



A BETTER LIFE FOR EXOTIC PETS

LEOPARD GECKO CARE GUIDE

Native to: Typically found in South Afghanistan, Pakistan, NW India & Iran.

Habitat: Rocky, dry grassland and semi-desert regions.

Behaviour: Crepuscular/Cathemeral & usually sticking to shaded areas, tunnels and burrows.

Social: Solitary.

Size: Range between 7-10 inches, including tail.

Lifespan: Anywhere up to 15-20 years.



ANATOMY

Eyes Closed:

These geckos have eyelids, meaning they can blink and close their eyes when they sleep.

Shedding Skin:

Every so often, leos will shed their skin. They will go a paler colour and eventually eat the old skin layer

Cloaca-what?

Leos have a single, multi-purpose orifice. Not only do they poo & wee from here, but they also reproduce from here too.

Non-Stick Feet:

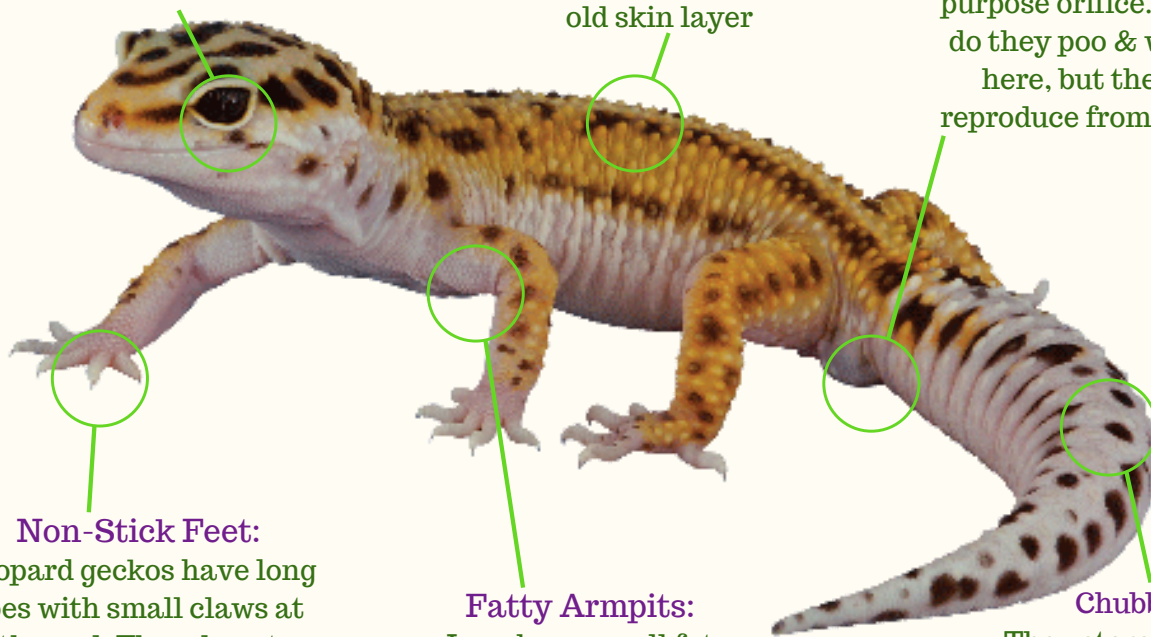
Leopard geckos have long toes with small claws at the end. They do not "stick" like other geckos.

Fatty Armpits:

Leos have small fat stores behind their front legs, that often looks like lumps in their armpits.

Chubby Tails:

They store most of their fat in their tail. They can also drop their tail when spooked, but it does grow back.



DIETS

Leopard geckos in the wild eat a diet consisting entirely of insects.

Insects should be offered daily when the gecko is young, decreasing to 3 times a week when mature. It is important to feed a variety of insects to promote different hunting techniques and provide the variety of nutrition each insect contains.

Insects should be no larger than the geckos head.

We feed our leos every Mon, Wed & Fri. with a different feeder insect every week.

STAPLE FEEDER INSECTS



Crickets

A good staple, can be noisy and may bite. Contain good all round nutrition.



