

# Veiled Chameleon

*Chamaeleo calyptorarus*



## CARE SHEET

Developed with and approved by a Qualified Veterinarian

Veiled chameleons are one of the most popular of the chameleon species. They are able to look in any direction without turning their heads or shifting body position because each eye can swivel nearly 180 degrees. They have the uncanny ability to point their two eyes in different directions at the same time. Veiled chameleons require a significant amount of care.



### Is a veiled chameleon the right companion animal for you?

Yes	No	Check "Yes" or "No" after reading the following statements:
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1. I can accommodate a habitat requiring an electrical heat source.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2. I want a pet that doesn't need to be cuddled or touched.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	3. I feel comfortable feeding live food to this chameleon.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	4. I can commit to providing proper care for a veiled chameleon.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	5. A mature person will provide responsible and primary care for this companion animal.

If you answered "Yes" to these statements, a veiled chameleon may be the right choice for you! Continue reading about how to care for a veiled chameleon and consult with a PETCO associate to learn more. PETCO is committed to responsible companion animal care.

**Average Size** 6 to 12 inches long **Life Span** Up to 5+ years with proper care

**Diet** Provide a variety of live insects, including gut-loaded (recently fed) crickets, mealworms, and waxworms; collard greens; pothos and ficus leaves; Dust the insects daily with a pure calcium supplement and once or twice a week with a vitamin/mineral supplement

**Feeding** Feed adults every other day; juveniles daily

**Housing** Due to the varied sizes and growth rates of reptiles, and their individualized needs, we recommend you consult your qualified reptile veterinarian and a book on this species to determine it's specific housing requirements

Size – Appropriate size habitat to accommodate normal behaviors and exercise, all screened sides, taller than it is wide; recommend aluminum screen; do not use fiberglass screen for the habitat; use a basin under the bottom of the cage to catch water

Substrate – No specific substrate is needed, they are tree-dwellers and reside on branches and in plants exclusively; use leaf litter, sphagnum moss, and mulch-type substrates

Habitat – Create a dense area of non-toxic plants to one side for hiding; create a more open, exposed area of branches for basking to the other side

Temperature – Temperature gradient (100° F. for the warm end, 70° F. for the cool end); recommend radiant heat; use an incandescent light or ceramic heater as primary heat source

Lighting – Provide needed UVB rays with full spectrum fluorescent light for 10 to 12 hours a day; ceramic heater for basking area 24-hours a day

Water – Not likely to drink from a bowl; rely on moisture on non-toxic plants and collecting pools in the tank for drinking; consider using a drip system with chlorine-free water for constant moisture; maintain humidity at 30–60%; mist environment, not chameleon  
Keep chameleons separately; do not house different species of reptiles together

- Recommended Supplies**
- Habitat with secure lid
  - Humidity gauge
  - Thermometer
  - Book about chameleons
  - Full spectrum fluorescent light
  - Vitamin/mineral supplement
  - Non-toxic plants; branches
  - Incandescent light or ceramic heater
  - Drip system
  - Mist bottle

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**Normal Behavior and Interaction** Veiled chameleons change color, depending on temperature and mood  
 Unlike other reptiles, males are generally larger, more vibrant and colorful than females  
 Veiled chameleons become highly stressed when handled; regular handling is not recommended

**Habitat Maintenance** Remove feces from habitat daily; mist frequently to maintain water supply  
 Thoroughly clean the habitat at least once a week: set veiled chameleon aside in a secure habitat; scrub the habitat with a 3% bleach solution; rinse thoroughly with water, removing all smell of bleach; rinse all plants with clean water

**Grooming and Hygiene** Always wash your hands before and after touching your chameleon or habitat contents to help prevent *Salmonella* and other infectious diseases  
 Chameleons regularly shed their skin; ensure humidity of habitat is appropriate to allow proper shedding; to facilitate shedding

- Signs of a Healthy Animal**
- Active and alert
  - Healthy skin
  - Clear eyes
  - Eats regularly
  - Clear nose and vent
  - Body and tail are rounded and full

Common Health Issues	Health Issue (alpha)	Symptoms or Causes	Suggested Action
	Gastro-intestinal Disease	Runny stools, caked or smeared stool around the vent area, and loss of appetite caused by bacterial or parasitic infection.	Consult your exotic animal veterinarian.
	Metabolic Bone/Vitamin Deficiency	Inability to absorb calcium due to insufficient UVB light. If untreated, can lead to a disorder characterized by deformities and softened bones. Swollen limbs and lethargy.	Provide ample UVB lighting and consult your exotic animal veterinarian.

- Red Flags**
- Mucus in mouth or nose
  - Swelling
  - Paralysis of limbs or tail
  - Bumps, sores or abrasions on skin
  - Lethargic
  - Labored breathing
  - Abnormal feces
  - Weight loss or decreased appetite
- If you notice any of these signs, please contact your exotic animal veterinarian.**

**Sources** *Chameleons, Their Care and Breeding* by Linda J. Davison  
*The New Chameleon Handbook* by Francois Le Berre

**Note:** The information on this Care Sheet is not a substitute for veterinary care. If you need additional information, please refer to the above sources or contact your veterinarian as appropriate.