

## ----- Feeding

The largest prey should be no bigger than 1/2 of the size of the head of the lizard you are feeding. Make sure you are present as live prey can & will fight back causing an injury to your pet. Their natural diet is on small bugs, worms & other reptiles eggs. Supplement with diced fruits & moist vegetables (remember to keep the food fresh). 'Leafy' greens which are high in calcium; kale, arugula, collard & mustard greens, parsley, dandelion greens & flowers, endives, radish, carrot & turnip tops. Mixed into the greens may be many other veggies such as mango, corn, peas, carrots (shredded), sweet potato, cucumber, zucchini, green peppers, pears... also chopped fruit such as cantaloupe, apple, blueberries, peaches, pears, grapes, plums, raspberries... all chopped finely to avoid choking. Mealworms may be preferred over crickets & are a good option. They have a sweet tooth & like honey & sweet fruits

**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 Gecko requires...

- Aquarium or Terrarium of appropriate size
- Red light / Heat source (basking spot is not required)
- UVB Light (\*optional-day use)
- Blue Light (\*optional-for night use)
- 'heated rock' (heat source optional to red light)
- Water dish or bowl
- Substrate or bedding material
- Caves/Dens/Hiding Box (Shedding box)
- Rocks (or Vines & branches for climbing)
- Misting bottle (simple plant sprayer for water)
- Thermometer
- Food dish for fresh fruits & veg'
- Tightly sealable box for keeping 'live' food(insects)



## Gecko

- Size: common length 16-22 cm. Larger species can grow to more than a metre.
- Life Span: 18-20 years on average in captivity, although they may live longer.



## ----- Temperament

Geckos are small to average sized lizards belonging to the family Gekkonidae, found in warm climates throughout the world. Geckos come in various patterns & colors such as purple, pink, blue, or black. Geckos are among the most colorful lizards in the world. Some species of gecko can change color, similar to how chameleons do, to blend in with their surroundings or adjusting with the temperature. Geckos are unique among lizards in their vocalizations, making chirping sounds in social interactions with other geckos. All geckos have no eyelids & instead have a transparent membrane which they lick to clean. The eyes in some species are near 350 times more sensitive than humans. They can discern colors even in low level light. Many species are well known for their specialized toes that enable them to climb smooth or vertical surfaces, & even ceilings. The toes of the gecko have a special adaptation that allows them to adhere to most surfaces without the use of liquids or surface tension. Every square millimeter of a gecko's footpad contains about 14,000 hair-like setae which allows them to walk on walls or glass, & even upside down.

When an intruder is in the area, many species in defense will expel a foul-smelling material or feces onto their aggressors. Having a generally calm nature they are fairly inactive & tolerate being handled well. They are a nocturnal species so they are most active in the evenings & at night times, spending most of the day hidden away sleeping. They do not display much activity & will normally walk about a bit before climbing onto a rock to sit & rest. The gecko is a clean reptile & they will naturally choose a single place inside their tank to use as a toilet area. Handle them as gently as possible, & don't yank away your hand if you get bit - it doesn't usually hurt, but yanking might hurt them - put them back in their enclosure so that they can feel something under their feet. They can drop their tails if it gets grabbed (this is called autotomy).

## Housing



Gecko are a safe, small lizard & a good pet choice. They are fragile, so handle with care.

Gecko do not need much room. A 20 gallon fish tank is fine for 2 or 3 gecko. All environments must have tight fitting doors or lids. Gecko's are known to be of a curious nature & will escape given the chance. They will clean the bugs in your house but avoid you. Your Gecko's environment should include:

- **Substrate:** Sand is the best substrate for geckos. Play Sand is best because it has been screened & washed. Only use fine sand (grain size 0.5 mm or less).
- **Heating:** The temperature in your lizards enclosure should be between 78 - 88 A "basking spot" is not required for geckos. At night the temperature can drop as low as 60 to 65. 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, or 'Heated Rocks' also.
- **Decoration:** Branches, vines, rocks, etc are good things to have in your enclosure to give your lizard something to climb on & bask on. Hiding boxes are not recommended for young lizards, it may decide to hide instead of bask & therefore will not eat & grow properly.
- **Water:** The ambient humidity should be 60-70%... humid but not wet. A couple of live plants to help maintain humidity & provide cover could be included. Spray plants or mist the sand with water a couple times a day as Gecko like part of the environment a bit moist, especially when they shed their skin. A small Shedding or Wet Box with moist dirt or moss can help & most geckos enjoy a light water misting daily.

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## Shedding



Gecko's skin is actually reptile scales, not unlike a snake. It does not grow along with the lizard & it must be shed.

Shedding requires no help from the owner - actually anything you do to help will only hurt your pet. Never pull any hanging skin that is partially attached, even if it partially obstructs his vision or he fusses with it. Do not worry, it is all perfectly natural. You can keep your gecko happy at all times & aid shedding by creating a shedding box out of a sealable plastic container; Cut a hole big enough for them to climb in & out of the container in the lid or side, fill the box with a couple inches of moist sand, peat moss or paper towel & attach the lid - done! This small wet enclosure will give them a comfortable, cooler & humid environment to release the old skin.

## Social Behavior & Breeding

Chemical communication between geckos occurs. Geckos have a 'Jacobson' organ located in the roof of their mouth that is very sensitive to chemicals. Sometimes when a gecko is flicking out their tongue they are detecting these subtle chemical messages. Similar to how a dog wags its tail, a gecko will wag rapidly when it gets excited. This same movement can be observed in male geckos when they are interested in mating with a female. Sometimes the end of the tail moves so fast it makes a buzzing sound similar to a wasp flying past your ear. When under threat, its tail movements are slower & deliberate. A female can also do this when they see a mating partner, this could be observed as a kind of dance or ritual to let the male know they want to mate. The female will also stand up as tall as they can while at the same time arching their back. Some geckos can be very vocal also.

Geckos are best kept singly or in groups. Generally, males should be kept singly or in the company of two or more females. They do not take kindly to other males in their territory & will fight. Females rarely fight are more than one poses little problem. Captive geckos will breed, or attempt to, readily if conditions are right. Geckos will almost always mate behind some kind of cover, so you might add in some extra rocks or branches into the tank. A female gecko is able to lay several clutches of two eggs every year. They will lay & bury their eggs either under shelter or in between plants or cover. Young will usually hatch after around 6 to 12 weeks. Incubating temperatures of reptile eggs will determine which sex the hatchling will be. At 76 - 82 degrees Fahrenheit they are likely to be female, around 86 degrees - likely mixed, raised to 90 degrees - likely males will be born.

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