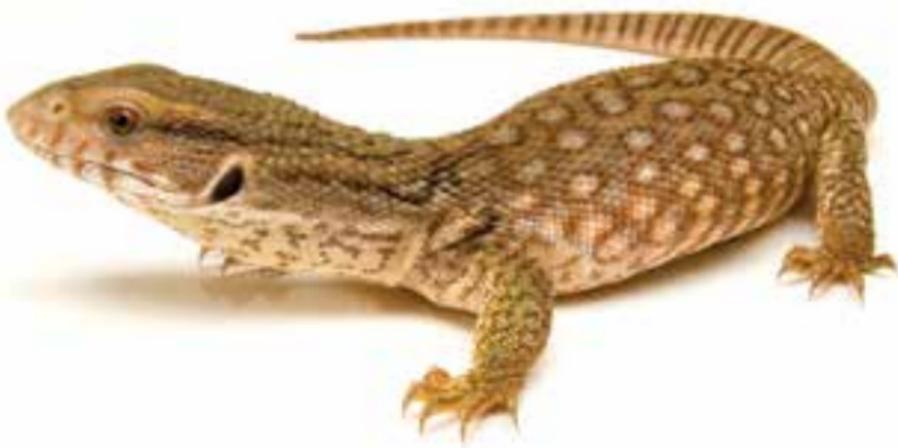


monitor and tegu care sheet



Tegus are among the largest of lizards. Tegus and monitors are not recommended for beginners.

facts

average adult size:	1 to 7 feet, depending on species
average life span:	up to 10+ years with proper care depending on species
diet:	carnivore

Will reach adult size in 2 to 5 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.

monitor and tegu

includes savannah monitors and tegu lizards

care sheet



Developed with and approved by a qualified veterinarian.

diet

A well-balanced tegu or monitor diet consists of:

- A variety of insects, including gut-loaded (recently fed) crickets, mealworms, waxworms, roaches and commercial monitor and tegu diet.
- Common goldfish; frozen/thawed rodents.
- Avoid high-fat foods such as dog and cat food.
- Frozen, thawed rodents may be given occasionally. Do not use a microwave to defrost frozen rodents and do not prepare them in the same area that you prepare food. If it is unavoidable, be sure to thoroughly disinfect the area. See the Feeding Frozen/Thawed Foods Care Sheet for more information.

feeding

Things to remember when feeding your tegu or monitor:

- Fresh, clean, chlorine-free water should be available at all times.
- Feed all tegus and monitors daily.
- Sprinkle food with calcium supplement daily and a multi-vitamin supplement once or twice a week.

housing

- Size - Appropriately sized and shaped habitat to accommodate normal behaviors and exercise; ensure tegu habitat is secure as they are escape artists. Provide the largest habitat possible and upgrade your habitat size as your lizard grows.
- Habitat - Most monitors and tegus like to climb; long, sturdy branches, driftwood, hollow logs and large rocks are recommended. Maintain 60 to 80% humidity by misting as needed every day.
- Substrate - Use a mulch-type such as coconut fiber, dampened sphagnum moss and bark.
- Temperature - Temperature gradient (100°F for the warm end and 70°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 ceramic heater

or nocturnal or red incandescent at all hours.

- House adult tegus and monitors separately and do not house different reptile species together.

normal behavior

- Tegus and monitors are not naturally tame; significant time must be spent with them to socialize them.
- Prefer a daily routine with set feeding and cleaning times.
- Like to hide in dark, tight areas.

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

- 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 a shed box, a hide box with sphagnum moss, that will aid in the shedding process.

signs of a healthy animal

- Active and alert
- 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
- Lethargy
- Bumps, sores or abrasions on skin
- Labored breathing
- Paralysis of limbs
- Abnormal feces

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 improper amounts of calcium/vitamin D. 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 monitor or tegu food
- Treats
- 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 tegus and monitors

sources

Ask a store partner about Petco's selection of books on tegus and monitors 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.

