Sugar Glider FAQs

Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff

A sugar glider is a very cute pet, but it is also an exotic pet. This means that it's a lot different owning a sugar glider than it is to own a dog or a cat. You need to learn as much as you can about them if you own one. Take a look at the questions and answers below to learn more about this fun and interesting animal.

Why are they called sugar gliders?

A The name "sugar glider" comes from their love of sugar and their ability to glide from tree to tree in the wild.

How long do sugar gliders live?

A A pet sugar glider can live 10 to 15 years, so you will have this pet for a long time!

How does he glide?

A If you look, you will see a webbed area that connects his wrists to his ankles. This acts like wings and allows him to glide through the air. He controls where he's going while he's gliding with his long tail.

Why do his feet look like they do?

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If you look at his feet, you will see that his middle toes are fused together, but it still has two claws. He uses this as a grooming comb. If you look at his back feet, you will see that he has an opposable big toe (opposable means he can touch the tip of it to the tips of his other toes to grab things). This helps him to grip branches and climb.

How many sugar gliders should I own?

A

Sugar gliders are very social animals, which means they like to live with friends. They do best in pairs or groups, but you can have just one. You will have to spend lots of time playing and bonding with him so he doesn't get lonely though.

What do sugar gliders eat?

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This is actually a very good question, and there is not one answer. It's not like with a dog or a cat where you can just feed a regular food you get at a store. Sugar gliders have very exotic diets, and you should discuss the exact diet you feed your glider with a veterinarian.

Sugar gliders are "omnivores," which means that they eat plants and meat, just like people do. Your glider's daily diet should include a pellet kibble diet (either an insectivore diet or a meat diet), fruit, vegetables, and fresh water. You can also supplement the regular diet with pinky mice and live insects.

What kind of cage does a sugar glider need?

A

Sugar gliders need lots of room to climb and glide, so they need a very tall cage. The minimum cage size is 24" deep by 24" wide by 36" tall. Because they are so small, you need to make sure that the wire spacing is no more than 1/2" x 1". The cage must have a very secure latch to keep it closed - some sugar gliders will learn to open simple latches and escape!

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What should I put in the cage?

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Put the following items in your sugar glider's cage:

- Platforms and shelves
- Aspen wood shavings
- Nest box near the top of the cage
- Cloth pouch hung on the side of the cage
- Cloth bedding
- Branches for climbing and jumping
- Ropes and ladders for climbing
- Wooden toys
- Exercise wheel with a solid surface
- Plastic food dish that attaches to the side of the cage
- Water bottle or water dish (use a dish until your glider is used to the bottle)

How should I clean my sugar glider's cage?

A

You will need to change the Aspen bedding in the bottom of the cage at least one or two times a week. If you have more than two sugar gliders, you will probably have to do that more often. Everyday you need to clean up any big messes and give him fresh food and water. Wipe down the entire cage and clean all of the accessories in it once a week.

How do I tame my sugar glider?

A

As with any small pet, you have to let your sugar glider get used to his new home before interacting with him. Since sugar gliders are nocturnal (most active at night and sleepy during the day), start your bonding and taming by interacting with him during the day when he's sleeping and calmer. Follow these steps to tame your sugar glider:

- Talk to him often
- Allow him to get used to your smell by placing a piece of clothing

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that you have worn on top of his cage

- Touch and pet him during the day
- Put him in your shirt pocket or a bonding pouch during the day when he's sleeping so he can get used to your smell and your touch
- Don't pick him up - offer your hand palm up or palm down for him to climb onto

You must be careful not to make any loud noises or sudden movements around him while you are bonding with him, as this can scare him.

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