

FAQs: Leopard Geckos

Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff

Leopard Geckos are relatively easy to care for, and they're one of the most popular pet reptiles. The following information will help answer some questions you may have about these fun, interesting lizards.

- [How long will my Leopard Gecko live?](#)

- [How can I tell if my Leopard Gecko is male or female?](#)

- [What should I feed my Leopard Gecko?](#)

- [Do Leopard Geckos need any vitamin or mineral supplements?](#)

- [How often should I feed my Leopard Gecko?](#)

- [How should I feed my Leopard Gecko?](#)

- [How big should the habitat be?](#)

- [Can I keep multiple Leopard Geckos together?](#)

- [What should I put in the terrarium?](#)

- [How warm should the terrarium temperature be?](#)

- [What type of lighting should I use?](#)

- [What is the proper humidity level for my Leopard Gecko's terrarium?](#)

- [What type of substrate should I use for my Leopard Gecko's terrarium?](#)

- [Do Leopard Geckos drink water?](#)

- [Why does my Leopard Gecko wiggle his tail?](#)

- [Should I be worried that my Leopard Gecko is eating his shed skin?](#)

- [Why does my Leopard Gecko flick his tongue?](#)

How long will my Leopard Gecko live?

The average life span of a Leopard Gecko in captivity is 15 to 20 years, though some have been known to live as long as 30 years.

[\[Back to Top \]](#)

How can I tell if my Leopard Gecko is male or female?

Males have hemipenile bulges that look like swellings at the base of their tail on the underside of their bodies. They also have V-shaped pre-anal pores leading to their vent. Additionally, males have a wider tail base, a broader head, and bulkier bodies. It's easiest to sex adult Leopard Geckos, but you can sex juveniles if you use a magnifying glass.

[\[Back to Top \]](#)

What should I feed my Leopard Gecko?

Leopard Geckos are carnivores, and the staple of their diet is live crickets. They will eat other feeder insects such as mealworms and grubs, and adults can be given the occasional pinkie mouse. All insects should be gutloaded before they are fed to your gecko.

[\[Back to Top \]](#)

Do Leopard Geckos need any vitamin or mineral supplements?

Yes, you will need to dust your Leopard Gecko's food with a vitamin supplement twice a week and a calcium/Vitamin D supplement every other feeding.

[\[Back to Top \]](#)

How often should I feed my Leopard Gecko?

Juveniles should be fed once a day, and adults should be fed every other day.

[\[Back to Top \]](#)

How should I feed my Leopard Gecko?

We recommend using a feeder of some kind - [Feeding Rocks](#) work well for crickets and [Insect Feeding Dishes](#) are perfect for mealworms. Using a food dispenser of some kind will lessen the chance that your gecko will ingest its substrate. Be sure to remove any uneaten food within a few hours. [\[Back to Top \]](#)

How big should the habitat be?

A 10 gallon terrarium is sufficient for one Leopard Gecko. Choose a terrarium that is long rather than tall to allow for plenty of living space.

[\[Back to Top \]](#)

Can I keep multiple Leopard Geckos together?

Yes, you can, but there should only be one male per enclosure because males will fight. Be sure to increase the size of the terrarium - two geckos will need at least a 15 gallon terrarium, and a group of three or four will need at least a 20 gallon terrarium.

[\[Back to Top \]](#)

What should I put in the terrarium?

You will need to provide hiding spots and climbing places. Your gecko will take shelter in the hiding spots during the day, and you can use caves, securely stacked rocks, and commercial [hideboxes](#) with small openings. The climbing places will provide your gecko with the exercise he needs, and you can use rocks and logs. Be sure to keep the décor fairly simple, as this will make cleaning easier.

[\[Back to Top \]](#)

How warm should the terrarium temperature be?

Leopard Geckos need a temperature gradient in their habitat that ranges from 75° to 85°F during the day, with a basking area that reaches 90°F. This will allow them to move back and forth between the areas to regulate their body temperature. Nighttime temperatures should drop into the 70s. Under tank heaters can be used to maintain proper temperatures. Never use hot rocks, as these can burn your gecko. Always monitor terrarium temperature with at least two thermometers - one in the cool end and one in the warm end.

[\[Back to Top \]](#)

What type of lighting should I use?

Leopard Geckos are nocturnal, so avoid using bright white lights during the day, as they are stressful for your gecko. UV light isn't necessary, but it may be beneficial. If you do use it, use a UV light with a low UVB output. Red heat bulbs, black heat bulbs and ceramic heat lamps can be used during the day and night.

[\[Back to Top \]](#)

What is the proper humidity level for my Leopard Gecko's terrarium?

Leopard Geckos need humidity that falls between 40% and 60%. You should provide a high humidity [hide](#), such as a commercial hide lined with damp [substrate](#), to facilitate proper shedding. Monitor humidity with a hygrometer.

[\[Back to Top \]](#)

What type of substrate should I use for my Leopard Gecko's terrarium?

These geckos like to dig, so good substrates to use to provide a more natural environment are commercial terrarium sand substrate or clay substrate. Other substrates you can use include artificial turf, paper toweling, slate tile, and newspaper.

[\[Back to Top \]](#)

Do Leopard Geckos drink water?

Yes, they do, and you should always provide a clean water bowl. Use a flat, shallow bowl to prevent them from drowning, and change it daily. Disinfect it once a week, or as needed if your geckos soil it by going to the bathroom in it.

[\[Back to Top \]](#)

Why does my Leopard Gecko wiggle his tail?

Leopard Geckos will wiggle or move their tail slightly when they are preparing to hunt for their meal. It generally means that they have spotted their prey and are about to attack it.

[\[Back to Top \]](#)

Should I be worried that my Leopard Gecko is eating his shed skin?

No, this is nothing to worry about. It's called "dermatophagy," and it's perfectly normal.

[\[Back to Top \]](#)

Why does my Leopard Gecko flick his tongue?

Leopard Geckos, like other lizards, use their tongues to smell their food and surroundings. They have a sensory organ called a Jacobson's organ on the roof of their mouths. When they flick their tongue, they pull in particles of air, and the Jacobson's organ analyzes the molecules and identifies the scents.

[\[Back to Top \]](#)