

# Carpet Python Care



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## INTRODUCTION

If you are planning on getting a Carpet Python as a pet, or you already have one but want to brush up on your snake care skills, this manual will guide you in ensuring they live a long, healthy and happy life. By far the most popular pythons as pets are the Carpet Pythons as they make wonderful pets for the whole family to enjoy! Whilst Carpet Pythons are fantastic for both first time owners and seasoned professionals, there are several factors you should consider when looking after your new friend to ensure they will stay happy and healthy.

Carpet Pythons range in size from 1.5m – 3m in length, meaning your pint-sized critter will become a larger than life housemate in no time! Carpet Pythons can live for 15-20 years and are relatively low maintenance compared to a cat or dog or even a lizard!

## HOUSING

Melamine Enclosures or Glass Terrariums are the most practical form of housing for a Carpet Python as they are simple to clean and make it easy for you to view your new friend exploring his home. For the first 6-9 months of a Carpet Python's life, a 2-foot (60cm) enclosure or a smaller is adequate, however after this you will need to upgrade to at least a 3-foot (90cm) – 4-foot (120cm) enclosure to ensure your python has enough space to keep growing. Most Carpet Pythons will require an even larger enclosure such as a 6-foot (180cm) enclosure for the later years of their life. If you have two Carpet Pythons, we recommend moving up to an 8-foot (240cm) enclosure or larger as this allows enough space for both Snakes to grow whilst also providing plenty of space for them to have an area to themselves when they need it.

*TIP – As your Carpet Python gets older, we recommend that the enclosure should have a width of at least 18 inches (45cm) so they have ample room to turn and move around freely.*

## ULTRA VIOLET LIGHTING

Carpet Pythons kept indoors do not require Ultraviolet light (UVB) however at Reptile Life we provide UVB lighting which makes viewing easier and may result in healthier animals. It will also simulate the natural day/ night light cycle offering better well-being for your python. By feeding your snake whole prey food such as rats or mice, the snake is able to receive the necessary calcium from the bones of the animal.

*TIP – On writing this care manual Ultraviolet light is agreed that it is not essential however may have long term health benefits.*

## HEATING

Did you know that Carpet Pythons are ectothermic? This means they rely on external sources to control their body temperature, such as sunlight or a heated surface. As a result, your Carpet Python will require some form of heating such as a Ceramic Heat Emitter or an Infra-Red Lamp (ideally connected to a thermostat), Heat Mat or Heat Cord to keep them warm. It's recommended to have overhead heat as well as additional under belly heat so that your Python can choose wherever it feels most comfortable. You must offer a gradient of temperature within the enclosure. This means that there needs to be an area in its enclosure where the snake can get away from the heat and cool down when he wants to.

## BREEDING

Carpet Pythons can become aggressive when it comes to the breeding season. This is usually seen after a 'winter cooling' period where the snake goes into a state of brumation. As the weather warms up, they begin to cycle. For males, this can result in fighting which can leave bite marks. If a male and female are kept together during breeding, 'locking' behaviour can be seen where they will sit together with tails coiled around each other signalling mating. Carpet Pythons lay up to 30 eggs usually four months after the initial mating period.

## SEXING

The best method for sexing Carpet Pythons is the probing method where a sterile probe is inserted into the vent area of the python angling toward the end of the tail. The probe will go in much further in a male than a female. This should only be done by an experienced herpetologist or Reptile Veterinarian.

## TANK MATES

Carpet Pythons are best kept on their own as they are naturally solitary, however, if enough space is provided then providing a tank mate can be done successfully.

If planning on cohabitating Carpet Pythons, it is best to stick to the same species or sub species to minimise the risk of issues and ensuring that husbandry conditions are essentially the same. It is also recommended that the pythons are of similar size. Other animals such as lizards are not suitable tank mates.

*TIP - if choosing to keep Carpet Pythons together upgrade your enclosure to a larger model to combat the added space required to prevent aggression.*



## TANK MAINTENANCE

It is essential to completely clean out and disinfect your Carpet Python's enclosure at least once every 2 months to ensure that any sheds, food scraps and waste is cleaned up. Spot cleaning is also very important and should be done at least every 2 days. Water should be changed daily. Carpet Pythons are fine to drink tap water and no extra water treatments are needed.

## DIET

Carpet Pythons are carnivorous and feed on a variety of whole food items. Their staple food can be mice or rats as well as day old chicks or even rabbits. At Reptile Life, our Carpet Pythons are fed Commercial Frozen Rats/Mice which are fed a varied diet to ensure that our Carpet Pythons get all the required nutrients. Extra food items can be fed including chicken necks, guinea pigs and other widely available frozen feeders.

Carpet Pythons should be fed a mouse or rat that is appropriately sized to the body and head size of the snake and adults should be fed less frequently than younger snakes. Waiting between feeds allows snakes to digest their food properly as their metabolisms are slow which means food takes longer to pass through their digestive systems. Generally, you will need to feed your python every 1-2 weeks. If you have more than one snake, we recommend feeding them separately so one of your snakes doesn't miss out on food.

## TOXIC TO YOUR PYTHON

Be careful what you feed your snakes. Rats or mice caught from your garden should never be used as feeders as they may have diseases or poisons that could harm your snake.

Likewise, we recommend only feeding freshly defrosted food to your snakes and removing any left-over food that your Carpet Python hasn't eaten.

## HEALTH CARE

Observe carefully what your Carpet Python is eating so you will be aware if it loses its appetite. This could be a sign of illness or insufficient heating. Establish a pattern of what a healthy snake looks like so that you can more easily pick up when your Carpet Python's actions are different. However, most problems originate from poor or incorrect tank maintenance and hygiene.

Respiratory Infection – Caused by incorrect temperature, inadequate humidity and too much humidity.

Dysecdysis (Shredded Shedding) – Caused by humidity being too low resulting in incomplete sheds and stuck scales. We have shedding products in-store.

Loss of weight – Typically nutritional deficiencies are caused by the feeding your snake food lacking the correct nutrition or incorrect temperature causing an early or untimely brumation (winter cooling).

## IN SUMMARY

Carpet Pythons have been extremely popular as pets in Australia and overseas for many years and the popularity is growing quickly. They make a fantastic pet especially for kids as they teach them responsible pet ownership. Given the correct conditions your new pet Carpet Python will thrive in captivity giving your kids hours of fun and enjoyment.