

shopping list for needed supplies

- appropriately sized habitat
- book about colubrids
- substrate
- moss
- water dish
- hideaway place
- climbing décor
- plants
- heat light
- heat fixture
- under tank heater
- thermometer
- humidity gauge

sources

Ask an associate about Petco's selection of books on Colubrids and the variety of Petco Brand products available for the care and happiness of your new pet. All Petco Brand products carry a 100% money-back guarantee.

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

Pregnant women, children under the age of 5 and people with weakened immune systems should contact their physician before purchasing and/or caring for a snake and should consider not having a snake as a pet. Go to the Centers for Disease Control at cdc.gov/healthypets/ for more information about snakes and disease. Go to petco.com/caresheet to download other helpful Care Sheets.

This care sheet can cover the care needs of other species. See petco.com for more information.

Colubrids

includes rat, corn, african house and king snakes



Care Sheet

These snakes belong to the genera of the Colubridae family. They are native to temperate and subtropical areas of North America, Europe, and Asia.

Colubrids facts:

- average adult size: 1 to 6 feet long, depending on species
- average life span: up to 15 years with proper care, depending on species
- diet: carnivore

Will reach adult size in 2-3 years, depending on species and under ideal conditions; upgrade habitat size as your snake grows.

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

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Developed with and approved by a qualified veterinarian.

diet

A well-balanced Colubrid diet consists of:

- Appropriate size frozen rodents, thawed/warmed to above room temperature.
- **If feeding your snake live rodents, do not leave them unattended. Live rodents can injure the snake, sometimes fatally.**

feeding

Things to remember when feeding your Colubrid:

- Feed juveniles once or twice a week, adults every one to two weeks.
- Feed in a separate tank so that your snake doesn't associate your hand or the habitat being opened with feeding.

housing

- Size - appropriate size and shape habitat for an adult Colubrid to accommodate normal behavior and exercise, at least a 20 long to 40 breeder.
- Substrate - aspen shavings, mulch-type bedding or reptile bark; dampened sphagnum moss. Avoid gravel and artificial turf (too harsh for skin).
- Habitat - provide a hiding area just large enough for your snake to fit inside and a branch or decor to climb on. Maintain 40-60% humidity; higher during shedding.
- Temperature - temperature gradient (85°F for the warm end and 70° for the cool end); recommend radiant heat; use an incandescent light as primary heat source, use under tank heater as secondary source.

- Lighting - snakes need a photoperiod light cycle; provide 8-12 hours of light daily. Don't leave white light on at all times; a black or infrared light should be used at night.
- House adult Colubrids alone and do **not** house different snake species together.

normal behavior

- As snake gets ready to shed, eyes will turn a milky blue/grey over the course of a few days and body color will start to dull and develop a whitish sheen. May become irritable, avoid handling if needed.
- Appetite may vary.

habitat maintenance

Thoroughly clean the habitat at least once a week: place snake 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 & hygiene

Snakes will regularly shed their skin; ensure humidity of habitat is at appropriate level to allow snake to shed properly.

signs of a healthy animal

- Active and alert
- Clear eyes (except when shedding)
- Eats regularly
- Healthy skin
- Sheds regularly
- Sheds skin in one complete piece

red flags

- unusually frequent or infrequent shedding
- vomiting
- lethargic or reluctant to eat
- abnormal feces
- bumps or spots on skin
- labored breathing
- difficulty shedding
- white, cheesy substance in mouth

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

common health issues

Health Issue	Symptoms or Causes	Suggested Action
Dermatitis	Blisters, rapid shedding caused by an unclean habitat or one that is too cold or damp.	Consult your exotic animal veterinarian, clean the habitat and lower humidity.
Respiratory disease	Labored breathing, mucus in mouth or nostrils. Can be caused by a habitat that is too cold or damp.	Consult your exotic animal veterinarian and keep snake warm and dry.
Stomatitis	White, cheesy substance in the mouth, loss of teeth and appetite. If untreated, can be fatal.	Immediately consult your exotic animal veterinarian.
Ticks and mites	Parasites on skin, can transmit disease.	Consult your exotic animal veterinarian.