Leopard Gecko Companion Care Guide



WHEN DO I SEE A VET?

- Annual wellness exam
- Brumation (hibernation) wellness exams
- Not eating or pooping for over a week
- Open mouth breathing or noise while breathing
- Diarrhea, blood in feces, vomiting, or regurgitation
- Retained shed, redness, swelling, or open wounds of the skin
- Swollen eyes, swelling or bleeding of the mouth
- A skinny tail or tail loss
- Any health concerns or questions

Feeding

Baby and Juveniles: 1-2 times a day

Adults: 1 time a day, every other day, or as needed to maintain desired weight

Calcium and vitamin supplements:

Dust insects daily with calcium and vitamins every 1-2 weeks.

Consult with your veterinarian to discuss the possible need of adding vitamin D_3 to your calcium dusting as in some cases it may be beneficial or recommended.

Recommended Dusting Supplements:

Repashy Calcium Plus Reptile Supplement
Flukers Calcium without D_3 and phosphorus free
ZooMed Repti Calcium without D_3
ZooMed Reptivite without D_3

Leopard geckos are pure insectivores aka carnivores and eat an insect based diet. There are several appropriate methods to feeding including offering 2-3 dusted insects in the morning and then evening, offering 4-5 dusted insects one daily, or even offering 5-8 dusted insects every other day depending on the age. Maintaining a balance and routine diet is important to maintaining stable health in a leopard gecko.

Main Insect Food Sources: (~90% of Diet)

Crickets, dubia roaches, or grasshoppers due to low fat to high protein ratios.

Snack Insect Sources: (~10% of Diet)

Mealworms, superworms, hornworms, phoenix worms, silkworms, or butterworms due to high fat or low protein ratios. (Hornworms are a good source of fluids, and Phoenix worms are a good source of calcium).

It is important to know that mealworms and superworms are high in fat and should NOT be a main food source in leopard geckos.

Common Illnesses

- Vitamin A deficiency
- Retained shed (Dysecdysis)
- Intestinal parasites
- Eggbinding or dystocia
- Nutritional Secondary Hyperparathyroidism (Metabolic Bone Disease)
- Cloacal prolapse
- Trauma, tail loss, and open wounds
- Renal disease
- Dehydration

Is My Leopard Lizard a Male or Female?

In adult leopard geckos there are a few visual characteristics that can be used to determine sex. In addition, the most reliable way in determining sex can be done by a skilled veterinary professional through several methods at a younger age. Listed below are two helpful characteristic that you look for to visually differentiate a male and female.

Femoral Pores – As adults, male leopard geckos have more prominent and larger femoral pores. These can be found in a "V" shape running along the ventral (bottom) aspect of their body between their two legs and above their vent. As adults, females tend to have very small to almost nonvisible femoral pores present

Hemipene Bulges – Adult male leopard geckos will have enlarged bulges around the ventral (bottom) aspect of their tail base just behind the vent. Females lack hemipenes and do not develop the same bulge seen in the males. Gently lifting the tail can allow for visualization of these bulges in a male.

Information by Dr. Brandon J. Louth

Husbandry

Enclosure Sizes

Babies: A 10 gallon (20" L x 10" W x 12" H) or larger enclosure

Adults: A 20 gallon long (36" L x 12" W x 12" H) or larger enclosure

Enclosures should have a basking area, hide, water dish, and décor to provide enrichment to your leopard gecko.

Housing

Leopard gecko are territorial reptiles and should be housed alone unless for breeding purposes, due to risk of injury and fighting that can be harmful to your leopard geckos's health.

Humidity and Hydration

Ideal humidity for a leopard gecko is 30-40% humidity and should be monitored using a hygrometer inside the enclosure. A clean water source should be offered at all times in a water dish. Other methods to stimulate drinking includes a moving water source, nighttime fogging one or twice a to stimulate drinking of morning condensation, and misting.

Substrate/Flooring

Paper towels, tile flooring, shelf liners, and slate floor are all acceptable flooring options. Excavator clay burrowing substrate can be molded into place to allow for a nice naturalistic enclosure and enrichment for your leopard gecko. Less common than some other species leopard geckos can get substrate impactions and it is important to monitor hydration and volumes of sand being consumed while on a substrate. Particle substates such as "WASHED" playsand and ecoearth topsoil are good options to allow for burrowing and enrichment. Choose a slightly coarser substate that can be misted and let dry when initially placed to help decrease dust particles. If using a topsoil substrate preforming routine changes every 6 months is recommended and every 12 months when using a washed playsand with weekly fecal sifting on a routine basis.

Enrichment

Thrive Feeding Ball – Allows your leopard gecko to stay stimulated and rotate a plastic ball to gain access their insect food source.

Obstacle Mazes – Stimulates activity and exercise for your leopard gecko to obtain food.

Supervised Time Outside Their Enclosure – A clean, item free area where you can supervise the activity with access to no other pets including dogs, or cats and no area to fall from high heights.

Lighting and Temperatures

Leopard geckos are a crepuscular desert species most active at dust and dawn at first light or just before darkness.

Lighting:

Ideal hours of daylight to nightlight:

10-12 hours on and 12-14 hours off

Recommended UVB lights include:

T5 Strip Lights:

- Arcadia T5 D3Reptile Lamp 6% UVB
- Zoomed Reptisun 5.0 UVB T5-HO

Compact Fluorescent Bulbs:

- Zoomed Mini Compact Fluorescent 5.0 13 Watt

Temperatures:

Basking Temperatures: 85-90°F

Cool Side: 75-80°F

Nighttime Temperatures: 70-75°F

Avoid temperatures below 65°F due to risk of causing digestive issue and other illnesses.

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