

**Chapter 1 : The Ultimate Guide to Ball Python Care | ReptiFiles**

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Heat Cables Most common ones are heat pads, they are use almost by all snake keepers because they are easy to install place under the enclosure and do not get very hot in order to cause burns and blisters to the snake. The philosophy here is to set up an enclosure that will offer the snake different thermal options in one confined space. So the snake can move to the warm side if it needs to get some warmth and move away from it as far as possible to the cold side if it needs to cool down. A hide should be placed at each part of the thermal gradient to provide the snake with options to retreat and feel safe without compromising its thermal needs. A snake will often choose to hide instead of moving to the correct temperature if no hide is provided in that area. If you decide to use a spot lamp or a ceramic heat emitter then you will need to make sure the snake has no direct access to it, this heating elements get extremely hot to the touch and if the snake climbs on it or touches the surface it will get burnt. So proper care must be taken in order to avoid this. This can be easily taken care of with the use of a light bulb guard or a wire mesh. If you choose to go with a good commercial enclosure then you will not need to worry about the ventilation as it probably will already have holes and grills for proper ventilation, but if you plan to make one on your own then you need to address that. Make sure that ventilations holes are correctly spaced apart and at the proper areas to allow some ventilation but not excessive so you can still keep your required temperatures inside the enclosure. Poor ventilations can result in many problems for the snake over time it can escalate leading to diseases and health issues. Now about the humidity, I personally would not stress very much about it but still is an issue to take under consideration for your animals well being. Ball pythons love a good mist of water especially when younger. And it helps tremendously with their shedding schedule, so a mist of the enclosure times a week will be very beneficial. This would probably be one of the most important issues that many fist time keepers seem to straggle with. Ball pythons eat rodents and in captivity they should be offered the same. A baby ball will need to eat small and frequent meals, so if you have a juvenile animal your best bet would be small baby mice or rats pinky, fuzzy, hopper mice. Sickness, improper temperatures or stress. There is another article here if you encounter any feeding problems with your snake. These guys have the tendency to be very docile calm snakes and this is one of the main reasons people seem to love them for. Having said that now please keep in mind that they are also very shy animals and they get easily stressed by excessive handling or improper housing conditions. Back a while ago when the market was full of wild caught Ball pythons were a lot more aggressive snakes not easily acclimated to life in captivity, however now the captive trade provides most of the animals, and all ball pythons for sale now are CB animals. If you have the option to choose from then always take CB Captive Breed snakes in general. I urge you to continue reading and educating yourself as much as possible, about correct snake husbandry, breeding and health issues. Knowledge is indeed a great power and this is no exception! Here are some nice Ball Python books we recommend.

## Chapter 2 : Care Sheet - Python regius - World of Ball Pythons

*Ball Python (Python regius) The ball python is quite simply the most popular pet python in the world. Ball pythons are generally a bit shy, but they make for ideal captives, because they are of a small size, are generally friendly, are manageable to care for, and come in a remarkable array of colors and patterns.*

Because of their small size, docile nature, and varying colors and patterns, Ball Pythons are one of the most popular pet snakes. Ball Pythons are named for their habit of curling up in a tight ball with their head in the center when they are nervous. These snakes are very active at night and will sleep and hide a lot during the day. Baby Ball Pythons can be housed in a 20 gallon terrarium. As they get older, a bigger terrarium will be needed. Make sure the terrarium is big enough for the python to exercise. Provide plenty of ventilation and a secure hiding place. Pythons love to climb and are great escape artists. Most Ball Python keepers use aspen shavings or Sani-chips as a substrate. Some use paper towel, especially for babies. Do not use cedar shavings or bark chips. They are toxic to reptiles. Provide a hiding area that is big enough for your python to fit snugly into. Provide sturdy branches for climbing. An under tank heater can be used as the primary heat source. Ball Pythons need hours of light a day. Do not leave white light on during the night. Instead, use a red light. It might take your new Ball Python a little bit of time to adjust to its new surroundings. Avoid handling your Ball Python until it has eaten on its own a couple of times. In the beginning some Ball Pythons can be stubborn eaters. It is best if you feed your Ball Python at night. Baby Ball Pythons eat fuzzy mice once a week. You can increase the size of the food as the snake grows. Adult snakes should be fed every two weeks. If you do feed it live food be careful as live food might fight back and bite or injure your python. Provide a bowl of chlorine-free water large enough for the python to soak in. Empty, clean, and refill the dish when it is dirty. To download or print this care sheet – Click link: [Ball Python Care Sheet](#).

