

tarantula

care sheet



Tarantulas are members of the spider family. There are over 800 kinds in many colors. They have eight eyes and are active at night. Females tend to be larger and live longer than males.

facts

includes:	pink-toed, red knee and rose hair tarantulas
average adult size:	2 to 10 inches, depending on species
average life span:	with proper, care, Females- up to 30 years; Males up to 7 years; depending on species.
diet:	carnivore

Will reach adult size in 2 to 9 years, depending on species and under ideal conditions; upgrade habitat size as your pet grows.



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 tarantula diet consists of:

- Appropriately sized live insects, such as gut-loaded (recently fed) crickets, mealworms, superworms, roaches.
- Some species may eat frozen/thawed pinkie mice, thawed/warmed to room temperature.

feeding

Things to remember when feeding your tarantula:

- Fresh, clean, chlorine-free water should be available at all times; may not drink from a bowl but will rely on moisture on plants.
- Feed juveniles daily, adults every other day. Since they are nocturnal, feeding should occur at night.
- Be sure that food is smaller than the tarantula; pink toes eat small crickets; remove any uneaten live food as it may cause injury to a resting tarantula.

housing

- Size - Appropriately sized and shaped habitat to accommodate normal behavior and exercise; at least three times the leg-span long and two times the leg-span wide. Height should be the length of the tarantula for ground dwellers, about 10 inches for tree-dwelling tarantulas.
- Habitat - Provide a place to hide, such as a half log; tree-dwelling tarantulas also need twigs and branches to build their webs. Maintain 50 to 90% humidity by misting as needed every day.
- Substrate - Mulch-type such as coconut fiber bedding, reptile bark or dampened sphagnum moss; avoid gravel and artificial turf (too harsh for skin).
- Temperature - 70 to 82°F.
- Lighting - Keep in a darker part of the room

red flags

- | | |
|--|---|
| ■ Dull exoskeleton | ■ Getting stuck in a molt |
| ■ Bleeding from injury to leg or abdomen | ■ Loss of appetite that is not associated with molt |
| ■ Very slow movements | |

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



Developed with and approved by a qualified veterinarian.

away from sunlight; avoid incandescent lights which can dry out a tarantula; use a nocturnal or infrared light to watch your tarantula after dark.

- House tarantulas separately and do not house different invertebrate species together.

normal behavior

- Handling tarantulas is not recommended; if feeling threatened, they may bite or even run and fall. Even a short fall can cause serious, even fatal injury.
- Their bite is equivalent to a bee sting but is still painful and some individuals may be especially sensitive; if bitten, seek immediate medical attention.
- As part of their natural defense, some may “flick” urticating hairs which may also cause allergic reaction or irritation in humans.

habitat maintenance

- Thoroughly clean and disinfect the habitat at

least once a week: place tarantula 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.

- Fill water bowl daily.

grooming & hygiene

When tarantulas molt, they lie on their back with their feet up in the air; juveniles molt about four times a year and adults once a year. May stop eating up to two weeks before a molt; do not disturb during this time. Be sure to remove all live food from enclosure as even a cricket could harm them during this period.

signs of a healthy animal

- Eats regularly
- Healthy skin or shell (exoskeleton)
- Active and alert

common health issues

Health Issue	Symptoms or Causes	Suggested Action
Dehydration	Slow moving, shriveled appearance.	Consult your veterinarian and spray-mist the habitat more frequently.
Falls, injuries	Bleeding.	Immediately consult your veterinarian.

shopping list for needed supplies

- ☐ Appropriately sized habitat
- ☐ Substrate
- ☐ Moss
- ☐ Water dish
- ☐ Hideaway place
- ☐ Climbing décor
- ☐ Plants
- ☐ Thermometer
- ☐ Humidity gauge
- ☐ Vitamin supplement
- ☐ Calcium supplement
- ☐ Under-tank heater
- ☐ Cricket keeper
- ☐ Cricket food
- ☐ Cricket quencher
- ☐ Book about tarantulas

sources

Ask a store partner about Petco's selection of books on tarantulas 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](https://www.cdc.gov/healthypets)** and **[petco.com/caresheet](https://www.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](https://www.petco.com)** for more information.

