

# tropical gecko

## care sheet



Tropical geckos can lighten or darken their skin tone to blend into their environment. Also, many of these geckos can walk on vertical surfaces or even the ceiling of their habitat.

### facts

- average adult size: 4 to 12 inches depending on species
- average life span: up to 10+ years with proper care
- diet: insectivore

*Will reach adult size in 6 to 18 months, depending on species and 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.

# tropical gecko

includes African fat-tailed, crocodile, giant day, tokay and golden geckos

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### diet

A well-balanced tropical gecko diet consists of:

- A variety of insects, including gut-loaded (recently fed) crickets, roaches, mealworms and waxworms.
- Some species, such as golden geckos, like fruit-flavored baby food.

### feeding

Things to remember when feeding your tropical gecko:

- Fresh, clean, chlorine-free water should be available at all times.
- Feed your gecko appropriately sized insects based on their size. A cricket should be no larger than the space between their eyes.
- Feed daily.
- Sprinkle food with calcium supplement daily and a multi-vitamin supplement once or twice a week.

### housing

- Size - Appropriately sized and shaped habitat to accommodate normal behaviors and exercise.
- Habitat - Thick branches for climbing; tall, dense, non-toxic plants for hiding, a hiding place on the

ground for species like African fat-tailed geckos and a hiding area elevated off the habitat floor is also necessary for arboreal geckos. Maintain 50 to 70% humidity by misting as needed every day.

- Substrate - Use a mulch type such as coconut fiber or bark.
- Temperature - Temperature gradient (95°F for the warm end and 70°F for the cool end); Use an incandescent light or ceramic heater as primary heat source.
- Lighting - UVB rays with full spectrum lighting for 10 to 12 hours a day is recommended for some geckos; most tropical geckos only need fluorescent light for 10 to 12 hours a day. An incandescent day bulb can be used for basking area if not using a ceramic heater.
- House adult tropical geckos separately and do **not** house different reptile species together.

### normal behavior

- Most tropical gecko species are nocturnal (active at night).

- Many tropical geckos are easily stressed and do not like to be handled; some become aggressive when handled.
- Some tropical geckos may bite when handled.

### habitat maintenance

- Thoroughly clean and disinfect the habitat at least once a week: place 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

- Geckos regularly shed their skin; ensure humidity of habitat is at appropriate level to allow proper shedding.
- Provide a shed box, which is essentially 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
- 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. 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 and mealworm dishes
- Hideaway place
- Climbing décor
- Plants
- Heat light
- Heat fixture
- Under-tank heater (optional)
- UVB lighting and fixture
- Vitamin supplement
- Calcium supplement
- Cricket keeper
- Cricket food
- Cricket quencher
- Thermometer
- Humidity gauge
- Book about tropical geckos

## sources

Ask a store partner about Petco's selection of books on tropical 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.