### Chapter 3 : Care - Ball Python Care

*Ball Python Care Level Because of their relatively small size and docile nature, ball pythons are one of the best types of snake for beginners and intermediate keepers. Caring for a ball python is not as demanding as other snake breeds and most keepers will have little trouble providing a proper captive environment.*

The variation of color and pattern called, morphs created by selective breeding in the reptile industry has only helped to rocket their popularity. Ball pythons typically grow between feet 6 feet is not uncommon anymore in length and live years with good husbandry. This slender necked but stocky bodied snake is generally identified as tan blobs on a dark brown or black background with white. Typically, the belly is white with or without darker speckled patterns. This is normal for "wild" coloration or "normal". Even though these snakes are technically considered part of the "giant snake" category they are an exceptional snake for those that want the all the features of a python but without the intimidating length. Generally, these snakes are found in the savannah grasslands and termite mounds where they frequently hide to shed and escape oppressive heat. Cultivated areas also house large amounts of these harmless serpents as the rodent population is generally large. In its natural territory they are both revered as deities and slaughtered on sight as "venomous" snakes. In Ghana, this serpent is worshiped and even protected. Throughout its natural habitat, these snakes are captured for the meat trade, the pet trade, and even the leather industry. Enclosure There are many different ways to keep Ball pythons, as with any snake. These primarily terrestrial snakes require more floor space in their cages. Adults can be housed in Neodesha, large plastic containers, and vision cages. Vision cages are the best for monitoring, humidity support, and ample room for maneuvering. Adults can also be kept in a minimum 30 gallon tank but larger is always better with these snakes. Custom enclosures are encouraged and should be at least 3 feet long, 2 feet wide, and 18 inches high. Ventilation can be added to plastic enclosures via a soldering iron or a drill. Aspen can also be used as long as the aspen is large in size, agitated daily and bedding is changed weekly. However, if a particulate bedding is used it is advisable to feed in a separate container to avoid accidental ingestion of bedding. Never use pine or cedar shavings as the aromatic oils are irritating to snakes. All organic matter needs to be washed away prior to using the dilute bleach. The bleach solution should be left on for 10 minutes before washing off. These temperatures should be maintained with a thermostat and monitored with two thermometers ideally. One thermometer should be placed on the warm end an inch above the substrate and the other an inch above the substrate on the cool end of the enclosure. Under tank heaters, heat cable outside the enclosure not in the enclosure, heat tape, and ceramic heat emitters can all be utilized to maintain air temperature. Low branches for climbing are encouraged for this species especially when they are young and are wonderful for enrichment. The addition of hay or dried leaves offers new scents for the snake to explore. Also, adjusting the cage furnishings once in a while is recommended for enrichment. Lighting Ball pythons are nocturnal by nature and do not require intense lighting despite their natural habitat during the day. However, it is recommended that a 5. All snakes can absorb the calcium from their whole prey for their own use but a UVB bulb still offers some health benefits as well as promotion of natural behaviors from the UVA being emitted. In captivity however, most are fed mice and smaller rats although the largest of them have been known to eat large rats. The prey should be humanely euthanized using acceptable methods. Frozen prey should be used within six months of freezing. A separate feeding cage is recommended so the snake associates the cage with feeding and not your hand. Ball pythons are nighttime feeders. It is highly recommended to feed only pre-killed prey as live prey can severely injure or kill a snake. Chicago Exotics recommends feeding properly thawed frozen rodents. Young snakes are generally fed semi adult mice to small young rats "crawlers" every days. Generally, they should be fed prey items no larger than their girth at mid-body. Juveniles should be fed the appropriate sized rodent s weekly. As they reach adulthood it is acceptable to decrease the feeding interval to every days. Adults are fed small to large rats every days to maintain a healthy weight. Juveniles may be sexed also by manual eversion of the hemipenes. Either technique should be performed by an experienced person or reptile veterinarian, since poor technique may result in injury. Generally, females probe a distance of subcaudal scales and males 8 or more. Males have larger cloacal

