

----- Feeding

Do not feed too large of prey. The largest prey should be no bigger than twice the size of the largest part of the snake you are feeding. Frozen/thawed is less expensive & easier to keep than live prey. It is also safer for your snake as dead prey can't fight back. If your snake refuses to eat frozen/thawed, you can feed live. Make sure you are present as live prey can & will fight back causing an injury to your pet. Their natural diet is on slugs, insects & earthworms. Adult diet frequently includes lizards (especially skinks), & small mammals. They are also known to eat birds and their eggs, frogs, fish, & other snakes.

Seek veterinary attention if your pet changes behavior or becomes inactive; this may indicate the pet has an illness.

As a pet owner, you are responsible for proper pet practices. Be prepared to take an ill pet to a Veterinarian & know which Veterinarian in your area can treat your pet.



check-list ✓

Your pet Corn Snake requires...

- Aquarium or Terrarium of appropriate size
- Red light / Heat source
- Under-tank heater or 'heated rock'
- Bathing dish or bowl (big enough for the snake)
- Substrate or bedding material
- 2 or more Caves/Dens (for hiding spots)
- Vines & branches (for climbing)
- Misting bottle (simple plant sprayer for water)
- Thermometer
- Sealable box for keeping 'live' food (insects)

Corn Snake

- Size: average length 4 - 4.5 ft. Well feed & cared for can reach 6.5 ft. in length.
- Life Span: 15 - 20 years on average in captivity, although they may live longer.



----- Temperament

The corn snake (*Elaphe guttata*), or red rat snake, is a North American species of rat snake that subdue their small prey with constriction. The name "Corn Snake" is a holdover from the days when southern farmers stored harvested ears of corn in a wood frame or log building called a crib. Rats and mice came to feed on the corn, & corn snakes came to feed on the rodents. This usage is recorded as far back as 1676.

Their docile nature, reluctance to bite, moderate adult size 1.2-1.8 metres (3.9-5.9 ft), attractive pattern & comparatively simple care make them popular pet snakes.

Corn Snakes are commonly kept as pets, due to their ease of care. Corn Snakes are overall hardy & simple to care for & quite active. They are an active snake. This snake enjoys regular contact with its owner & regarded as an intelligent, engaging breed.

Corn Snakes are fairly docile & rarely bite provided with regular handling. They may defecate on you if they consider you a threat. Most will settle down & wrap around your hands with gentle handling. They are constrictors, suffocating their prey before eating. These snakes are rarely aggressive to other snakes & are considered a good pet species. Corns are most active at night or in the hours of dawn & dusk.

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Housing



Corn Snakes may try to eat cage mates & should be housed on their own!

Corn Snakes do not need much room. A 20 gallon fish tank is fine, to start. Once your Milk Snake is close to full grown, a 33 gallon tank will be adequate, a 55 gallon would be better, but not necessary. All reptile environments must have tight fitting doors or lids. Your snake environment should include:

- **Substrate:** For substrate (bedding) aspen is a good way to go because it doesn't give off any oil. It also allows snakes to burrow when the mood strikes them. Green carpet, paper towel, mulch, or bark may also be substituted.
- **Heating:** The temperature in your snakes enclosure should be between 76 - 86 Fahrenheit with 90 in a "basking spot". At night the temperature can drop as low as 70 to 74. An under tank heater can be used as the only source of heat by putting it on half the tank. You also can use a red light 24/7 for added continual heat.
- **Decoration:** Corn Snakes need somewhere to hide. Two identical hides (one on each side of the tank) just big enough to allow your snake to curl up inside are necessary. Branches, vines, rocks, etc are good things to have in your enclosure to give your Snake something to climb on.
- **Water:** At all times there should be a large dish big enough to accommodate your Corn Snake so they are able to soak in it. While snakes do drink, they get a lot of their moisture through soaking themselves.

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Shedding & Humidity



Misting your snake's cage with water every couple days should be enough to keep the humidity high enough at most times to keep your snake comfortable. A water (for soaking) dish keeps humidity up also as a tightly enclosed environment is recommended; if only for security purposes. Snakes & other reptiles are well known for the ability to escape their cages.

However, when your Corn Snake goes into "blue" & begins its shed, it will need higher humidity & a few helpers. "Going into Blue" is something snakes do prior to their shed. That is when the skin over their eyes lifts in preparation causing their eyes to take on a bluish colour. During this time they become blind & it is advised not to touch or bother them as this is the most likely time they will strike as they are blind & defenseless. When your Corn Snake goes into blue you need to add something like a rough rock or large piece of bark, if these are not a part of the enclosure already. This gives your Corn Snake something to rub up against to help them get the old skin layer off.

You can also make a shedding box, which is a simple crate, Tupperware container, a take out carton, (etc,) that has a hole cut out on the lid big enough to let the snake completely enter the box. Inside the box can be damp paper towel or damp reptile moss. This acts as a steam room which can be very helpful to a Corn Snake during a difficult shed. Once your Corn Snake has finished its shed sometimes not all the skin comes off, you can give it a warm bath & gently rub at the skin, usually this helps take off all the left over skin. Bathing your snake is often a bonding exercise for 'handled' snakes & your pet may enjoy the help, but be careful as they are sensitive during this period & are generally grumpy.

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