

Ball Pythons

Python regius



Approximate life span: 20-25 years
Estimated adult size: 3-5 feet long
Difficulty Level: Beginner
Hot side temp range: 85-95°F
Cool side temp range: 75-80°F
Humidity level: 50-60% (60-70% in shed)

RECOMMENDED VETERINARY CARE

- Annual exam
- Common medical conditions: parasites, impaction, dysecdysis, stomatitis, burns, live feeding injuries



Ball pythons, also called royal pythons, get their popular name from their tendency to coil into a ball when stressed or nervous. They are a good first snake due to their calm temperament and longer lifespan. There are dozens of morphs, bred for interesting color ranges in addition to the traditional brown, gray, and black markings.

HOUSING REQUIREMENTS

Housing should be appropriately sized for the length of the snake - generally, the cage should be about $\frac{2}{3}$ the length of your snake. Cages should include a humid hide box for visual security and proper shedding. Snakes will shed their skin regularly and often do not eat during this time. Substrate should not consist of sand or other small materials that can be ingested, due to the increased risk of impaction. Reptile carpet, tile, or newspaper can be used but orchard bark or cypress mulch may help retain humidity. Decorative touches like artificial plants, rock hides, and caves can also be added. Lighting and temperature are key to healthy reptiles. Ball pythons should have a hot side and a cool side for maintaining appropriate temperatures as they cannot regulate body temps on their own. They will not require special UV lighting, and lights should be on for no more than 12 hours per day, with heat maintained at all times.

DIETARY NEEDS

Ball pythons are carnivores and require a diet of whole prey animals for proper nutrition. It is recommended to feed only frozen/thawed food due to the risk of injury from live prey. Provide food that is about the same girth, or very slightly larger, as the largest part of your snake. Food should be warmed and fed once a week for younger snakes and every 2-4 weeks for adults. Never microwave food as it can heat unevenly and burn your snake. Remove and dispose of uneaten food within 24 hours. Provide a deep, stable water dish with fresh water at all times for soaking and humidity.