spurs and longer tails than females. Sexual maturity occurs between 2 and 4 years of age, if appropriately fed and maintained. Breeders begin cycling in either mid-September through mid-November. Eggs are usually laid from mid-February through beginning of April. Ball Pythons are not fed for two weeks prior to cooling. The temperature is gradually decreased to 75 F. Some breeders keep the snakes at their preferred daytime high temperature during this period, but drop the nighttime low to 75 F. It is possible to utilize a combination of these two techniques. Monitor the snakes carefully for evidence of respiratory disease. Respiratory infection is most likely if the snakes are not provided a basking spot in their preferred temperature range for at least part of the day and, because of this, the first technique is not recommended. Depending upon the breeder, males are introduced to females either at the beginning of, during, or after cycling. Active courtship precedes copulation. Eggs are usually laid in burrows or well placed sweater boxes with moistened vermiculite and peat moss inside. Usual clutch size is six or seven eggs. Incubation time is about three months. Ball Pythons should be quarantined for at least three to six months before being added to an established collection. Respiratory tract disease is very common in captive snakes. Difficulty breathing, discharge from the mouth, and wheezing are common signs associated with respiratory tract disease. Pictured to the left is a snake with horrible stomatitis and pneumonia. You can see the inflammatory debris crusted in his mouth. The head up, open mouth position is typical for a severely compromised patient. This snake needs help ASAP. Inadequate temperature, excessive feeding, and handling after feeding are common causes. Snake mites are very common external parasites. The mites may cause significant disease and distress to an infested snake. Many Ball Pythons are wild caught and usually harbor significant internal parasite loads. An annual fecal exam by an experienced reptile veterinarian is recommended. A competent reptile veterinarian should be sought out to diagnose and treat any of the disorders that may affect your python. Pictured below is a serious burn along the ventrum of the snake. Heat pads used without thermostatic control often lead to this problem. Seek immediate help if you find this problem with your snake! Speak with your reptile veterinarian about Salmonella and what measures are recommended to limit the risk of transmission to people. A Complete Guide to Regius, Colette Sutherland If you have any questions, please feel free to call us at If you have any questions, please feel free to call us at

Chapter 4 : Signs of a Ball Python Getting Sick | Animals - calendrierdelascience.com

*Care Sheet for Ball Python - Python Regius. Care Sheet written by: Joel Bortz. Ball pythons are one of the most popular snakes kept in captivity worldwide.*

Often, symptoms are not apparent until well into the course of the disease, so promptly addressing signs of illness is crucial. Note abnormalities, like the snake stretching out for prolonged periods or holding its head in an elevated position, termed stargazing behavior. Strange postures can signal a respiratory infection; your snake may be uncomfortable because of fluid in its lungs. Serious health concerns like paramyxovirus, inclusion body disease or neurological diseases can also be indicated by stargazing. Soaking Some snakes, like anacondas *Eunectes* sp. A snake that spends a lot of time in its water dish may have mites, be too warm or be trying to "hide" in the water. While an occasional soak, particularly during shed cycles, is no cause for concern, you should investigate further if a snake spends excessive time in the drink. Breathing Difficulties Improper husbandry, chronic stress or exposure to pathogens can cause respiratory illnesses in ball pythons. Respiratory infections can cause wheezing, labored breathing or mucus to bubble from the nose. If caught early, respiratory illnesses can be treated by correcting the underlying problem and seeking veterinary care. Most often, the prescribed care will involve a combination of heat and humidity changes and, when appropriate, antibiotics. Skin Problems Skin problems can be traumatic, such as rodent bites, or infectious, as when caused by bacteria. Minor skin injuries will heal within a shed or two, so require no special treatment, but rodent bites and other significant wounds should be evaluated by veterinarian. Ball pythons kept in poor, cool and damp conditions can develop sepsis, sometimes characterized by blisters filled with clear fluid. Immediate veterinary care is necessary if the snake is to have any chance of survival. Soaking a snake in an inch of lukewarm water for a few hours will generally allow the shed to be removed. Digestive Malfunctions A healthy ball python should be fed about once per week and should defecate several days later. Healthy stools are firm and dark brown, and rodent hair is sometimes visible. Additionally, small white or yellow "rocks" may be passed; these are uric acid pellets that snakes pass in lieu of urinating. Runny, off-color or bloody stools signal that veterinary care is warranted. Additionally, snakes may vomit if plagued by parasites, kept at improper temperatures or stressed. Anorexia When a ball python refuses food, it may be a sign of parasites or infection. Conversely, food refusal may be attributed to a number of benign causes. Stress is the most common reason for food refusal; ball pythons may fast when undergoing a shed cycle, which is normal and no cause for concern. Additionally, breeding behaviors may interrupt normal feeding habits: Wild ball pythons are notorious for refusing domestic rodents, and likely carry high parasite loads. If neither breeding behavior nor shedding can be identified as the cause, a trip to the vet is in order. Lumps Lumps under the skin can mean a number of things, none of which can be diagnosed without the help of a veterinarian. Other causes of lumps include broken bones, abscesses, tumors or parasites. Activity Patterns A common concern among new keepers is that their ball python never seems to move. In the wild, ball pythons spend much of their day in burrows or termite mounds, becoming active at night.

