



## Leopard Gecko

### Diet and Care Recommendations

#### GENERAL INFORMATION

Wild leopard geckos live in the dry, rocky habitats of Pakistan, Western India, and Afghanistan. They are crepuscular, meaning they are most active during the night but will come out during the day to bask.

#### DIET

**Invertebrates:** 100%, crickets gut-loaded with T-Rex Calcium plus or ILF formula, silkworms or phoenix worms. You can purchase them from [www.mulberryfarms.com](http://www.mulberryfarms.com)  
[www.mulberryfarms.com](http://www.mulberryfarms.com)  
[Avoid mealworms , wax worms or super worms because they are high in fat and phosphorus.](#)

#### ENVIRONMENT

Leopard geckos should be kept in a cage that provides them with plenty of space to move around, climb, and hide.

**Lighting:** Leopard geckos require a specific wavelength of light called UVB. It is required for the proper absorption of calcium. We recommend using a full-spectrum bulb, **the Reptisun 5.0 or 10.0, manufactured by ZooMed**. Leave UVB bulbs on for 14 hours a day, and make sure that the bulb is not filtered through glass or plastic. These bulbs need to be changed every 6 months because their effectiveness as a UVB ray emitter decreases over time.

**Heat:** Use ceramic heat emitter bulbs. The temperature gradient should be 88-90°F on the hot end and 70-75°F on the cool end. Keep a thermometer at basking level on the hot end of the enclosure, and at ground level on the cool end. Provide branches for climbing as well. Never use heat rocks or heating pads, as they can cause severe burns.

**Substrate:** Use paper-based bedding, such as Carefresh or Yesterday's News. Coconut fiber is also okay. Avoid all types of sand, including calcisand. Sands can be ingested, causing blockages in the intestines. Also avoid corncob bedding because it can grow fungus and cause health problems.

**Moisture:** Leopard geckos live in dry environments, but seem to need humidity in captivity. Provide a large dish of water for soaking and defecating. Change the water often. Also provide a humidity box as they seem to help geckos shed.

**Enclosure:** Leopard geckos hide for most of the day. Provide multiple hiding places.

#### MEDICAL CARE

**Exams:** Bring leopard geckos in once a year for an exam and a fecal test to check for parasites.

#### **Common Illnesses:**

**Parasitic Infections:** Symptoms include: loss of appetite, inability to gain weight, and slow growth. Treatment involves administering an oral anti-parasitic medication and repeating fecal tests.

**Impaction:** Almost always caused by the ingestion of sand. Symptoms include: loss of appetite and inability to produce stools. Leopard geckos exhibiting these symptoms should be seen by a veterinarian right away. Treatment can be difficult and often requires hospitalization. Avoiding the use of sand as a substrate prevents this problem.

**Nutritional Secondary Hyperparathyroidism (Metabolic Bone Disease):** Caused by lack of UVB lighting and improper nutrition. Symptoms include: limb and mouth deformities, lethargy, lack of appetite, and difficulty eating. Leopard geckos exhibiting these symptoms should be seen by a veterinarian right away.