

# Avian and Exotic Animal Clinic

9330 Waldemar Road Indianapolis, IN 46268

[www.exoticvetclinic.com](http://www.exoticvetclinic.com) (317) 879-8633



## Ball Python Care Sheet

**Introduction:** Ball pythons come from West-Central Africa. They are semi-arboreal which means they climb trees and hide in bushes. Their diet in the wild includes various African rodents including gerbils and spiny mice. They tend to be most active at night. Ball pythons are one of the most popular snakes bought in pet stores. They are relatively inexpensive, are beautifully marked, have a relatively friendly disposition, and generally do not get more than four feet in length. They can be easily identified from other snakes due to their brown, black and tan markings.

**Captivity Requirements:** Small Ball Pythons (16-28 inches) will do well in a ten gallon size enclosure. An adult Ball Python (30-48 inches) should be housed in a thirty gallon enclosure. Reptile carpeting or newspapers are substrates that are affordable, readily available, and easy to clean. Mulch, sand, and wood shavings aren't recommended as they are hard to keep clean enough and can lead to skin infections and impactions. A water dish that is big enough for the entire snake to fit into and a dark place to hide should be provided. Temperatures should range 82-85°F with a basking spot around 90°F; night time temperatures should never fall below 75°F. These ranges can be achieved with over tank ceramic heat bulbs. The recommended humidity level for ball pythons is around 60%.

**Diet:** Ball pythons can be finicky eaters. Wild caught adults are generally difficult to feed and maintain as a pet, which is why captive hatched and bred snakes are preferable. It is recommended that younger snakes are fed every 7-10 days; older snakes can be fed every 2-3 weeks. Since snakes eat whole animals vitamin supplements are not required. We recommend feeding killed prey for the safety of the snake. Scratches and bite wounds are frequently seen on snakes fed live prey. If your Ball Python resists eating traditional white mice sold by pet stores, gerbils or spiny mice may be substituted since these are natural prey items.

### **Diseases:**

Dysecdisis— Problems shedding skin, commonly caused by low humidity.

Mites- Appear as small, red or black specks. Infected snakes may spend long periods of time soaking, or rubbing. To visualize, rub a clean white paper towel down the entire length of the snake's body.

Stomatitis- Also known as Mouth Rot. Inflammation of the mouth commonly caused by poor husbandry, which weakens the immune system and allows bacteria to rapidly reproduce.

Respiratory infections- Can be caused by viral, bacterial, fungal, or parasitic pathogens.

Symptoms may include wheezing or bubbles from nostrils.

Intestinal parasites- A variety of parasites commonly afflict snakes. To prevent exposure keep snake's enclosure clean and disinfect frequently. Do not feed snakes wild prey.