



Sydney Exotics & Rabbit Vets

SERV: Dr David Vella BSc BVSc (Hons) Diplomate ABVP (ECM) & Associates

SYDNEY EXOTICS & RABBIT VETS

e exoticsvetinfo@gmail.com

w www.exoticsvet.com.au

NORTH SHORE VETERINARY SPECIALIST CENTRE

a 57-63 Herbert St, Artarmon NSW 2064

t 02 9436 4884 f 02 9906 5710

CARPET AND DIAMOND PYTHON CARE

Diamond & Carpet Pythons are non-venomous snakes native to Australia. They belong to the species *Morelia spilota*. There are many subspecies including the **Diamond Python** *M.s.spilota*, **Coastal Carpet Python** *M.s.mcdowelli*, **Centralian Carpet Python** *M.s.bredli*, **Inland Carpet Python** *M.s.metcalfei* and **Jungle Carpet Python** *M.s.cheynei*. There are also interbreeds of these subspecies. They are generally relatively easy & low maintenance reptiles to keep in captivity. They are gentle creatures though some individuals may be more temperamental. Some pythons may grow over 3m in length & live for over 30years. Below outlines some 'basic' requirements for keeping Pythons as pets. *Please note: All Australian snakes are **protected species** in Australia. Seek individual state & territory requirements for legalities on keeping snakes as pets.*

Housing

- Pythons can be housed indoors. They require suitable artificial heat & light sources as outlined below
- Suitable enclosures include ventilated glass/clear plastic fronted wooden or plastic cabinets at least 1m long x 1m high x 0.5m wide (depending on size of snake). Juveniles can be kept in smaller plastic tubs
- Furnish the cage with a hide box, branches for climbing & water bowls heavy/large enough for the snake to bathe in
- **Substrates** (enclosure floor covering) are most simply & hygienically provided by means of newspaper sheets. Artificial grass can also make a good, easy to clean substrate option
- Enclosures should be **disinfected** at least once weekly (use household bleach diluted 1:10 with water & rinse well afterwards) & 'spot' cleaned as necessary
- Pythons can be housed individually or in pairs, but beware that fighting may occur. Avoid feeding them together
- **Centralian Pythons** come from arid areas & prefer a lower humidity.
- **Heating.** Provide them with a 'temperature gradient' in their enclosure. This means they need a 'hot' end & a 'cool' end. The temperatures must be monitored with thermometers at both of these ends
- The **hot/basking area** end can be heated with a thermostatically controlled ceramic/reflector globe to create a basking temp of 30-35C. At the **cool end**, aim for 24-27C. (nb; different subspecies require different temperatures)
- Overnight temperatures should not fall below 21C. The use of heat mats or red light/ceramic heat lamps may be required to achieve this 'night heat'. Do not use heat rocks, as serious burns to the python could result.
- **Lighting.** Pythons should be provided with **UVB light** which may aid in natural foraging and feeding behaviours. The effective UVB emission lifespan of these lights is usually in the vicinity of 3-6 months, so they will need to be **replaced at least every 6 months**
- UVB light may not be essential to pythons, it's a good idea to give them regular access to **natural unfiltered sunlight**
- Recommended day and night cycles for most Python species is 12 hrs light and 12 hrs dark

Handling

- Most Pythons can become very used to being handled. Over handling though may be stressful
- Support the whole body of the snake & avoid squeezing them

Feeding

- Pythons are **carnivorous**. They should be fed whole prey such as rodents or birds. All items fed **MUST** be dead. It is illegal to feed snakes live prey items.
- Occasional supplementation with multivitamins added to the food is a good idea
- Feed pythons around 10% of their body weight weekly for juveniles & every 2-3 weeks for adults

Veterinary & Health Notes

- Have any new python examined by a reptile vet. **Parasite** checks and general blood screens can be performed
- It is essential that you **quarantine** any newly acquired reptile. Don't risk introducing disease or parasites. Speak to your reptile vet for details on sound quarantine procedures
- It is recommended that you have your reptiles vet-checked annually. Especially if you intend to breed them
- Pythons can also be microchipped to aid in identification and ownership
- **Always wash your hands after handling** any reptile & between handling of different reptiles
- It is a good idea to regularly **weigh** & record the body weight of your pythons
- Pythons can be transported individually in tied cotton bags & then placed into an insulated container. Ensure that they can't escape or overheat
- Pet health insurance is more widely available nowadays and is worth considering for your pet reptile