

# 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.