



# Maryland Avian & Exotics Veterinary Care

DR. LISA CARR, DVM



## **CARNIVORIOUS LIZARD CARE (Monitors/Tegus)**

### ***DIET AND HOUSING***

These lizards should be fed daily to several times a week. Prey items should be small, such as crickets, mealworms, pinkies, or a small amount of dog food, etc. Occasionally you can feed a larger item such as a frozen, thawed rodent of appropriate size to the lizard. Overfeeding and obesity is common in these species so be careful to monitor your lizard's weight carefully. Fresh water should be available at all times. The bowl should be large enough for the lizard to soak its body. A 30-gallon fish tank with a secure, screen top is a good cage to start with for most young monitor lizards. But as they grow the size of the enclosure will need to get bigger so that they get the appropriate amount of exercise. The minimum size cage should be at least twice the length of the animal. A basking area with an incandescent bulb should be offered on one side of the cage. The temperature under that light, should reach 92-95 degrees F. You also need to offer a 5.0 UVB fluorescent light over the basking area. This bulb needs to be 7-15 inches from the animal in order to work well. Make sure there is NO glass or plastic between this bulb and your monitor. Lights should be on for 12 hours and UVb fluorescent bulbs need to be replaced every 6 months (even if they still work). Right now there are several incandescent bulbs that provide heat and UVb such as, Active Heat by T-Rex and PowerSun by Zoomed. At night the cage temperatures should drop to the lower 80's upper 70's so if it gets colder than this supplemental heat may be needed. Newspaper or indoor/outdoor carpeting is the ideal substrate to line the cage.

### **VETERINARY CARE**

Yearly examinations are important in this type of lizard. Many of these species are caught in the wild so internal and external parasites are common. Stress from being transported is common and contribute to poor health and disease. As mentioned above, obesity is frequently seen in monitors and tegus so nutritional counseling is helpful to new lizard owners. If you would like to schedule an appointment, please call Dr. Carr at 240.687.1414