## Chapter 5 : Northwest Reptiles - Ball Python breeder

*Ball pythons (also known as royal pythons) are a terrestrial species of constricting snake native to regions of eastern, central, and western Africa. In the wild, they are most often found in semi-arid grasslands, sparse woodlands, fields, and near agricultural areas, sheltering in burrows, termite mounds, and hollow logs.*

Inverts Ball Python Ball pythons are among the most popular pet snakes. They are good beginner snakes because they are docile and easy to care. Housing for a ball python can vary from simple to elaborate. The most important thing is that you follow several rules and check in on your pet often to ensure it appears to look and act healthy. Biological Facts Ball Python also known as Royal python , Python regius Constrictor, non-venomous Natural habitat is savannah, grassland, and sparsely wooded areas. Smallest of the African pythons. May grow ft cm long; rarely exceed 5 ft cm Stocky build; average adult weight lb gm , but can exceed 7 lb gm Life span: Africa Behavior Shy species that will coil around its head and into a ball when frightened Nocturnal. Prefers to hunt at night with the aid of heat pits on the upper jaw. Rests during the day in underground burrows in the wild. Can be finicky eaters, and occasionally go several months between meals. This may be normal, but should be investigated if significant weight loss occurs. Adults will consume adult mice and small rats. The size of the prey item should approximate the width of the snake at the largest part of its body. Never leave a live rodent in the cage with your snake unsupervised or for longer than minutes Frozen-thawed mice and rats are safer and less expensive; they can be bought in bulk, and are stored more easily than live ones. Frozen rodents can be purchased online and at most pet stores. Fresh water daily in a clean bowl. Environment Clean, well ventilated cage free of sharp edges or points. Enclosure must provide adequate room to move around e. Under-tank heating pads or ceramic heat emitters are preferred. Avoid hot rocks or direct contact with heat sources of any kind, as they can cause severe burns. Provide two hide boxes, one at the warm end of the cage and another at the cool end, to minimize stress. Hide boxes should be designed so the snake can be easily removed from its hiding place, if necessary. Newspaper, paper towels, and reptile carpeting are highly recommended as cage substrates. Natural substrates such as aspen shavings, cocoanut fiber, and pine bark are more cosmetic in appearance, but occasionally cause problems if ingested. Annual fecal exam for parasites especially if feeding live prey Ticks and mites are best treated by an experienced, exotic veterinarian.

Chapter 6 : calendrierdelascience.com | Ball Python Care Sheet

*Ball pythons are notoriously picky eaters, and many ball python owners pass it off as a "normal behavior" and that "they will eat when they get hungry." Ball pythons get hungry just like humans and every other animal.*

