



Sugar Glider Diet and Care Recommendations

GENERAL INFORMATION

The **Sugar Glider** (*Petaurus breviceps*) is a small gliding possum native to eastern and northern mainland Australia and New Guinea, and introduced to Tasmania. Sugar gliders are marsupials and have a pouch where their young develop. Despite the massive loss of natural habitat in Australia over the last 200 years, sugar gliders are adaptable and capable of living in surprisingly small patches of remnant bush. Sugar gliders are able to glide because they have skin membranes called patagium, which extend from the fifth finger of the forelimb back to the first toe of the hind foot. When fully extended they form an aerodynamic surface the size of a large handkerchief.

The diet of wild sugar gliders vary considerably with both geography and the changing seasons, but they mainly feed on the sap of acacias, nectar, pollen, and insects. In captivity, sugar gliders usually live 12-14 years. They reach sexual maturity at 10-12 months and usually have 2 young at a time.

DIET

Insectivore Diet: This diet (made by Mazuri) can make up the majority of your sugar glider's diet, and is available at the clinic.

Leadbeater's Mix: This is an alternative diet you can make yourself. Gather the following ingredients:

- 2/3 cup of warm water
- 2/3 cup honey
- 1 shelled, boiled egg
- 1 tsp vitamin/mineral supplement
- 2 Tablespoons high protein baby cereal

Directions: Mix warm water and honey. In a mixer, blend hard-boiled egg until homogenized. Gradually add water and honey. Then add vitamin powder and baby cereal until the mixture is smooth. This mixture can be kept in the refrigerator or frozen in an ice cube tray. Feed 2 tablespoons of mix per day or 1 cube.

Fruit: Fruit can be offered regularly as a treat.

Nectar Supplements: Commercially available powdered supplements such as Glideraide, Gliderade, and Sugar Glider Nectar are designed to mimic the nectar portion of a glider's diet. They can be offered 2-4 times weekly.

ENVIRONMENT

Sugar gliders are very active and love to burrow, nestle, jump, and climb and need large, multiple-level cages.

Substrate: Use paper-based bedding, such as Carefresh or Yesterday's News. Don't use cedar or pine shavings. The oils in shavings can cause skin and respiratory irritation, and can also cause changes in liver function.

Moisture: Provide a water bottle or dish of water at all times, and change the water daily.

Furniture: Provide many blankets, beds, and hammocks. Also provide a nesting box for sleeping, since in the wild sugar gliders nest in the cavities of trees.

MEDICAL CARE

An annual exam performed by a veterinarian is recommended for proper care. Your veterinarian can advise you if any additional testing is required.