

# leopard gecko

## care sheet



Leopard geckos are available in a variety of morphs including lucicistic, high yellow and albino. Unlike other geckos, leopard geckos have moveable eyelids.

### facts

average adult size: 6 to 9 inches long

average life span: 20+ years  
with proper care

diet: insectivore

*Will reach adult size in 9 to 12 months, under ideal conditions; upgrade habitat size as your reptile grows.*



**Note:** The information on this Care Sheet is not a substitute for veterinary care. If you need additional information, refer to the Sources section or contact your veterinarian as appropriate.

Developed with and approved by a qualified veterinarian.

### diet

A well-balanced leopard gecko diet consists of:

- Insects, including crickets, small mealworms and waxworms. Use gut-loaded (recently fed) crickets no larger than the space between the gecko's eyes.

### feeding

Things to remember when feeding your leopard gecko:

- Fresh, clean, chlorine-free water should be available at all times.
- Feed daily.
- Sprinkle food with calcium supplement daily and a multi-vitamin supplement once or twice a week.

### housing

- Size - Appropriately sized habitat with secure cover; a 10 to 20 gallon tank is recommended for one leopard gecko.
- Habitat - Provide multiple hiding areas with non-toxic plants, branches, logs and cork. Maintain humidity below 50%.
- Substrate - Use sani-chips, calci-sand or terrarium carpet.

- Temperature - Temperature gradient (95°F for the warm end/basking area and 78 to 88°F for the cool end).
- Lighting - 10 to 12 hours of light per day is required; because leopard geckos are nocturnal, they do not require UVB lighting. An incandescent bulb can be used for basking area during daylight hours only; can use a ceramic heater or nocturnal heat bulb at all hours.
- **Do not** house two or more male geckos together and **do not** house different reptile species together.

### normal behavior

- Nocturnal (active during the night) and hide under rocks or burrow into the sand during the day.
- Leopard geckos will eat their skin when shedding.
- Keep handling to a minimum as overhandling can cause them stress.
- Never grab a leopard gecko by its tail as they may drop their tail.

### habitat maintenance

- Thoroughly clean and disinfect the habitat at least once a week: place leopard gecko in a secure habitat; scrub the tank and furnishings with a 3% bleach solution; rinse thoroughly with water, removing all traces of bleach smell; dry the tank and furnishings completely and add clean substrate.

### grooming and hygiene

- Leopard geckos regularly shed their skin; ensure humidity of habitat is at appropriate level to allow proper shedding. To facilitate shedding, provide a shed box, a hide box with sphagnum moss, that will aid in the shedding process.

### signs of a healthy animal

- Active and alert
- Clear eyes
- Body and tail are filled out
- Healthy skin
- Clear nose and vent
- Eats regularly

### red flags

- Weight loss or decreased appetite
- Mucus in mouth or nose
- Swelling
- Retained shed on toes
- Lethargy
- Bumps, sores or abrasions on skin
- Labored breathing
- Paralysis of limbs
- Abnormal feces

*If you notice any of these signs, contact your veterinarian.*

### common health issues

| Health Issue                      | Symptoms or Causes   | Suggested Action   |
|-----------------------------------|--|--|
| Gastro-intestinal disease         | Runny stools, caked or smeared stool around the vent area, and loss of appetite caused by bacterial or parasitic infection.  | Consult your veterinarian.   |
| Metabolic bone/vitamin deficiency | Inability to absorb calcium due to insufficient UVB light or improper calcium/vitamin D supplements. If untreated, can lead to a disorder characterized by deformities and softened bones. Swollen limbs and lethargy. | Consult your veterinarian and provide ample UVB lighting and proper calcium/vitamin supplements. |
| Respiratory disease               | Labored breathing and mucus in the mouth or nose. Can be caused by a habitat that is too cold or damp.   | Consult your veterinarian and ensure habitat is the proper temperature.                          |

## shopping list for needed supplies

- Appropriately sized habitat
- Substrate
- Moss
- Water dish
- Mealworm dish
- Hideaway place
- Climbing décor
- Plants
- Heat light
- Heat fixture
- Under-tank heater (optional)
- Vitamin supplement
- Calcium supplement
- Cricket keeper
- Cricket food
- Cricket quencher
- Thermometer
- Humidity gauge
- Book about leopard geckos

## sources

Ask a store partner about Petco's selection of books on leopard geckos and the variety of private brand products available for the care and happiness of your new pet. All private brand products carry a 100% money-back guarantee.

Because all reptiles are potential carriers of infectious diseases, such as *Salmonella*, always wash your hands before and after handling your reptile or habitat contents to help prevent the potential spread of disease.

Pregnant women, children under the age of 5, senior citizens and people with weakened immune systems should contact their physician before purchasing or caring for reptiles and should consider not having a reptile as a pet.

Go to [cdc.gov/healthypets](http://cdc.gov/healthypets) and [petco.com/caresheet](http://petco.com/caresheet) for more information about small animals and disease.

This Care Sheet can cover the care needs of other species. Go to [petco.com](http://petco.com) for more information.

