



Ball Pythons at a Glance

Difficulty of care: **Beginner**

Average lifespan: **Up to 30 years with proper care**

Average adult size: **4-5 feet long**

Diet: **Carnivore**

Minimum habitat size: **120 gallons**

Temperature: **Warm side 88-92 F, cool side 78 F**

Humidity: **50-70%**

Fun fact → The ball python is named for their protective habit of curling into a tight ball when threatened.

Tank Setup and Maintenance

- It is recommended to set up a bioactive terrarium that breaks down waste naturally.
- Maintain a temperature gradient in your tank with a warm side of 88-92 F and a cool side of 75-80 F. Use an under-tank heater or ceramic heat emitter controlled by a thermostat.
- Add a water dish large enough for soaking and increase the humidity to 60-75% during shedding.
- Include sturdy pieces of wood like driftwood for climbing, as well as substrate and hides for burrowing.
- Spot-clean any visible feces, urine, or shed skin. Check and refresh the water dish every two to three days to ensure cleanliness.

Supply Checklist

- Appropriately sized habitat
- Substrate
- Moss
- Water dish
- Hideaway box
- Plants
- Heat emitter
- Heat fixture
- UV light emitter
- Feeding tongs
- Thermometers
- Thermostat
- Humidity gauge
- Frozen rodents



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Handling

Always wash your hands before and after handling your ball python.

Most ball pythons are docile and tolerant of handling once they're socialized. But, like all snakes, they may strike if they feel ill, stressed, or threatened.

Handle your ball python minimally during shedding and try not to handle your python for at least 24 hours after feeding, as this can lead to discomfort and regurgitation.

Health

A healthy ball python will have clear, clean eyes and vent, and regularly flick their tongue.

Call a vet if your ball python is lethargic, not eating, has stuck shed, or discharge around their vent.

Common illnesses in ball pythons include:

- Stuck shed or eggs
- Skin infections
- Mouth infections
- Gastrointestinal obstructions

Diet

- Ball pythons feed on whole, thawed frozen rodents, such as mice and rats. Use feeding tongs rather than your fingers. Do not feed your ball python live prey.
- A ball python's prey size should be equal to the widest part of their body.
- Ball pythons should always have access to fresh, clean water.



Lifespan feeding recommendations

Hatchlings (up to 6 months)

Feed every 5–7 days

Juveniles (6 months to 2 years)

Feed every 7–10 days

Subadults (2–3 years)

Feed every 10–14 days

Adults (3+ years)

Feed every 14–21 days

Fun fact

With regular handling, ball pythons can learn to recognize and bond with their pet parents.