended to feed the gecko in its cage so that you can prevent ingestion of the substrate and to prevent any uneaten crickets from injuring the gecko. See the cricket care handout.

Housing: Offer fresh water daily in a water dish large enough for the lizard to soak its entire body in. Additional soaks in shallow warm water for 15-20 minutes 2-3 times a week are helpful, especially during a shed. Misting the cage with water daily also helps maintain humidity in the cage which will keep your pet healthy and shedding properly. Creating a humidity box may also be helpful with shedding. A 10 to 20 gallon fish tank is a good size for juveniles. Housing adults individually is important to prevent fighting.

Substrate: Paper towels, newspaper, indoor/outdoor carpet or a paper pulp product are the safest beddings to use. Sand can cause damage to the eyes and substrates, like mosses or barks can cause intestinal obstructions if ingested.

Lighting/Heat: Reptiles regulate their temperature through their environment and need supplemental heat. Proper heat and lighting is important to keep your lizard healthy. You can provide heat with an under the tank heater and an incandescent light bulb, the wattage will depend on the size of the cage and environmental temperature, or a ceramic heater. Temperatures should reach 80-88 degrees F on the warm side and 70-75 degrees on the cool side. **Always measure the temperature at the bottom of the cage and/or at the basking site where the reptile actually sits with an accurate thermometer!** Leopard geckos do not require a source of UVb light like other reptiles but it does not cause harm if used properly.

Humidity Boxes: To create a humidity box you can purchase a commercially produced hide box that is not porous. This will help prevent mold from growing. You can also cut an entrance out of a plastic container, flower pot or similar items. Placing a small amount of damp sphagnum moss, will allow the reptile to hide in this moist environment where there is increased humidity. It is important to change the moss weekly to prevent bacteria and mold build up. Also monitor the reptile to ensure it does not ingest the moss.

VETERINARY CARE

Yearly examinations are recommended for leopard geckos and other reptiles to help prevent disease and husbandry related problems. A majority of health problems in reptiles are caused by improper diet and environment. Metabolic bone disease, impactions and reproductive related problems can easily be prevented with veterinary guidance. It is also important to check newly purchase for pre-existing conditions and for internal and external parasites. To schedule an appointment, please call for an appointment 240.687.1414.