

Leopard Gecko

“Eublepharis macularius”

Leopard geckos must be one of the cutest lizards in the world. They have an almost puppy-like quality about them, as they can be so clumsy going after prey and then will happily chew while wagging their tail! They stay small, only 6-8 inches, and are gentle and tame creatures. They make wonderful pets for almost anyone.

General Diet:

Leopard geckos are mainly insectivores, so they eat mostly insects such as small crickets and different types of worms. As adults they will also eat the occasional pinkie mouse. These can be bought frozen and are very good for geckos.

Vitamins/ Supplements:

Reptiles need to have a vitamin/mineral supplement with calcium and phosphorous. This supplement should be sprinkled on the adult's food items at every second to third feeding and more often with very young reptiles. We will be glad to explain how often to feed and give supplements to your new pet.

Treats/ Foods:

Leopard geckos will eat almost anything that moves and fits into their mouths. In warmer weather, it is good to supplement their insect diet with outdoor insects, especially anything soft bodied like moths. But you'll have to remove the wings, these geckos are not the best at catching prey! If they are given frozen pinkie mice, they must be thawed out first and brought to room temperature before being fed. Never feed a reptile cold food or food too big for it to eat easily.

Housing:

Leopard geckos stay small, so an individual can be kept in a ten-gallon tank. Although a 20-gallon is better for an adult, three or more can be kept as a colony in a larger tank as long as only one of the geckos is a male. A screen should be used on top along with two types of lighting systems. One type of lighting has a reptile fluorescent bulb that gives off full spectrum light including UVA and UVB. The UVB is especially important for these reptiles to get so they can absorb calcium properly.

The second light system is for heat. Reptiles are ectotherms, which means they get their heat from an outside source, unlike humans who can make their own heat. Different areas of the habitat should be at different temperatures, so reptiles can move around to heat up or cool off. Leopard geckos are comfortable with a daytime temperature in their tank of 83-88 degrees and a nighttime temperature of 68-75. Use a nocturnal black light only in a lamp during the day to keep the temperature up in their tank. Heat pads should also be used in the tank if it is especially large or if the room is cool.

Leopard geckos like low humidity in their tank and should be misted only lightly once or twice a week. Keep a small shallow dish of water in the tank as well, although they rarely will drink

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from one. Have caves available as these reptiles like hiding places. Use the appropriate reptile litter or substrate on the bottom.

Sanitation/General Care:

Change the water every other day and clean out the water dish thoroughly twice a week. The litter or substrate used on the bottom should be cleaned as often as needed, and this will depend on tank size, the reptile's size, and the number of reptiles in the tank.

General Maintenance:

Mist the tank lightly once or twice a week. Reptiles will shed their skin periodically. Mist them more often during these times to help them shed the skin more easily. Be sure the tank is at the right temperature at all times. Change the reptile full spectrum light as often as recommended by the manufacturer, usually every six months to a year. Although the bulb may still be working, it will lose its potency over a certain period of time.

Health Care:

Leopard geckos are generally very hardy and healthy when kept in the right conditions. They do not require any yearly check ups or vaccines.

Special Section - Handling Precaution:

Reptiles can carry one disease that can be transmitted to people called salmonellosis. Although it is rare for a reptile to carry this disease, it is always important to wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water after you have handled your pet or anything in your pet's cage. Keep your pet out of the kitchen area and do not allow very small children to handle any reptiles.

Supplies checklist:

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| Fish tank | Heat pad |
| Screen top | Water dish |
| Fluorescent light with reptile UVB bulb | Reptile litter or other substrate |
| Heat lamp with nocturnal heat bulb | Caves for hiding |
| Books about Leopard Gecko | Vitamin/mineral supplement |