

# millipede

## care sheet



The millipede's name means "thousand-legger," which is what they appear to be. Millipedes actually have only 200 to 300 legs and at least four eyes. They are gentle and easy to handle, sleep during the day and come out in the evening to eat.

### facts

scientific name:	narceus americanus
average adult size:	4 to 11 inches long
average life span:	3+ years with proper care
diet:	herbivore



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

Developed with and approved by a qualified veterinarian.

### **diet**

A well-balanced millipede diet consists of:

- Vegetables and fruit, such as romaine lettuce, squash, melon slices and bananas; avoid iceberg lettuce because it does not provide enough nourishment.
- Apples and cucumbers are favorites but everything must be sliced or peeled due to their weak mouthparts.
- Ground cuttlebone will supply needed lime salts.

### **feeding**

Things to remember when feeding your millipede:

- Feed once a day, as much food as they will consume in a night.
- Discard uneaten vegetables and fruits each morning.
- Water - Always have a shallow dish of chlorine-free water available; place a sponge or stones in the dish to keep the millipede from drowning; if a sponge is

used in the dish it must be replaced often due to bacteria growth.

### **housing**

- Size - Appropriately sized habitat, such as a 5 to 10 gallon glass aquarium, with a screen mesh lid fastened tightly with metal clips to prevent escape.
- Hideaway - Provide a hideaway to help your millipede feel secure.
- Substrate - Mulch-type commercial material, dampened sphagnum moss and bark; avoid gravel and artificial turf (too harsh).
- Temperature - 60 to 78°F.
- Lighting - Keep habitat away from sunlight; millipedes sleep during the day and do not like bright, hot lights; a red or blue bulb will allow you to watch the evening activities of your millipede without disturbance.
- Millipedes may be housed with other

### **red flags**

- Poor appetite
- Lethargic
- Fungus
- Dull shell

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



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millipedes of the same species but do not house different invertebrate species together.

### normal behavior

- Generally easy to handle; millipedes don't bite, move slowly and have tough shells.
- Nocturnal (active at night).
- When feeling threatened, they curl up into a tight spiral with their shells to the outside to protect themselves and may secrete a foul-smelling and -tasting fluid meant to repel predators. Always wash your hands after handling a millipede.

### habitat maintenance

Thoroughly clean and disinfect the habitat at least once a week: place millipede 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 before adding clean substrate.

### grooming & hygiene

Handle as little as possible; wash hands before and after handling. Do not allow a millipede's secretion to come into contact with eyes, mouth or open wounds.

### signs of a healthy animal

- Eats regularly
- Body is rounded and full
- Active and alert
- Healthy skin (exoskeleton)

## common health issues

Health Issue	Symptoms or Causes	Suggested Action
Dehydration	Lethargic, shriveled appearance.	Consult your veterinarian.
Fungus	Loss of appetite, white fuzzy patches.	Consult your veterinarian.

## shopping list for needed supplies

- Appropriately sized habitat
- Substrate
- Water and food dishes
- Décor
- Thermometer
- Humidity gauge
- Vitamin supplement
- Calcium supplement
- Cuttlebone
- Red or blue bulb and lighting fixture
- Book about millipedes

## sources

Ask a store partner about Petco's selection of books on millipedes 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 invertebrates are potential carriers of infectious diseases, such as *Salmonella*, always wash your hands before and after handling your invertebrate 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 invertebrates and should consider not having an invertebrate as a pet.

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

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



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