They are equally comfortable on the ground and in trees. They are crepuscular, active around dawn and dusk. Called royal pythons in Europe, here in the United States we call them "balls" due to their habit of curling themselves up into a tight ball when they are nervous, their heads pulled firmly into the center. Like most pythons, ball pythons are curious and gentle snakes. Ball pythons typically reach 4 feet 1. When properly fed, their bodies become nicely rounded. Like all pythons and boas, ball pythons have anal spurs. These single claws appearing on either side of the vent are the vestigial remains of the hind legs snakes lost during their evolution from lizard to snake millions of years ago. Males have longer spurs than do the females; males also have smaller heads than the females. Ball pythons, like all pythons and boas, devour a variety of prey in the wild - amphibians, lizards, other snakes, birds and small mammals. They do not eat mice in the wild, however, and do not recognize the mice we offer them as being something edible. Thus, imported wild-caught ball pythons tend to be very picky eaters, at least initially, and drive their owners to distraction in their attempts to get them to eat something. Ball pythons are reputed to be able to go for extended periods of time without food; wild-caught ball pythons have gone for a year or more without food until finally enticed to eat lizards and other snakes. This is not a healthy trait and must not be a reason for selecting this species. This should also make you suspicious when a pet store tells you that their ball pythons are eating well. Buying captive-born ball pythons reduces the stress on the threatened populations in the wild and helps ensure you will get a healthy, established eater and a snake already used to contact with humans. Buying from a reputable breeder will ensure that you will get the help and advice you need to assure that your ball feels comfortable and secure enough to eat after you bring it home and let it get settled for a week or so. With the increased popularity of reptiles as pets there is increased pressure on wild populations. In addition to the more than 60, ball pythons that are imported annually, ball pythons are killed for food and their skin is used for leather in their native land. For some reason, despite their low reproduction rate, wild ball pythons are the least expensive pythons on the market, generally wholesaling for under ten dollars. Imported ball pythons also harbor several different types of parasites which may go unnoticed by the novice snake owner. All around, it is better to buy a captive-born hatchling or an established, well-feeding juvenile, sub-adult or adult than an imported ball of any age. In captivity, young ball pythons will grow about a foot a year during the first three years. They will reach sexual maturity in three to five years. The longest living ball python on record was over 48 years old when it died. Egg-layers, female ball pythons encircle their four to ten eggs, remaining with them from the time they are laid until they hatch. During this three month period, they will not leave the eggs and will not eat. Getting Started Selecting Your Ball Python Choose an animal that has clear firm skin, rounded body shape, clean vent, clear eyes, and who actively flicks its tongue around when handled. All ball pythons are naturally shy about having their heads touched or handled by strangers; a normal reaction is for the ball to pull its head and neck sharply away from such contact. When held, the snake should grip you gently but firmly when moving around. It should be alert to its surroundings. All young snakes are food for other, larger snakes, birds, lizards and mammalian predators so your hatchling may be a bit nervous at first but should settle down quickly. All snakes are escape artists; ball pythons are especially powerful and cunning when it comes to breaking out. A good starter tank for a hatchling is a 10 gallon tank approximately 20"L x 10"W [50 x 25 cm]. A young adult requires a 20 gallon tank, and full adult may require a 30 gallon tank 36" x 12"W [91 x 35 cm]. Select a suitable substrate Use paper towels at first. These are easily and quickly removed and replaced when soiled and, with an import, will allow you to better monitor for the presence of mites and the condition of the feces. Once the animal is established, you can use more decorative ground cover such as commercially prepared shredded cypress or fir bark. Pine and aspen shavings should not be used as they can become lodged in the mouth while eating, causing respiratory and other problems. The shavings must be monitored closely and all soiled and wet shavings pulled out immediately to prevent bacteria and fungus growths. The utilitarian

