



## Owning and Caring For Sugar Gliders

These charming, highly social animals are great companions for people who are willing to commit the time and energy required to fulfill their attention needs. Anyone considering adding a sugar glider to their family should consider adopting more than one. Sugar gliders are known for their clean, cuddly, and relatively quiet personalities.

### Facts:

- Lifespan 10-15 years
- Weight about 4-6oz
- Marsupials (have a pouch)
- They are nocturnal
- They are omnivores
- Gestation (pregnancy) about 17 days
- Prefer to live in groups
- Can glide up to 150ft

### Preventative Care:

- Complete physical exam every 6-12 months
- Yearly fecal exam to check for parasites
- Spay/Neuter at 9-12 months of age
- Annual blood work to monitor organ function
- Regular nail trims

### Common Problems:

- Malnutrition or obesity
- Behavioral disorders resulting from stress
- Internal/External parasites
- Respiratory infections
- Diarrhea/constipation
- Trauma

## DIET ESSENTIALS

**Fruits and vegetables:** Feed your glider a portion of fresh fruits or vegetables daily (NOT canned, dried, or trail mix). We suggest feeding them a single fruit or veggie each day and varying the choice each day. Gliders tend to prefer fruits and vegetables that have a sweet taste.

**Protein:** We are strong advocates of sugar gliders getting at least 50% protein in their diets. We suggest using the following for protein sources and vary them each night: fresh cooked lean meats with no spices and diced into small pieces, chicken or turkey baby food, mealworms, crickets, tofu, and boiled/scrambled eggs. You can also alternate yogurt (with fruit) and cottage cheese as part of this category.

**Supplements:** Sugar gliders can be picky eaters. So, even with a well balanced diet, your pet may be lacking important vitamins and minerals. Even though gliders aren't reptiles, a reptile multivitamin and calcium with D3 supplements can be used to help make sure you have a happy, healthy pet. We recommend using Rep-Cal, Herptivite, Glideraide, Supreme blend, or Lory nectar and sprinkling a small amount on your fresh fruits/veggies or insects daily. You never want to mix vitamins with the glider water supply as this can create growth in the water bottle that may not be healthy.





## Say NO to...

- Chocolate/candy
- Onion/garlic
- Rhubarb
- Lima beans
- Any fruit pit or seed
- Coffee/tea/soda
- Avocado
- Bugs caught outdoors
- Foods high in fat (nuts)
- Milk
- Canned foods or meats
- Cheese
- Chives
- Fried foods
- Iceberg lettuce
- Raw eggs or meats
- Salty or sugary foods

## Behavior and Bonding

The best part of being the owner of a sugar glider is connecting with him/her in a special way so that you will become very close companions. The best time to socialize a glider is when the joey is 7-12 weeks out of the pouch. When you first get your glider, it may fuss or make a funny sound, called crabbing. It is appropriate to carry your glider with you frequently while training. A WORD OF CAUTION: do not pull away from a glider trying to bite. If the animal senses fear, your reaction will actually motivate the glider to try and bite again. Although many people have successfully kept single sugar gliders without the glider developing any social problems, we recommend having more than one for the sake of their happiness. If you choose to get just one, you really need to spend a lot of time with it (at least three hours a day). Sugar gliders are incredibly social by nature, and when lacking companionship are prone to depression and other behavioral issues. Depression can lead to a variety of disorders from overeating, to extreme shyness, to not eating at all. Males left unneutered will mark their cages with urine.

## Environment

Now that you have decided on a sugar glider as your pet you should have all the supplies necessary before bringing him home. A safe and enjoyable home will help you have a happy and healthy sugar glider. The cage should be a wire construct big enough for the glider(s) to have ample room to jump and glide (a minimum of 2 cubic ft but always select the largest cage possible).

Glass surfaces, like aquariums, or other surfaces that prohibit a glider from climbing are extremely detrimental and likely to lead to hip fusions and other joint problems in the future. It is better to choose a taller/narrower cage versus a shorter/wider cage. Hanging food dishes and a "hamster-type" suspended water bottle are most often used. Your

glider should also have a variety of toys, perches, branches, ladders, tubing, tunnels, balls, and climbing ropes for playing, exercising, chewing, and exploring. The cage needs to be in an area that is away from human traffic during the day so your pet can sleep. The cage should be in an area that gets enough light to distinguish between night and day, but avoid direct sunlight. The environment should be draft free and kept between 70-90°F. Because sugar gliders are nocturnal, you should provide a nesting box for sleeping during the day. A cloth pouch, birdhouse, or even hamster house will suffice. Bedding should be made of shredded plain paper, recycled paper bedding, or wood shavings. Whichever substrate you choose should be non-toxic, in case your pet eats it, and good at absorbing waste. Avoid cedar and pine as they may cause respiratory irritation. Always remember to keep the cage and bedding clean. This will help prevent odor and behavioral problems such as self-barbering and self-mutilation.



Even though gliders drink very little water; fresh, clean water should be available to him/her around the clock. Each day, change out the water in the water bottle for fresh water. On a weekly basis, sanitize the water dish/bottle with a mild dish detergent and rinse thoroughly.

## Bourbon's Modified Leadbeaters (BML)

½ c honey

1 hard boiled/scrambled egg + shell  
¼ c apple juice (not frozen or for babies)

1- 4oz bottle premixed Gerber juice with yogurt (mixed fruit or banana)

1 tsp Rep-Cal Herptivite

2 tps Rep-Cal Calcium supplement (non-phosphorous with Vitamin D3)

2- 2 ½ oz jars of chicken baby food

¼ c wheat germ

½ c dry baby cereal

Blend the first 3 ingredients together, then add the remaining ingredients, and blend well. Pour into ice cube trays and freeze.

1 cube is approximately 2 tablespoons.

Good for 1 month.

Recommend daily diet for sugar glider:

1 tablespoon BML

1 tablespoon chopped fruits

1 tablespoon chopped vegetables

3-5 insects