Dubias

Harder to find in shops but, they are high in protein and easy to breed.



Hopper

A common feeder insect, these are good all-round nutrition and fun for them to hunt.



Morio Worm

These are fatty insects, and should be offered less often, can give a nasty bite.



Meal Worm

These are also high in fat, but small. Can be left in a worm proof bowl in the tank.

GUT-LOADING

To ensure the live feeders contain the right nutrients, they should be fed an appropriate diet of fruit, vegetables and meal prior to offering them to your gecko.

Our insects are fed on fresh fruit and vegetables, and leftover CGD

SUPPLEMENTS

Calcium:

They will require additional calcium to promote bone growth and development.

I ensure that insects are dusted in calcium powder just before feeding. This is done three times a week with youngsters and once a week for mature leopard geckos.

Nutrobal:

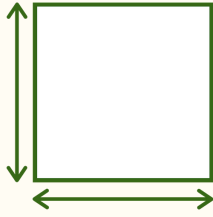
Nutrobal is a multi-vitamin powder, which includes vitamin d3. This is vital to promote calcium absorption.

We dust feeder insects with Nutrobal twice a week for youngsters, and once a week for adult leopard geckos.

WATER

Clean, fresh water should be available at all times in the enclosure. Provide a shallow dish, around the size of the gecko's body and clean regularly.

ENCLOSURES



Space:

They need plenty of floor space to allow for burrowing and hunting. Some height for climbing.

We suggest a 3x1x1ft wooden vivarium as a minimum, but bigger is always better!



Lighting:

They will need a day and night cycle, best provided with a low-level UVB tube light on in the day.

A 5-7% UVB tube light will be plenty for leopard geckos. The Arcadia Shadedweller is the perfect design for them.



Temperature:

They need a hot spot of 32-34°C to allow for thermoregulation. The cool side should sit at 23-25°C.

This is best provided with overhead heat - a halogen light bulb is the optimum choice, on one side.



Humidity:

No higher than 30-40%, with access to a hide at a higher level of humidity in the tank.

Using a dry substrate should promote this, with an enclosed hide, with sphagnum moss, as well.



Substrate:

Mix soil with play sand, or pre-made desert surface. Slate and artificial grass are okay.

We suggest mixing up a loose, digging substrate with something like slate to replicate wild habitats.



Decor:

They need at least three hides, one on the warm side, the cool side and a humid hide. Provide lots of cover and burrowing opportunities.

Please see examples page.

MAINTENANCE

Remove poo and urates daily - they will usually use a set area as a toilet.