approach is to use inexpensive AstroTurf. Extra pieces can be kept in reserve and used when the soiled piece is removed for cleaning and drying soak in one gallon of water to which you have added two tablespoon of household bleach; rinse thoroughly, and dry completely before reuse. Provide a hiding place A half-log is available at pet stores. An empty cardboard box or upside-down opaque plastic container, both with an access doorway cut into one end, can also be used. The plastic is easily cleaned when necessary; the box can be tossed out when soiled and replaced with a new one. The box or log must be big enough for the snake to hide its entire body inside; you will need to eventually replace it as your snake grows. Ball pythons prefer dark places for sleeping and, as they are nocturnal, they like the dark place during our daylight hours; they also like to sleep in something that is close around them, so do not buy or make too big of a cave for its size. Place a nice climbing branch or two in the tank with some fake greenery screening part of it; your ball will enjoy hanging out in the "tree. The ambient air temperature throughout the enclosure must be maintained between F C -during the day, with a basking area kept at 90F At night, the ambient air temperature on the coolest side may be allowed to drop down no lower than F C only if a basking area of at least 80F 27 C remains available. Special reptile heating pads that are manufactured to maintain a temperature about 20 degrees higher than the air temperature may be used inside the enclosure. There are adhesive pads that can be stuck to the underside of a glass enclosure. Heating pads made for people, available at all drug stores, are also available; these have built-in hi-med-lo switches and can be used under a glass enclosure. You can also use incandescent light bulbs in porcelain and metal reflector hoods to provide the additional heat required for the basking area. All lights must be screened off to prevent the snake from burning itself. All pythons, especially ball pythons, are very susceptible to thermal burns. For this same reason do not use a hot rock. New on the market are ceramic heating elements. They radiate heat downwards, do not emit light, and are reported to be long lasting. Plugged into a thermostat will enable you to adjust the temperature inside the tank as the ambient room temperature changes with the seasons. Buy at least two thermometers - one to use in the overall area 1" 2. Humidity Ball pythons are native to generally temperate to arid areas. Depending on where you live, they may be fine with the ambient humidity. If there are any problems shedding, or feces are dry when deposited or there is straining to defecate, check the humidity with a hygrometer and get it up to 50 percent. When shedding, they will need higher humidity: If you bathe them in a warm bath the day their eyes clear, they should shed completely within 24 hours. Lighting No special lighting is needed. Ball pythons are nocturnal snakes, spending their days in the wild securely hidden away from possible predators. To make it easier to see your ball during the day, you can use a full-spectrum light or low wattage incandescent bulb in the enclosure during the day. Make sure the snake cannot get into direct contact with the light bulbs as ball pythons are very prone to getting seriously burned. Feeding Allow your snake to acclimate to its new home for a couple of weeks. Start your hatchling about 15" in length off with a single pre-killed one week to day old "fuzzy" mouse. A smaller sized hatchling may require a smaller mouse; try a pre-killed 5-day old. Older ball pythons may be fed larger pre-killed mice or pinkie rats. If you have not had any experience force feeding a snake, you may not want to try it yourself until you have seen someone do it. If your new ball has gone several months without eating and is beginning to noticeably lose weight, take it to a reptile vet or contact your local herpetology society and ask to speak to someone who is knowledgeable about ball pythons and feeding problems. Water Provide a bowl of fresh water at all times. Your snake will both drink and soak, and may defecate, in it. Check it daily and change when soiled. Soaking is especially good just before a shed. When they eyes clear from their milky opaque, or "blue" state, soak the snake in a tub of warm water for ten minutes or so, then lightly dry it off, and return it immediately to its tank; it should shed cleanly within twenty-four hours. Health problems Routine veterinary care for newly acquired snakes is essential. Many of the parasites infesting ball pythons and other reptiles can be transmitted to humans and other reptiles. Left untreated, such infestations can ultimately kill your snake. There it will be tested and the proper medication given if worms or protozoan infestations are found. A common problem encountered in captivity include retained eye shed spectacles and mites. When snakes shed their skin, the layer of skin over their eye is also shed, and can be clearly seen when looking at a piece of head shed. If one or both spectacles have been retained, bathe the snake again in warmish water for about ten minutes. Before returning it to the enclosure, place a dab of mineral oil on that eye with a cotton-tipped swab.

The spectacle should come off within twenty-four hours. If it does not come off, wrap your four fingers with transparent tape, sticky side out. Gently rock your fingers from left to right or, from nose to neck across the eye; the spectacle should come off. If this does not removed the spectacle, then seek veterinary assistance. Mites are a sign of poor environmental conditions. Adult mites are tiny reddish brown dots barely bigger than the period at the end of this sentence. Mites are harmful to snakes, especially ones that have not been kept properly. On the positive side, they are easy and relatively inexpensive to get rid of, although the process is time-consuming. Read the article [Getting Rid of Reptile Mites](#) to find out the best ways to eradicate them. Snakes, including ball pythons, should routinely shed is one piece, from snout including spectacles to tail-tip.

