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## **SUGAR GLIDER HUSBANDRY**

### **CAGING**

Sugar gliders should have the largest cage possible because they are highly active at night. Minimum cage size is 36 X 24 X 36 inches and they should be made of wire mesh to allow for proper ventilation. Ensure that the bar spacing is close enough together to prevent escape or injury. Several different food and water bowls should be placed throughout the cage. Adequate climbing branches of different diameters allow exercise and toys should be offered for enrichment. Solid plastic wheels will encourage exercise when included in the cage. Perches should be made from untreated wood or nontoxic plants. A nest box or sleeping pouch can be provided high in the cage. The ideal temperature range is from 75-80 F. Pulp paper bedding (Carefresh) is preferred to wood chips so that the respiratory tract is not irritated. Cleaning the cage and the sleeping area should be cleaned out at least once a week. Self-mutilation is a syndrome seen in some solitary sugar gliders. Other factors may include stress, sexual frustration, and improper nutritional status. For this reason, consider obtaining sugar gliders in pairs.

### **DIET**

Little is known about the dietary requirements of sugar gliders. Several commercial diets are available and should encompass at least 50%-75% of the daily dietary intake. Dry dog, avian or primate foods can be used, also. Supplement commercial diets with a variety of other foods including insects, eggs, pinky mice and pelleted bird food (you can dribble a small amount of honey over the pellets to encourage the glider to eat them). Fruits such as berries, kiwi, papaya and mango should also make up a portion of the diet. Calcium deficiency is common in gliders so the quality of the food you feed is very important. Fruits that should NOT be added as a portion of the diet include: grapes, melon, bananas, apples, pears and canned fruit because they contain too much phosphorus and not enough calcium. Water should be available at all times and changed daily. Most gliders will learn to drink from sipper bottles.

#### **Sample diet**

5 grams dry or 10 grams semi-moist food  
5 grams berries  
5 grams citrus  
5 grams other fruit  
5 grams sweet potato  
1 gram mealworm or other invertebrates such as crickets

(Vet Clinic of North America: Exotic Animal Practice,  
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#### **Sample diet #2 (blended into a slurry)**

12 grams chopped, mixed fruit (any type, <10% citrus)  
2.5 grams cooked, shopped vegetables  
10 grams peach or apricot nectar  
5.5 grams ground, dry low-iron bird diet  
(eg Harrison's Bird Diet Adult Lifetime)  
1 gram mealworm or other invertebrates

### **VETERINARY CARE**

Yearly examinations are recommended in sugar gliders because preventable problems such as metabolic bone disease, obesity and dental diseases are common. Spaying and neutering at four to six months of age is also recommended. If you would like to schedule an appointment please call our office at 240-687-1414.

**Exclusively for Birds, Reptiles and Exotic Mammals**