

TO CARE FOR YOUR TURTLE

Turtles are omnivores, which means they eat both meat and plants.

LIVE FOOD

Water snails, garden snails (crush, feeding shell and all) worms, goldfish fry, tadpoles, water boatman, woodlice etc.

You can also buy food from pet shops that contains calcium, minerals and vitamins essential for the development of a turtles shell and its well being which is suitable for both adults and hatchlings.

VEGETABLES

Always have oxygen weed or other aquatic plants in the water. Turtles love puha and lettuce.

Hatchlings require a constant diet of live food. This consists of daphnia (water fleas), chopped up worms, water boatman, mosquito larvae and small woodlice.

LIGHT

Turtles must have some form of sunlight, however DO NOT place a tank in the sun, you may cook your pet. Have available a minimum of five hours natural sun daily or ten hours of a GroLux fluorescent light. Always have a place for the turtle to sunbathe. It is best to slope the sunbathing area so that the turtle may choose the position most suitable.

TEMPERATURES

Turtles generally slow down or stop at around 15-18°C. However they do not hibernate until around 10°C. It is best to keep the temperature up and the turtle eating, thus preventing the turtle from starving.

WATER

There is no need to age the water. If possible try to undertake a 50% water change each week. For every gram of solid matter excreted a turtle excretes four – five grams of urine.

COMMON DISEASE – SOFT SHELL

(lack of adequate light and/or vitamin D.)

Treat this disease by providing extra sunlight and more calcium in the diet. This can be done by floating a cuttlefish in the tank or adding an extra ½ teaspoon of Turtle Reptile Food Additive to every 400gms of food mixture. DO NOT add any more than this, as an overdose of calcium can be harmful.

Providing turtles have adequate sunlight, a varied diet and clean warm conditions it is unlikely that you will experience any disease problems with your turtle.

A turtle does shed its skin and this is often mistaken for skin fungus. This is perfectly normal and is more noticeable with young turtles. Turtles also shed the outer part of their shell.

It pays to have a piece of cuttlefish floating in the tank as this gives your turtle an additional source of calcium if required and is also useful to keep it's beak sharp.

FEEDING

Turtles should be fed once a day at the same time each day.

Hatchling turtles should be fed twice a day, also at the same times. The turtles soon learn their feeding times. Each turtle will normally consume twice its own head size in food at each mealtime. If it looks like it would like more don't hesitate to give it extra. When feeding turtles it would pay to feed it in a separate area. This helps to keep their tank clean, and it's a lot easier to rinse out a container or sink than to clean out their tank. Leave the turtle for an hour or so to let it excrete after feeding.

SALMONELLA

Turtles are natural carriers of this disease. Always wash your hands well after handling turtles, especially children.

TANK SIZES

Turtles cannot be kept in a fish bowl. The smallest tank suitable for a turtle is 60cm X 30cm X 30cm. With a pair of well-fed hatchlings this tank would only last six months. A pair of turtles 15cm across the carapace (upper shell) will require a minimum tank size of 120cm X 60cm X 60cm.

WATER DEPTH

There is no maximum water depth, but turtles are excellent climbers so don't have the water (or sunbathing area) too near the top of the tank. A drop of 50cm or more onto a hard surface may kill a turtle. The minimum depth should be twice the length of the carapace.