

arid lizard

care sheet



Arid lizards include several species originating from dry, hot environments.

facts

- average adult size: 4 to 36 inches long, depending on species
- average life span: 15+ years with proper care
- diet: herbivore or omnivore, depending on species

Will reach adult size in 1 to 3 years, depending on species and under ideal conditions; upgrade habitat size as your reptile grows.



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

Developed with and approved by a qualified veterinarian.

arid lizard

includes bearded dragons, steppe runners, curly-tails, frilled lizards, armadillos, African plated, agamas and uromastix lizards

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diet

A well-balanced arid lizard diet consists of:

- Depending on species, may require a mix of 30% veggies and 70% gut-loaded (recently fed) insects such as crickets, mealworms, roaches and waxworms.
- Some species may be herbivores, which only eat vegetables and fruits; others may require frozen, thawed rodents. See the Feeding Frozen/Thawed Foods Care Sheet for more information.

feeding

Things to remember when feeding your lizard:

- Fresh, clean, chlorine-free water should be available at all times; may not drink from a bowl but relies on moisture on décor.
- Feed daily.
- Sprinkle food with calcium supplement daily and a multi-vitamin supplement once or twice a week.
- Vegetables and fruits not eaten within 24 hours should be discarded.

housing

- Size - Appropriately sized and shaped habitat

for an adult lizard to accommodate normal behaviors and exercise. Due to the varied size and growth rates of arid lizards and their individualized needs, we recommend you consult a book on the species to determine its specific housing requirements.

- Habitat - Provide a hiding area and branches for basking. Use an under-tank heater at one end of the tank. Maintain less than 50% humidity; mist as needed.
- Substrate - Calcium-based sand is recommended. Terrarium-carpet is also recommended as an alternative substrate.
- Temperature - Temperature gradient (95 to 100°F for the warm end and 70 to 75°F for the cool end). Use an incandescent light or ceramic heater as primary heat source.
- Lighting - UVB rays with full spectrum lighting for 10 to 12 hours a day is required. An incandescent day bulb can be used for basking area during daylight hours only; can use a ceramic heater or nocturnal heat bulb at all hours.

- Do not house different reptile species together.

normal behavior

- All arid lizards will spend part of the day in a hiding spot in their habitat.
- Male arid lizards are territorial and should be housed separately.
- Never grab a lizard by its tail as they may drop their tail.

habitat maintenance

- Thoroughly clean and disinfect the habitat at least once a week: place lizard in a secure habitat; scrub the tank and furnishings with a 3% bleach solution; rinse thoroughly with water, removing all traces of bleach smell; dry the tank and furnishings completely and add clean substrate.

grooming and hygiene

- Arid lizards regularly shed their skin; ensure humidity of habitat is at appropriate level to allow proper shedding. To facilitate shedding, bathe in a large container that allows the lizard to immerse its entire body or provide a shed box, a hide box with sphagnum moss, that will aid in the shedding process.

signs of a healthy animal

- Active, alert and interested in humans
- Clear eyes
- Body and tail are filled out
- Healthy skin
- Clear nose and vent
- Eats regularly

red flags

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

If you notice any of these signs, contact your veterinarian.

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 veterinarian.
Metabolic bone/vitamin deficiency	Inability to absorb calcium due to insufficient UVB light, or not being provided the proper amount of calcium/vitamin D supplements. If untreated, can lead to a disorder characterized by deformities and softened bones. Swollen limbs and lethargy.	Consult your veterinarian and provide ample UVB lighting and proper calcium/vitamin supplements.
Respiratory disease	Labored breathing and mucus in the mouth or nose. Can be caused by a habitat that is too cold or damp.	Consult your veterinarian and ensure habitat is the proper temperature.

shopping list for needed supplies

- Appropriately sized habitat
- Commercial food (depending on species)
- Substrate
- Moss
- Food and water dishes
- Mealworm dish
- Hideaway place
- Climbing décor
- Plants
- Heat light
- Heat fixture
- Under-tank heater (optional)
- UVB lighting and fixture
- Vitamin supplement
- Calcium supplement
- Cricket keeper
- Cricket food
- Cricket quencher
- Thermometer
- Humidity gauge
- Book about arid lizards

sources

Ask a store partner about Petco's selection of books on arid lizards and the variety of private brand products available for the care and happiness of your new pet. All private brand products carry a 100% money-back guarantee.

Because all reptiles are potential carriers of infectious diseases, such as *Salmonella*, always wash your hands before and after handling your reptile or habitat contents to help prevent the potential spread of disease.

Pregnant women, children under the age of 5, senior citizens and people with weakened immune systems should contact their physician before purchasing or caring for reptiles and should consider not having a reptile as a pet.

Go to cdc.gov/healthypets and petco.com/caresheet for more information about small animals and disease.

This Care Sheet can cover the care needs of other species. Go to petco.com for more information.

