

# Leopard Gecko

*Eublepharis macularius*



## CARE SHEET

Developed with and approved by a Qualified Veterinarian

Leopard geckos are easy to care for. They come in a variety of colors and patterns, and have moveable eyelids. Leopard geckos include the leucistic, high yellow, and albino leopard geckos.



### Is a leopard gecko the right companion animal for you?

Yes	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Check "Yes" or "No" after reading the following statements:

- I have limited space for a companion animal.
- I want a pet that doesn't need to be cuddled or touched.
- I feel comfortable feeding live food to my leopard gecko.
- I can commit to providing proper care for this lizard.
- A mature person will provide responsible and primary care for this companion animal.

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

**Average Size** 6 to 9 inches long

**Life Span** 20+ years with proper care

**Diet** Provide a variety of insects, including crickets, small mealworms and wax worms; use gut-loaded (recently fed) crickets no larger than half the length of the gecko's head

**Feeding** Feed juveniles every day; feed adults every other day  
Dust food with calcium daily and a multi-vitamin supplement once or twice a week

**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 sized habitat with a secure lid; a 10-20 gallon tank is recommended for one leopard gecko

Substrate – Use alfalfa-based pellets or calcium sand; geckos may eat substrate, if they do, select an edible substrate such as alfalfa pellets

Habitat – Provide multiple hiding areas with non-toxic plants, branches, logs, and cork; environment should provide no less than 50% humidity to promote proper shedding

Temperature – Provide a temperature gradient by placing a heat source on one end of the tank; temperature should range from 78°F to 88°F with a basking area of 95°F

Lighting – 10-12 hours of light per day is required; because Leopard Geckos are nocturnal, they do not require UVB lighting like most other lizards; an incandescent bulb can be used for basking area during daylight hours only; can use a ceramic heater or a black heat bulb at all hours

Water – Provide a constant supply of clean, fresh, filtered, chlorine-free water in a shallow bowl that cannot be tipped over

Never house two or more male geckos, or different species of reptiles together

### Recommended Supplies

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Habitat with secure lid | <input type="checkbox"/> Non-toxic plants, branches, log and cork bark |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Substrate               | <input type="checkbox"/> Shallow water and food dishes                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fluorescent light       | <input type="checkbox"/> Thermometer, humidity gauge                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Under tank heater       | <input type="checkbox"/> Multi-vitamin supplement                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hide box or log         | <input type="checkbox"/> Incandescent light or ceramic heater          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Calcium supplement      | <input type="checkbox"/> Book about geckos                             |

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### Normal Behavior and Interaction

Leopard geckos have good dispositions  
Active during the night and sleep during the day (nocturnal)  
Keep handling to a minimum; over handling geckos can cause them stress

### Habitat Maintenance

Change water in the bowl daily  
Thoroughly clean the tank at least once a week: place gecko in a secure habitat; scrub the tank and furnishings with a 3% bleach solution; rinse thoroughly with water, removing all smell of bleach; dry the tank and furnishings; and add clean substrate

### Grooming and Hygiene

Geckos regularly shed their skin; ensure humidity of habitat is appropriate to allow proper shedding; a shed box, which is essentially a hide box with damp sphagnum moss, is a good idea as this will aid in the shedding process

Always wash your hands before and after touching your leopard gecko or habitat contents to help prevent *Salmonella* and other infectious diseases

### Signs of a Healthy Animal

- Clear eyes
- Eats regularly
- Active and alert
- Clear nose and vent
- Body and tail are full
- Healthy skin

### Common Health Issues

Health Issue	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	If untreated, can lead to a disorder characterized by deformities and softened bones. Swollen limbs and lethargy.	Consult your exotic animal veterinarian.
Respiratory Disease	Labored breathing with bubbly secretions around mouth and nose. Can be caused by cold temperature.	Ensure that the habitat is appropriately warm. Consult your exotic animal veterinarian.

### Red Flags

- Weight loss or decreased appetite
- Swelling
- Bumps, sores, or abrasions on skin
- Paralysis of limbs or tail
- Mucus in mouth or nose
- Lethargy
- Labored breathing
- Abnormal feces

**If you notice any of these signs, please contact your exotic animal veterinarian.**

### Sources

*Geckoes: Biology, Husbandry, and Reproduction* by Friedrich-Wilhelm Henkel  
*Leopard Geckos: Identification, Care, and Breeding* by Ray Hunziker  
*The Guide to Owning a Leopard Gecko* by Ray Hunziker

**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.