## Chapter 7 : Ball Python Care by xyzReptiles

*The care requirements for a normal, wild-type ball python will be the same for an albino, piebald, banana, mojave lesser champagne spider cinnamon, and so on. Can I take my ball python outside? Depending on the weather, you should be able to take your ball python outside.*

Calm ball pythons move about slowly but purposefully. Ball pythons often flick their tongues while moving about to learn about their surroundings. Hungry ball pythons often lay motionlessly, with their head poised and ready to strike. They may also prowl slowly around the habitat seeking prey. Although it is somewhat rare, ball pythons can bite if they feel threatened or mistake your hand for prey. Common Ball Python Behaviors: Shedding Ball pythons, like all other snakes, shed their skin periodically. This can occur as often as once every three or four weeks, or as rarely as once or twice per year, depending on the size, age and health of the individual. Proper sheds should come off in one long piece. But unfortunately, ball pythons who are sick, mite infested or dehydrated often shed in multiple pieces or fail to shed completely. This can cause long-term health problems in some cases, so it is important to take steps to eliminate the problem. You can usually help a ball python free himself of the retained skin by soaking him in a bit of room-temperature water for an hour or two. After soaking him, you can likely pull the retained skin off with gentle pressure. Do not force any scales off especially those located around the eyes or face. If any stubborn spots remain, soak your snake again the next day and try again. Biting Biting is the behavior that often elicits the most attention from new keepers. This is understandable nobody wants to be bitten by a snake. However, it is important to note that ball python bites are rarely very painful, nor are they likely to cause much damage. Bites rarely require much more first aid than simple soap and water. However, if the bite displays any signs of infection redness, swelling, etc. It is also important to feel the wound carefully to ensure no teeth were left in your skin. Handling Your Ball Pythons: Open the habitat and touch your snake gently on the back. Place your fingers under his body gently and lift him off the cage floor quickly and decisively. Just pick him up. Once lifted, let your snake crawl freely around your hands and arms. Be sure to support him but avoid gripping his body tightly that tends to make snakes feel threatened. After about 5 to 10 minutes or you are done examining him, if that was your reason for picking him up in the first place , gently return him to his habitat and close the enclosure. Wash your hands with soap and warm water. Tips and Tricks Try to follow the procedure outlined above, but from time to time, you may find the following tips helpful: Typically, ball pythons will communicate discomfort or fear long before they resort to biting. You can then pick up the entire package snake and towel and move him as necessary. A snake hook or an improvised version thereof can make some snakes feel more comfortable. After lifting the snake with the hook, you may be able to transfer him to your hand without a problem. Otherwise, you can simply use the hook to move him as necessary. Excessive handling will usually stress your snake out, so keep handling sessions brief. This type of behavior only hurts the hobby. Doing so may cause him to regurgitate his last meal. This not only creates a thoroughly disgusting mess, but it is also stressful for the snake. As a general rule, you should wait for at least 24 and preferably 48 hours after feeding your snake to handle him. This assumes that any bulge created by the meal has shrunk. If you can still detect a food bulge, do not handle your snake. Signs of a Sick Ball Python Some of the most common health problems that afflict ball pythons are explained below. These are certainly not all of the possible diseases and conditions that may threaten your pet, but they deserve the most attention. Respiratory Infections Any snake can suffer from a respiratory infection, but snakes that hail from tropical areas including ball pythons are often especially susceptible to them. Because snakes cannot cough, they have great difficulty expelling the fluid which can accumulate in their respiratory tract. A few of the most common symptoms of respiratory infections in ball pythons include: Blowing bubbles from the nostrils or mouth Unusual breathing sounds.

## Chapter 8 : The Ball Python Behavior (Common & Unusual) and Health

*Ball Pythons as Pets: Ball Python breeding, where to buy, types, care, temperament, cost, health, handling, husbandry, diet, and much more included!*

