



Practice Limited to Birds, Reptiles and Exotics

Dr. GREGORY RICH  
Dr. LESLIE PENCE  
[www.avianandexoticvet.com](http://www.avianandexoticvet.com)

**AFTER HOURS EMERGENCIES**  
504.835.8508

## *Leopard Gecko Care Sheet*

Leopard geckos (*Eublepharis macularius*) are native to the deserts and dry rocky plains of Afghanistan, India, and Pakistan. They are nocturnal, gentle, hardy, and easy to maintain lizards. Leopard geckos can grow to a length of 7-10 inches, and live an average of 10-15 years.

**HOUSING:** Leopard geckos can be housed in groups provided there is only one adult male per enclosure, as males are highly territorial and aggressive when mature. Standard 10-gallon (or larger) aquariums work well as enclosures. A cage height of at least 6 inches is recommended. The cage should have a screen top for adequate ventilation. Acceptable substrates include paper towels, newspaper, reptile carpet, bark, or fine sand. **\*Coarse sand, corncob, and walnut shell litter should be avoided as they have been implicated in gastrointestinal impactions.\*** Feces should be removed regularly and substrate replaced as necessary. The entire cage should be cleaned every week.

**TEMPERATURE:** Leopard geckos fare best at temperatures in the mid-80°F. A gradient of temperatures should be available in the enclosure, from 70°F on the cool end to 84°-88°F on the warm end. Heat should be provided by a heat pad, heat tape, or basking light. **\*Hot rocks or direct contact with heating elements or light sources should be avoided.\*** UVB or other supplemental lighting is not required for these primarily nocturnal lizards, but may be beneficial to their overall health and bone structure.

**HUMIDITY:** A moist hide box filled with damp sphagnum moss, cypress mulch, or vermiculite is especially important for both security and proper shedding. Mist the hide box substrate daily. The shelter should be cleaned and the substrate changed weekly. ALWAYS check for mold growth on the substrate or in the hide box. The lack of a moderately humid shelter will make a leopard gecko prone to dysecdysis (difficulty shedding and retention of shed skin which can cause damage such as toe loss).

**DIET:** Leopard geckos feed primarily on live moving insect prey. An appropriate diet may consist of commercially-raised crickets with smaller numbers of silkworms, roaches, mealworms, superworms, waxworms, and other live insects. Prey items should be fed a high quality diet ("gut-loaded") for at least 24 hours prior to using. Commercial cricket diets are available but fresh greens such as turnip greens, collard greens, parsley and carrot tops as well as vegetables like broccoli, cauliflower and carrot slicings add high quality nutrition to crickets and mealworms before they are consumed. Clean fresh water should be provided in a shallow container and changed daily. A shallow dish containing calcium powder can be provided so geckos always have access to calcium, an essential mineral for proper nutrition.

- Juveniles – feed every 1-2 days
- Adults – feed 2-3 times a week

For juveniles dust prey items with phosphorus-free calcium at every feeding and with a multi-vitamin once a week. For adults dust prey items with phosphorus-free calcium every 2-3 feedings and with a multi-vitamin every 5-6 feedings.

**VETERINARY EXAMINATION:** It is highly recommended to have all newly acquired pets checked by a qualified reptile knowledgeable veterinarian. All reptiles should have annual exams and be checked for intestinal parasites.

***We strongly recommend annual health examinations on all exotics!***

