

# veiled chameleon

## care sheet



Veiled chameleons are able to look in any direction without turning their heads or shifting body position because each eye can swivel nearly 180°. Veiled chameleons have specific care requirements.

### facts

- average adult size: 18 to 24 inches long, depending on species
- average life span: up to 5+ years with proper care
- diet: omnivore

*Will reach adult size in 9 to 12 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.

**diet**

A well-balanced veiled chameleon diet consists of:

- A variety of insects, including gut-loaded (recently fed) crickets, mealworms and waxworms.
- Dark, leafy green vegetables such as collard greens; pothos and ficus leaves.

**feeding**

Things to remember when feeding your veiled chameleon:

- Rely on moisture on plants for water; mist plants 4 to 5 times daily and/or use a dripper.
- Feed daily. Juveniles should have a constant supply of food.
- Sprinkle food with calcium supplement daily and a multi-vitamin supplement once or twice a week.
- Vegetables not eaten within 24 hours should be discarded.

**housing**

- Size - Appropriately sized and shaped habitat to accommodate normal behavior and exercise; preferably taller than wide, with screened sides.

Chameleons do better in a well-ventilated habitat. Habitats constructed of mesh or screen are recommended.

- Habitat - Create a dense area of non-toxic plants on one side for hiding; create a more open, exposed area of branches for basking on the other side. When selecting branches, consider the width compared to the size of the chameleon's feet and their ability to grab onto them. Maintain less than 60% humidity. Mist plants as needed to provide water for your chameleons to drink, even if you have a dripper.
- Substrate - Use alfalfa pellets, sphagnum moss and mulch-type substrates.
- Temperature - Temperature gradient (100°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 required. An incandescent day bulb can be used for basking area during daylight hours only; can

use a ceramic heater or nocturnal or red incandescent at all hours.

- House adult veiled chameleons separately and do **not** house different reptile species together.

**normal behavior**

- They are tree-dwellers and reside on branches and in plants exclusively.
- Veiled chameleons change color, depending on temperature and mood.
- Males are generally larger and more vibrant and colorful than females.
- Veiled chameleons become highly stressed when handled; regular handling is not recommended.

**habitat**

**maintenance**

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

- Chameleons 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
- Lethargy
- Bumps, sores or abrasions on skin
- Labored breathing
- Paralysis of limbs
- Abnormal feces
- Non-rotating eye(s)

*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 and ventilated habitat
- Substrate
- Water and mealworm dishes
- Plants
- Heat light
- Heat fixture
- Dripper
- Climbing décor
- UVB lighting and fixture
- Vitamin supplement
- Calcium supplement
- Cricket keeper
- Cricket food
- Cricket quencher
- Thermometer
- Humidity gauge
- Book about veiled chameleons

## sources

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

