

WILDSIDE VETERINARY HEALTH CENTER

CARE SHEET: BALL PYTHON



Environment:

- There are different enclosures that work well for ball pythons:
 - Plastic sweater boxes (i.e. Rubbermaid),
 - Adapted melamine racks.
 - Plastic-type reptile cages.
 - Glass reptile terrariums and tanks are adequate for ball pythons, but the screen tops on such enclosures can make it very difficult to maintain proper humidity levels.
- Spot-clean your ball python's enclosure often. Remove feces and urates as soon as possible. Do a complete cleaning every 30 days by removing all substrate and reptile accessories and completely disinfecting with a 5 percent bleach solution. Rinse the enclosure thoroughly with water, and allow it to dry completely before replacing cage accessories and your snake.
- Have a hide box!
- Temperature: You need two thermometers - one on the basking spot (90-95F), one on the cold side (75-80f)
 - Reptiles cannot regulate their body temperature on their own, that is why it is so important that the temperature is perfect.
 - Heating options: Undercage heating pads and tapes, ceramic heat emitters, basking bulbs (both regular daytime and black night bulbs). With heat emitters and basking bulbs, it is crucial to keep an eye on the humidity within the enclosure, especially if combined with a screen top, as both will dry the air quickly.
- Humidity in the cage should be around 70%.
- Substrate:
 - Paper towels or reptocarpets are an easy way to keep them comfortable and clean.
 - You may also use cypress mulch and orchid bark, which are great substrates for controlling humidity, but remember that too much humidity can also be detrimental.

Diet:

- Feed them an appropriately sized rodent.
 - "Appropriately sized" means prey items that are no bigger in circumference than the ball python at its largest circumference.
- Do not handle your ball python for at least a day after feeding, as this can lead to regurgitation.
- Ball pythons should be fed frozen/thawed rodents.
- Ball pythons are well-known for not eating particularly in the winter months, but still offer your ball python food every 10 to 14 days until it is interested in eating again, as the snake will eventually resume feeding normally.
- Feed young ball pythons weekly, and adult ball pythons every 2-4 weeks.
- Snakes generally do not eat while they are in the shed cycle.

Soak

- Shallow warm water for 15-30 minutes
- Healthy animals 2 times a week is ideal.