

Pet Turtles

GENERAL CARE SHEET



AMC

Animal Medical Center

SINCE 1910

Pet Turtles

General Care Sheet

Turtles are common pets that, with the correct husbandry, can live upwards of 40 years. Common species include Red-eared sliders, Box turtles, and Painted turtles. Many health concerns with turtles arise from incorrect living conditions.

Husbandry

- The rule of thumb is 10 gallons per inch of shell length.
- Adult turtles should be kept in at least a 75 gallon tank, if possible.
- No substrate is best. Turtles are notorious for eating sand, small pebbles, and even rocks thought too large to swallow.
- The water in the tank should be filled at least half way to allow the turtle to swim.
- Basking spot
 - Offer a platform so that the turtle is able to be out of the water when it prefers.
 - A heat lamp should be placed over the platform.
 - Temperatures under the lamp should read 85-88o F.
 - A UVB light should also be placed over the tank – replace the bulb every 6 months.
- Water temperature
 - Maintained at 75o-86oF via a water heater.
- Filtration
 - A filter is necessary for a turtle tank.
 - Ideally, the filter should be placed in the tank or a canister system placed outside of the tank.
 - The stronger the filter, the better.
 - Empty out 50% of the tank once monthly and replace with fresh, warm water.
 - The filter should be replaced as directed on the packaging.
- Feeding tank
 - Many turtle owners choose to have a separate tank, usually quite smaller than the normal tank, to feed in.
 - Turtles tend to defecate at the same time as eating and this may allow for a cleaner home tank.
- Diet
 - 25% of diet: Commercial pellets such as ReptoMin or Zoomed are ideal for both young and adult turtles. This provides essential nutrients and vitamins.
 - 25% of diet: Animal protein such as live feeder fish or earthworms.
 - 50% of diet: Plant matter.
 - Dark leafy greens such as collard, mustard, and dandelion greens.
 - Shredded carrots, squash, and green beans.
 - Fruit: apples, melons, berries, and cantaloupe.

**Please call the Animal Medical Center at (212) 838-8100
to schedule an appointment with the Exotics Service.**

Note: Our Emergency Room is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year and is equipped to see Exotics patients.