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## Leopard Gecko



Adequate temperature		
	Hot spot	Cold spot
Day temperature	33 °C	25 °C
Night temperature	22 °C	20 °C

### Main Features :

In the gecko family, the leopard gecko is the most popular! The gecko is a nocturnal species, that is, it is active at night! He is one of the reptiles who is capable of performing autotomy: that is, he has the ability to cut off his tail if he is in danger. This feature allows the animal to flee at the same time if a predator catches it by the tail or distracts the tail by abandoning its tail, to create a diversion to escape. The skin of the geckos has a grainy appearance but is soft to the touch. The average longevity of a geckonid is 15 years. It can be exceeded if it is kept in admirable conditions of captivity. One of the peculiarities of the gecko is that it accepts handling very well and even recognizes its owner to taste! The gecko often licks his racks and bowls to become familiar with his environment.

### Captivity:

The habitat of a gecko must be at least 80 cm x 45 cm x 40 cm and have a cover, a heating system and a lighting system emitting ultraviolet rays. Humidity (30-40%) and temperature (see table above) should be carefully monitored to maintain the health of your gecko. To maintain the proper temperature, a heating mat, out of reach of the animal, can be used as well as a heat lamp not accessible for the latter. The carpet must be installed under the terrarium to avoid any direct contact. If the animal has access to the heating source, the risk of burns is close to 100%. A reptile does not feel the heat on its skin, it is only once it is too late that it feels the wound. The gecko does not need a UV lamp in its habitat. In order to better control the humidity level and to maintain an adequate temperature, it is strongly recommended to buy a thermometer and a hygrometer to better control the variants. The ideal is to get a thermostat that will regulate the temperature and monitor the humidity. Using a timer to control the lighting time is a good alternative, but it is important to make sure that they always work, even after several years! For the substrate (bottom mat), a grass mat can be perfect as an option because it is easy to clean. It is good to have 2-3, to alternate when maintaining to be able to do a better cleaning of the carpet. The addition of sphagnum moss helps maintain good moisture, which will be beneficial in helping the lizard to moult. A gravel or sand substrate is not recommended due to the risk of the animal ingesting this product, which can cause intestinal blockage.

### **Food:**

Geckos are insectivorous, that is, they feed on insects! You can therefore offer him goliath (the most nutritious), crickets, waxworms, silkworms, butterworms and mealworms alive or dead. It is important to make sure that the crickets offered are fed before being given to your lizard. Do not forget to give water to the crickets so that they do not die before being given to the lizard. Adding a piece of wet sponge or a piece of potato to the cricket bowl is just fine. The addition of calcium and multivitamins is essential to his diet, like all reptiles. It is recommended to add 2 to 3 times a week on crickets before offering them to your companion.



### **Frequent health problems:**

- **Metabolic Bone Disease:** The lizard may suffer from anorexia, tremor, swelling around the bones, lethargy, or bone malformations caused by old fractures.
- **Infections:** Infections can occur in the mouth (stomatitis), on the skin (bacterial or fungal) or in the form of abscess. This condition is often the cause of poor nutrition, excess moisture or poor hygiene.
- **Parasites:** A lizard can sometimes catch parasites in many ways, such as having been outside, being in a boarding house or pet store or coming from their live food (mice, insects, etc.). If the animal is not treated following the appearance of parasites, it could become anemic and die. Parasites feed on your pet's blood, where they can find the nutrients they need for survival.
- **Moult problem:** A reptile moults several times a year. The moult consists of a change of skin. The animal grows up and the scales become too tight on it. He develops new scales and the old ones have to leave. A moult problem occurs when the degree of humidity is not adequate. If your pet has difficulty moulting, do not pull on the molt. Give it a bath of lukewarm water instead.
- **Cloacal Prolapse:** A cloacal prolapse is an externalization of part of the digestive system of your reptile. It is therefore possible to see part of the intestine of your reptile out its cloaca (opening that connects the anus and the reproductive system).

As with all animals, it is recommended that an examination be conducted after the purchase of a new reptile and an annual check is required. The annual exam helps prevent health problems that may occur and thus save the life of your pet. If in doubt, a visit to the veterinarian is required! A reptile, whatever it is, will hide its symptoms so as not to become an easy prey for predators (humans). At the slightest change in behavior, contact your veterinarian.

