

# Corn Snake Care Sheet

## Introduction

Corn snake care is relatively straight forward. The following will explain the basic care for your corn snake. This care sheet is not intended to be a thorough guide to keeping corns, but rather to outline the basics that every corn snake keeper should know and follow. Doing so will help keep your snake safe and healthy.

## Feeding

Corn snakes feed primarily on rodents. Typically mice or rats are fed to corns about once a week. You can feed them more often if you want to grow them up quicker, but once a week should suffice. If a corn snake is well fed there shouldn't be any problem for the snake to go without food for 2 or 3 weeks, but this should be kept to a minimum.

Corns, as well as many other snakes, will eat meals that are very small or very large. The optimum size for a meal is usually considered to be about the same size as the snakes diameter at its thickest spot. Although a corn snake can eat something twice as big or even bigger, it's generally not a good idea to overdo it. Snakes may regurgitate their meal if it's too large or hard to digest quickly.

Your snake will usually eat either live food or pre-killed frozen rodents which have been thawed out. Some snakes may prefer one over the other. Care should be given when live food is offered to your corn snake. Older rodents may bite back when attacked by your snake and could injure it. Live food may also bite when left in a cage with a corn snake that isn't interested in food. Live rodents should not be left in the cage with a snake that isn't ready to eat.

## Housing

Corn snakes don't get very large, typically up to around 5 feet as adults. Babies are often kept in a standard 10-gallon aquarium. Larger corns can be kept in a 20-gallon long aquarium. It's important that your snake have enough ground room. The height of the cage is not as important as the surface area on the ground. If you choose to keep your pet in an aquarium make sure you get a good lid that will keep your snake inside the cage. Snakes are very curious and can squeeze through small gaps. Be prepared for this before it becomes a problem.

Other types of cages can be used to keep corn snakes. This includes on the expensive side, cages built specifically for snakes and other reptiles, or some even choose to keep their snakes in plastic shoeboxes with holes drilled in the side for ventilation. This is probably the least expensive way to house your corn.

## Water

Your pet snake should always have available a source of clean drinking water. Many types of bowls can be used successfully, but some are better choices than others. Depending on your choice of substrate, your snake may make a mess of its water by filling the bowl with what you use as a bedding for your animal. Snakes will also knock over their water source and making a mess of the cage. This may also cause health concerns if the cage is too moist. You may also find that your snake may defecate in the water bowl from time to time. For all these reasons, we recommend using heavy glass containers that

aren't too wide. We have found this to work well in all of the situations mentioned. We found ours at the local dollar store.

## **Substrate / Bedding**

There are many good choices of substrates (what goes on the floor of the cage) for your pet snake. There are also many substrates that should not be used. Popular choices include aspen or bark shavings, paper towels, astroturf or butcher paper. Some people use newspaper or pine shavings, but personally we don't recommend it. Substrates that should be avoided are cedar or other kinds of wood shavings which give off harmful chemicals when wet as well as cob bedding.

## **Temperature**

Snakes are cold blooded animals. This means that they don't generate a body temperature themselves. In order for your snake to digest its food properly, the temperature needs to be warm enough. A corn snake should have an available source of heat in their cage that reaches 80 - 85 degrees. This can be achieved using various methods, but most often the cage will have some sort of heating lamp or heat tape. Make sure the snake doesn't have a way to burn himself with the heating source. Lamps and tapes should be kept on the outside of the cage. It's also important to not heat the whole cage. Having both a warm spot and a cooler spot will allow the snake to choose the temperature that's right.

## **Problems**

If the guidelines outlined above are followed, your snake should remain happy and healthy. If your corn snake should become seriously ill, it may be necessary to bring it to the vet. You may want to do some research of your own online to become familiar with what the issue may be as well as what may have caused it.

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