

REPTILIA

We Specialize in Small Animals and Reptiles



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CORN SNAKE CARE

Corn snakes come from areas around the United States. They can be between 20 cm in length as juveniles but reach around 60 cm within the first 12 months of growth with an eventual size up to 150 cm in length. This is usually within 5 years. They can live for up to 20 years in captivity.

HOUSING

- As large a vivarium as possible should be provided to enable room for exercise, and a thermal gradient to be created along the length of the tank (hot to cold). Wooden or glass vivarium are ideal as this provides the snake with some visual security and ventilation can be provided at snake level.
- Good ventilation is required and additional ventilation holes may need to be created.
- Hides are required to provide some security. Artificial plants, cardboard boxes, plant pots, logs or commercially available hides can be used. They should be placed both at the warm and cooler ends of the tank.
- Substrates suitable for housing snakes include fine reptile sand, kenaf, fine silica stones, AstroTurf, carpets and some of the commercially available substrates. It is important that the substrates either cannot be swallowed, or if they are, do not cause blockages as this can prove fatal. Wood chip-based or corncob substrates should never be used for this reason.
- The vivarium should be cleaned out at least once a week with a suitable disinfectant and spot cleaned daily to help prevent disease.
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TEMPERATURES AND HUMIDITY

- Reptiles are ectothermic, so a heat source is required.
- Temperatures should be measured with a maximum/minimum thermometer. During the cold winter months careful checking is required to ensure the heat sources are keeping the tank sufficiently warm. Heat sources should be guarded to prevent thermal burns.
- Temperatures must be measured to ensure the tank is not overheating especially in a small vivarium. The cool end should be maintained at 25°C, and the warm end should be maintained at 28°C and not exceed 30°C.
- Belly heat can be provided with a heat mat or heating pad (bellow the substrate or AstroTurf). If heat mat or heating pad does not supply sufficient heat an additional heat source must be added such as a

Heat Emitter, Infrared Heat Lamp or a Moon Lamp. This should be set on a thermostat so that the overnight temperature does not drop below 25°C.

COMPANIONS

- In general, the happiest snake is the solitary snake.

LIGHTING

- Despite being crepuscular species (active at dawn and dusk), corn snakes appear to benefit from UVB light.
- A low percentage UV light can be recommended. This will need to be on all day for 8 hours and at an appropriate distance from the snake as recommended by the manufacturer. A small branch or rock can be placed below the basking site (please ask for further information on UV light in reptiles).
- All UVB bulbs should be checked regularly for their UV output and should be changed at least every 10-12 months.

WHAT TO FEED

- Corn snakes are carnivores and their main diet consists of mice pinkies or fuzzies for hatchlings. As the snake grows, so will the frequency and amount of food given and an increase in prey size, from pinkie mice to large mice when fully grown. As a general guide one mouse per week is sufficient for a 500-gram snake.
- Most snakes prefer live feed as part of their hunting instinct. If frozen food is preferred, it should be defrosted and warmed to blood temperature 37°C prior to feeding. Handling should be avoided after feeding as to prevent the snakes from regurgitating.
- Water should always be available, and a container is required which will allow the snake to submerge completely. This should be changed daily.

SALMONELLA

- All reptiles can potentially carry Salmonella.
- However, it is rarely a cause of illness in reptiles and treatment is not required.
- It can be transmitted to people (especially young children or those who are immuno-compromised) so good hygiene after handling the reptile is important. Generally washing your hands in soap is sufficient. There are commercially available disinfectants that can be used as an alternative.

ANNUAL HEALTH CHECKS

We recommend annual health checks every year for pet reptiles as medical problems are more easily treated if detected at an early stage.