



Milk Snake at a Glance

Difficulty of care: **Beginner**

Average lifespan: **15 years or longer with proper care**

Average adult size: **2–6' long, depending on species**

Diet: **Previously frozen, thawed rodents**

Minimum habitat size: **10 gallons for juveniles;
30–40+ gallons for adults**

Temperature: **Warm side 80–82 F; cool side 70–75 F**

Fun fact ↪ Milk snakes are nonvenomous kingsnakes that resemble coral snakes because of their similar colors.



Enclosure Setup & Maintenance

- Milk snakes should be housed alone in a well-ventilated enclosure with a secure screened lid. Juveniles need at least a 10-gallon habitat, while adult enclosure size depends on the snake's size, with larger adults requiring at least 40 gallons.
- Paper-based bedding or reptile carpet can be used, while loose substrates such as coconut husk, aspen shavings, or cypress mulch require feeding in a separate enclosure to reduce the risk of accidental ingestion.
- The cool side of the habitat should remain between 70–75 F, while the warm side should stay around 80–82 F. Milk snakes should receive 10–12 hours of UV light each day.
- Humidity should remain between 40–60% and increase to about 70% during shedding. Provide at least two hideaways, moist sphagnum moss in the warm hide, climbing branches, plants, and a large water bowl for drinking and soaking. The enclosure should be cleaned and disinfected weekly.



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Supply Checklist

- Appropriately sized habitat
- Substrate and sphagnum moss
- Water dish
- Frozen rodents
- Plants, climbing décor, and hideaways
- Under-tank heater and thermostat
- Thermometers and humidity gauge
- Heat emitter and fixture
- UV light emitter
- Mister

Fun fact ↪ Milk snakes do not drink milk, but they help control rodent populations.

Health

Milk snakes should receive an annual examination from an exotic animal veterinarian. Healthy milk snakes have clear eyes, bright coloration, regular tongue-flicking behavior, and a relaxed demeanor.

Contact a veterinarian if you notice cloudy eyes (outside of shedding), skin lesions, discharge around the cloaca, loss of appetite, tumors, lethargy, retained shed, or nasal trauma.

Because shedding can temporarily affect vision, approach your snake carefully during this time. Always wash your hands before and after handling, as milk snakes can carry Salmonella and other infectious diseases.

Fun fact ↪ A milk snake preparing to shed will often develop cloudy blue or green eyes.

Diet

Milk snakes should be fed whole, previously frozen, thawed rodents such as mice and rats. Live rodents should never be offered.

Juveniles typically begin with pinkie mice and gradually transition to larger immature mice as they grow. Adult milk snakes can eat full-grown mice and rats. Food items should be no wider than the snake's mid-body.

A shallow dish for feeding can help prevent substrate ingestion, and feeding tongs should always be used instead of fingers. Fresh, clean water should be available every day.

Fun fact

↪ They received their name because they were often found around barns, where people once believed they drank cows' milk.