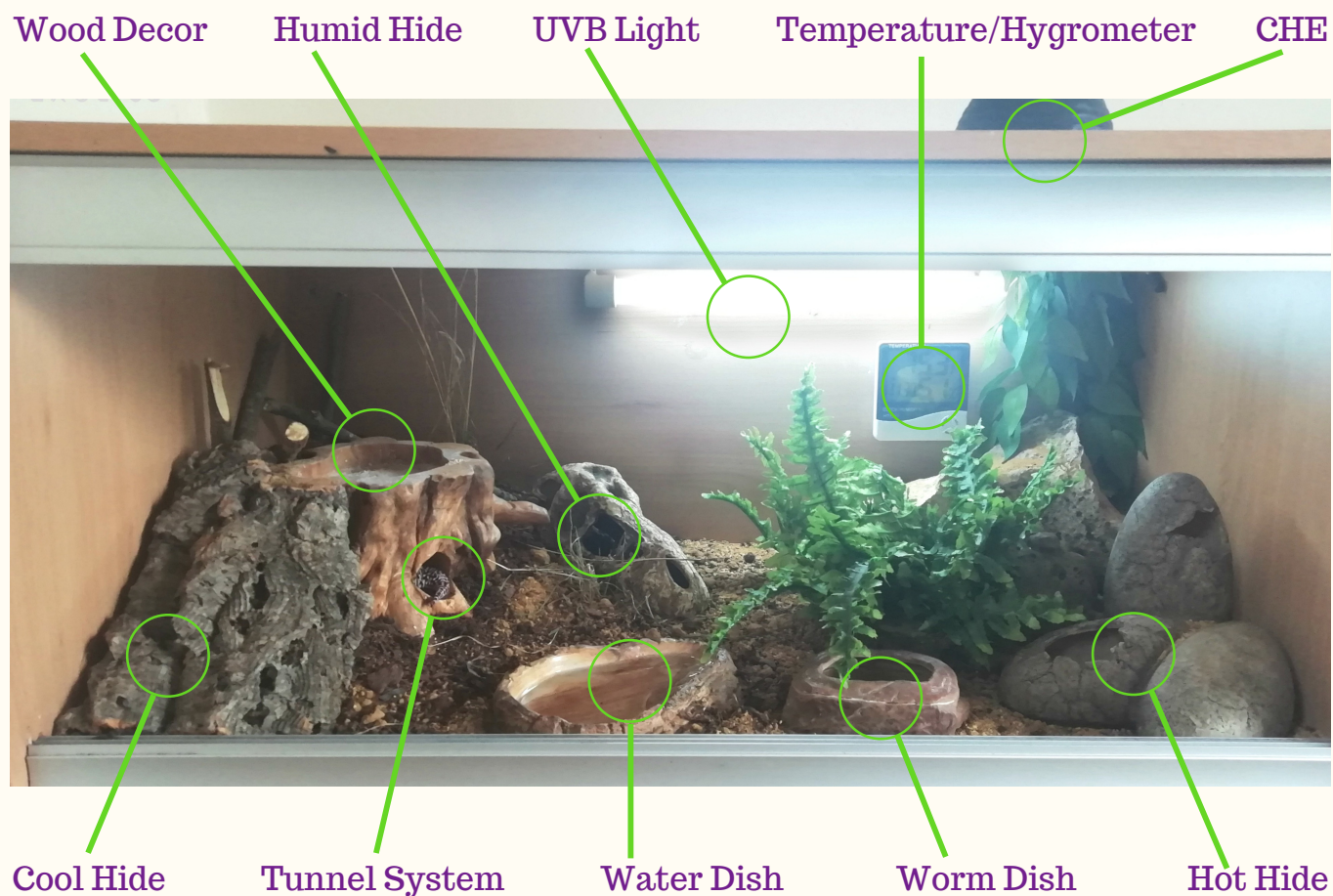
Change water daily - fully disinfect the water bowl weekly

Fully change substrate when needed - depending on the type of substrate (e.g. paper towels weekly, soil/sand every two months)

Clean decor items when soiled - fully disinfect monthly

Variations may apply when using a bio-active set-up

ENCLOSURE EXAMPLE



HOW TO SAVE MONEY

Setting up the tank is often the most expensive part of getting a new exotic. Between the tank, the electrics, the decor and maintenance tools, the cost can be crippling. Here are some of my tips on budgeting...

Take your time

You should never rush into a purchase, so buy what you need piece by piece - this will give you time to research leopard geckos while you build your setup.

Don't just buy new

Using tools like Facebook, eBay and other sales sites will save a lot of money!

Use a Bio active substrate

Bioactive substrates will allow you to add clean-up-crew and plants to the setup that can make one lot of substrate last the animal's entire life

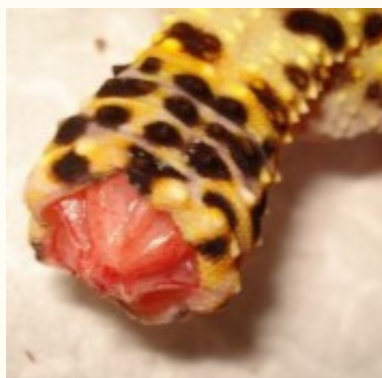
Get creative

You don't need the flashiest, top of the range decor. Try making hides out of old Tupperware, jars or cardboard boxes. So long as it functions as it needs to and doesn't cause a fire hazard it's fine.

