



AGAVE VETERINARY CARE
AND EXOTIC ANIMAL HOSPITAL

Your complete Sugar Glider Care Guide

Sugar gliders are wonderful, precocious pets, that form tight knit family groups and bond well with their humans. They are native to Australia and New Guinea.

Sugar gliders are nocturnal. They need plenty of light in the day, but minimal handling during their sleeping hours.

Enclosure:

Gliders need a lot of space. Being arboreal, they spend most of their time in trees. They need plenty of areas to climb and move to be healthy. Ideally, sugar gliders should have an enclosure that is at least 6x6x6ft. Many people accomplish this by giving their gliders a room in the home that is “glider-proofed” and isolated from any other pets.

Provide multiple feeding stations to prevent fighting, plenty of things to climb, and several areas for hiding and sleeping.

A heated area should be provided that reaches 85-95F. The temperature in the room cannot go below 65F. Never use heat rocks. They are known for causing burns. You can use halogen lamps (like what you would use to create a basking spot for a reptile) to create a warm area for them, but make sure that they can't jump on or land on the lamp as this can be a source of severe burns.

Diet:

About half of the diet should consist of Leadbeater's mix, a diet that was created to meet the nutritional needs of a related animal, the Leadbeater's possum, a fellow marsupial from Australia.

Leadbeater's Mix Recipe:

150mL water

150mL honey

1 hard-boiled egg (can include shell)

25g high protein baby cereal

1 teaspoon vitamin and mineral powder (Prime or Vionate)

Mix the water and honey. In a separate container, blend the egg and gradually add water/honey, cereal, vitamin/mineral powder and blend until smooth. Freeze in ice cube trays. Feed one thawed cube per glider per day.

The other half of the diet should be an insectivore/carnivore diet such as Reliable Protein Products Insectivore Diet or Mazuri Omnivore.

You can feed up to 1-3 gut loaded and dusted insects per glider per day. Good insects include crickets or Dubia roaches. Gut loading means feeding the insects with a product like Fluker's High Calcium Gut Cricket Diet for 24-48 hours prior to offering them. Immediately before offering them, dust the insects with a calcium powder such as ZooMed ReptiCalcium with D3 (put the insects in a small container with the powder and shake lightly to cover them like a powdered doughnut).

Anything that isn't Leadbeater's mix or the insectivore kibble should be considered a treat and should make up no more than 5% of the total diet (no more than half a teaspoon per day). This includes finely chopped fruits sprinkled with some of the ZooMed ReptiCalcium with D3 (1/2 tsp/day).

Noise:

Sugar gliders make a lot of noise including yaps and screeches. This is a normal way of communicating. As you get used to them, you'll be able to identify some of their meanings based on the sounds you hear.

Social groups:

Sugar gliders are very social animals and, as such, should always be kept in a group. Solitary gliders are known to develop symptoms akin to depression and can develop health problems as a result. Pairs are better than singles, but a larger group is best for normal social interactions. Sometimes males will fight one another. Providing sufficient space and neutering them can help prevent these problems.

Spay/Neuter:

Neutering is preferred over spaying for sugar gliders as the procedure is less invasive and the males tend to have more aggression and other behavioral issues. Neutering removes the testicles, which prevent unwanted breeding and reduces (but does not eliminate) territorial behaviors.

References:

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