



SUGAR GLIDER CARE

The sugar glider (*Petaurus breviceps*) is a small marsupial originating from Australia, New Guinea and the surrounding islands. They are nocturnal animals mainly found living in forest regions, and are able to glide up to 50m between trees. They are increasingly common pets and can live between 12-14 years if looked after correctly.

ACCOMMODATION

- Sugar gliders should be housed inside in a spacious tall aviary-type wire cage (minimum size 2 x 2 x 2m) with small mesh.
- The cage should contain a variety of nest boxes, branches, perches and shelves. Bird toys and swings may also be enjoyed.
- Temperatures should be maintained between 24-27°C for these tropical animals, and the cage should be placed in out of direct sunlight to avoid extremes of temperature.
- Supervised exercise within a confined area in the house is encouraged, but it is important to prevent access to anything that could be chewed, eaten or destroyed.
- The enclosure should be cleaned out at least once a week to help prevent disease.

COMPANIONS

- Sugar gliders are social animals, so will be happiest in a pair or small group. Entire males may fight but neutering will often help reduce this problem.

WHAT TO FEED

- Choosing the correct diet for your sugar glider can be difficult as diet is one of the most contentious topics in sugar glider keeping.
- However, by looking at a sugar glider's diet in the wild we can see that the majority of it is composed of a variety of insects, eggs, tree sap and nectar, and NOT fruit or vegetables.
- It is therefore recommended in captivity for their diet to be made up of 50-60% insects or a commercial insectivorous food (such as that designed for pet hedgehogs), and 40-50% mixed vegetables with only a small amount of fruit
- Vitamin and mineral supplementation should be applied to any fruit or insects given
- Clean water must be given daily either in a water bottle or bowl.

VACCINATIONS

- No routine vaccinations are currently recommended for sugar gliders

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NEUTERING

- Male sugar gliders may be castrated in order to reduce fighting, or prevent reproduction

PARASITES

- No routine parasite prevention is currently recommended for sugar gliders

SIGNS OF ILL HEALTH

- As sugar gliders are a prey species they will hide disease, so the first time you see any signs you must act quickly.
- A healthy sugar glider will be bright and alert with clear open eyes, ears and nostrils. Your sugar glider should also be keen to eat and drink, and pass faeces regularly.
- It is important to become familiar with your animal's normal appearance, movement and behaviour, in order that signs of illness can be noticed at an early stage.
- You should look out for any changes in appetite or faeces passed, as well as changes in weight, behaviour, coat condition or breathing. Other signs of illness include discharges from the eyes, nose or mouth
- Nutritional disorders are the most common problem seen in sugar gliders.
 - Signs of an inappropriate diet may include lethargy, weakness, weight loss, dehydration, tremors, incoordination, paralysis or even death
- Bleeding or discharges from anywhere should be assessed by your vet.
- Limping, change in grooming behaviour or wounds should be assessed by your vet.
- If you have any concerns contact your vet as soon as possible.