

shopping list for needed supplies

- appropriately sized habitat
- book about hermit crabs
- commercial hermit crab food
- treats
- substrate
- moss
- food and water dishes
- hideaway place
- climbing décor
- plants
- under tank heater

sources

Ask an associate about Petco's selection of books on Hermit Crabs 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 invertebrates are potential carriers of infectious diseases, such as Salmonella, always wash your hands before and after handling your invertebrate 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 an invertebrate and should consider not having an invertebrate as a pet. Go to the Centers for Disease Control at cdc.gov/healthypets/ for more information about invertebrates 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.

Hermit Crab

coenobita spp



Care Sheet

Hermit Crabs are nocturnal scavengers that will eat almost anything. Hermit Crabs live in large groups in the wild and do best in groups of three or more.

Hermit Crab facts:

- average adult size: 2 to 6 inches long, depending on species
- average life span: 10+ years with proper care, depending on species
- diet: omnivore

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

Care Sheet

Hermit Crab *coenobita spp*



Developed with and approved by a qualified veterinarian.

diet

A well-balanced Hermit Crab diet consists of:

- High quality commercial Hermit Crab food.
- Recommend vegetables (spinach, carrots and romaine lettuce) and non-citrus fruits (mangoes, coconut and papaya) as treats.
- Nuts, seaweed, brine shrimp, and fish flakes can also be offered as treats.
- Provide carotene and calcium supplements (such as cuttlebone)

feeding

Things to remember when feeding your Hermit Crab:

- Fresh, clean, chlorine-free water should be available at all times; may not drink from a bowl but will rely on moisture on plants.
- Crush all pelleted foods before feeding; feed at night.
- Hermit Crabs appreciate variety in their diet.

housing

- Size - appropriate size and shape habitat to accommodate adult Hermit Crab behavior and exercise, at least 10 gallons.
- Habitat - provide climbing decor and hiding areas; new shells should be a bit bigger than the current shell. Maintain 70-80% humidity by misting daily as needed (required to keep gills moist, prevent dehydration and ease molting).
- Substrate - sand, mixed with a mulch-type substrate such as coconut fiber bedding; can also include sphagnum moss. Substrate should be at least 3 inches deep.
- Temperature - temperature gradient (80°F for the warm end and 70°F for the cool end); recommend under tank heater as heat source.
- Lighting - provide lighting for 10-12 hours.
- Water - keep two shallow dishes of water in the

habitat at all times: one with fresh, de-chlorinated water and one with salt water. The water should not be any deeper than 1/4-1/2 inch; any deeper and your Hermit Crab could drown. A sponge can be placed in the dish to help your Hermit Crab climb in an out.

- House Hermit Crabs in groups of three or more, but do **not** house different invertebrate species together.

normal behavior

- Hermit Crabs are social and should be housed in groups of three or more.
- Usually molt once or twice a year; will bury itself in the sand. Don't disturb the process as the crab is very fragile. Protect the molting crab by placing a divider in the tank or moving the other crabs to another tank. Ensure proper humidity.

habitat maintenance

Thoroughly clean the habitat at least once a week: place Hermit Crab 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

- Bathe Hermit Crabs every week in a non-metal container with a little lukewarm, fresh, de-chlorinated water (keep water level low): immerse the crab upside down and let it right itself or put the crab in the container and let it walk around; when the bath is done, remove the crab, drain the water out of the shell and place them in a secure container with paper towels to dry off.
- Don't put a wet crab back into the habitat as the substrate will stick to it.

signs of a healthy animal

- Healthy appetite
- Active

red flags

- lethargy
- abandons shell and doesn't return
- loss of appetite

common health issues

Health Issue	Symptoms or Causes	Suggested Action
Mites	Mites appear in the habitat or directly on the crab	Completely clean habitat, replace substrate and bathe crab in lukewarm water. Ensure no mites are visible on the crab before returning to clean habitat.

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