

# Mite & Tick Control Tips for Reptiles

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## MITE AND TICK Control



Infestations of external parasites can make life miserable for you and your herp. Large infestations often lead to stress, anemia, loss of appetite, and skin problems in reptiles. **Mites and ticks are the most common external parasites found on reptiles.** In most cases, mites and ticks are introduced to a herp's environment by a newcomer. It is extremely important to conduct a thorough inspection for external parasites upon obtaining a new herp.

### Quarantine

Always quarantine your new herp for the first month. A [small terrarium](#) will work well as a temporary home for your new pet. While your new herp is under quarantine, you can look for signs of a parasite infestation.

### Handle

Use precautions as you handle your new herp. You can inadvertently transmit mites or ticks from the new animal to your other reptiles by carrying the parasites on your clothing or hands. You may want to use Pet Handling Gloves. Always feed and handle the new reptile last, and clean that cage last, as well. Wash hands and utensils well afterward.

Anemia is a condition in which the number of red blood cells present in the blood is lower than normal.

### Remove

Use tweezers to remove any ticks that you might find. To kill the ticks, place them in a jar of alcohol. Do not flush ticks down your toilet, as they have been known to crawl back out.

Mites can be more difficult to remove. Placing your reptile in a water bath for about 30 minutes a day will drown mites on the reptile's body but not on his head. You

can also use [Natural Chemistry Reptile Relief](#), a spray that helps control ticks and mites.

### Clean and Disinfect

Before placing the herp back in the cage after the parasites have been removed, clean and disinfect the cage to remove any mite or tick eggs. Relocate your reptile to a safe place in another room. Wipe down the cage, decorations, and accessories with a wet cloth or pre-moistened [Doo Be Gone](#). Use a bleach solution (1 part bleach to 16 parts water) to disinfect the cage, decorations, and accessories. Rinse completely with clean water and dry thoroughly before returning the herp to his home.

On a reptile, the vent is the outside opening of the cloaca, which is a common passageway for feces, urine, and reproduction.

### How to Detect

#### Ticks:

- Ticks can be brown, black, or gray in color.
- Ticks are most commonly found between scales, in the nostrils, near the vent, below the neck, or where limbs join the body.
- Ticks rarely move around. (If you see something moving on your herp, it's more likely to be a mite.)
- Adult ticks are generally large enough to see with the naked eye.
- Immature ticks can be difficult to detect.

#### Mites:

- Mites can be seen moving over the herp's body.
- Mites are commonly found around the eyes, between the scales, in folds of skin, around ear openings, and where the limbs join the body.
- Mites are very small and can be black, gray, orange, or red in color.
- Mites can multiply to large numbers before being detected in the terrarium.
- In a heavily infested terrarium, mites can be seen running over surfaces.
- Mite infestations may cause the animal to have a dull appearance.

**Parasites can be either internal or external.** Internal parasitic infestations are most often signaled by emaciation or changes in the feces. If you suspect an internal parasite or if you notice any change in the color, consistency, or frequency of your herp's urine or feces, collect a fecal sample and take it, along with



your herp, to your veterinarian for an examination and treatment. Infestation is caused by either contamination from the environment, another lizard, or because the herp was wild-caught.



## WE RECOMMEND



### [Exo Terra Terrarium](#)

Great for temporary housing or quarantine.



### [Doo Be Gone](#)

Ready-to-use wet wipes instantly clean your reptile's environment and dissolve reptile messes and associated stains.