COMMON HEALTH PROBLEMS

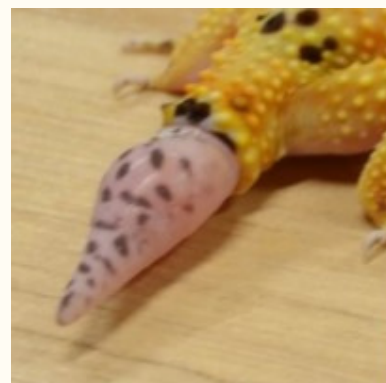
The below are a look at some common health problems you may see. It is still, ALWAYS recommended to seek veterinary assistance for anything out of the ordinary.

Dropped Tail

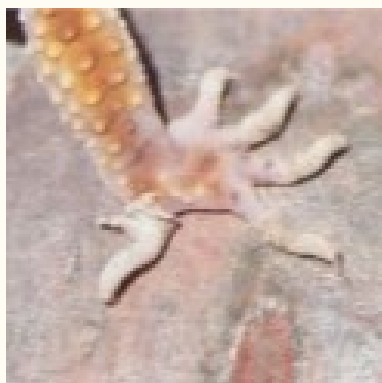


When very stressed or startled, leopard geckos will drop their tail as a defence mechanism. This is a natural process, so don't worry, the tail will eventually grow back, but may look a little different.

It is recommended to transfer the gecko to paper towel substrate, to keep the wound clean, and avoid leaving biting insects in the enclosure. The wound should heal on its own with no extra attention.

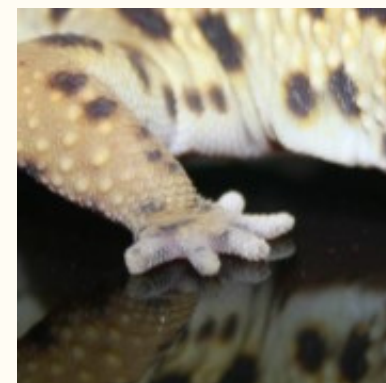


Stuck Shed



During shedding, sometimes skin can get stuck around the toes. It's important to remove this skin, else it will restrict blood flow and eventually cause the ends of their toes to die and fall off.

Once you notice the stuck shed, place the gecko in a shallow tub of luke-warm water (about 2cm deep) to allow the skin to soften. Rub the toes with a cotton bud until the skin is off - don't pull it!

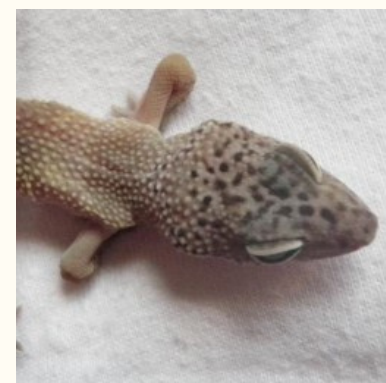


Metabolic Bone Disease

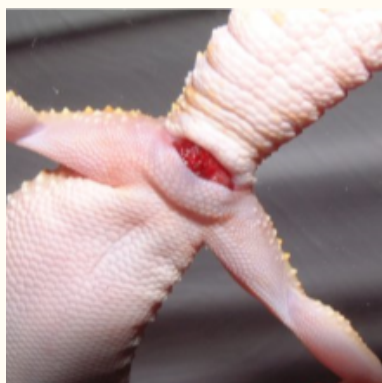


MBD is a condition where the gecko has not had enough calcium and vitamin D3 to promote healthy bone growth. Limbs will appear deformed and the gecko will struggle to walk.

It is recommended to seek a vet's opinion if you start to notice these signs. They may prescribe liquid calcium. If the disease is too severe and interferes with quality of life, euthanasia may be suggested.



Prolapse



A prolapse occurs at the vent, and is noticeable as a pink protrusion from the vent. This could be an indicator of further problems, such as impaction, egg-binding or parasites.

In the event of a prolapse, veterinary advice should be sought immediately. If you are unable to see a vet straight away, keep the gecko in a cool, shallow tub of sugar-solution until you can.