Ball pythons are generally a bit shy, but they make for ideal captives, because they are of a small size, are generally friendly, are manageable to care for, and come in a remarkable array of colors and patterns. Ball pythons are native to central and western Africa and thrive in these warm, tropical areas. They are known as the royal python in many parts of the world and are revered in some areas of Africa. Ball pythons make for a quality pet for the first-time keeper and experienced herpetoculturists alike. Each year, breeders create incredible, innovative, never-before-seen pattern and color variations that continually generate new fans of the ball python. With reptile health and wellness in mind, this species thrives in captivity. Ball Python Availability Ball pythons are quite easy to acquire. They are commonly available from pet stores, reptile breeders, reptile expos, and through online reptile shops and breeders. The best choice will always be captive born and bred snakes because they are usually parasite free and most likely the healthiest. Any ball python should be well-started and eating prior to purchase. Ball Python Size Ball python hatchlings are approximately 10 inches in length. Adult female ball pythons average 3 to 5 feet long, and adult male ball pythons average 2 to 3 feet in size. This is a species in which mature females are typically much larger than the males. A 5-foot ball python is considered big, although lengths of 6 feet or more have been reported. Ball Python Life Span With proper care, ball pythons can live 30 years or more. The record age for a ball python is more than 40 years – so plan on a long life for your new pet snake. Ball Python Caging Ball python enclosures can be as simple or as elaborate as you want to care for when it comes to snake habitat products. Remember that the more you put in the cage, the more you have to clean and disinfect on a regular basis. That said, there are different enclosures that work well for ball pythons, including, but not limited to, plastic sweaterboxes i. Rubbermaid , melamine racks and any of the commercially available, plastic-type reptile cages. Glass reptile terrariums and tanks are adequate for ball pythons, but the screen tops on such enclosures can make it very difficult to maintain proper humidity levels. Juvenile ball pythons seem to do well in small enclosures that make them feel secure. A small snake in a big cage can become overwhelmed and stressed. Adult ball pythons do not require exceptionally large or elaborate enclosures either. A inch by inch by inch enclosure will more than comfortably house an adult ball python. Remove feces and urates as soon as possible. Do a complete tear-down every 30 days by removing all substrate and reptile accessories and completely disinfecting with a 5 percent bleach solution. Rinse the enclosure thoroughly with water, and allow it to dry completely before replacing cage accessories and your snake. Ball pythons are secretive snakes that appreciate and utilize hide spots. Clay flowerpots, plastic flowerpot trays and commercially available hide boxes all work well. Provide your ball python with a basking spot temperature of 88 to 96 degrees Fahrenheit and an ambient temperature of 78 to 80 degrees. The ambient temperature should not fall below 75 degrees. It is vitally important to know the temperatures at which you are keeping your snake s. There are several types of snake heat lamps that help heat a ball python enclosure. Undercage heating pads and tapes like the Zilla heat pad , ceramic heat emitters Flukers , basking bulbs both regular daytime and red night bulbs are just a few. With heat emitters and basking bulbs, it is crucial to keep an eye on the humidity within the enclosure, especially if combined with a screen top, as both will dry the air quickly. Do not use hot rocks with snakes as they can heat unevenly over too small of a surface area and can cause serious burns. Continuous bright, overhead lighting is stressful to snakes, especially a nocturnal species such as the ball python. Ball pythons seem to prefer humidity levels of 50 to 60 percent. Kevin McCurley Snake Substrate Newspapers and paper towels are the cheapest and easiest substrates for ball pythons with regards to cleaning and disinfecting – out with the old, in with the new. Cypress mulch and orchid bark are great substrates for controlling humidity, but remember that too much humidity can be as detrimental if not more as too little. Never use any substrate containing cedar, as it contains oils that can be deadly to reptiles! Avoid sand, shavings and peat bedding. Ball pythons can eat rats from the time they are young – starting off with rat pups or "crawlers" at first and moving up in size as they grow. Do not handle

your ball python for at least a day after feeding, as this can lead to regurgitation. Never leave a live rodent unattended with any snake, as they can injure the snake. Ball pythons are well-known for not eating at certain times throughout the year, particularly in the winter months. This is typically nothing to worry about with healthy, well-established pythons, although it can be extremely frustrating to the snakekeeper. If your ball python is healthy, continue your husbandry routine as usual, but keep the amount of handling to a minimum. Offer your ball python food every 10 to 14 days until it is interested in eating again, as the snake will eventually resume feeding normally. Feed adult ball pythons every 1 to 2 weeks and younger ball pythons weekly as they need this energy to grow. Do not be alarmed if a well-started ball python goes off feed during the cooler, drier times of the year, as this is common in captivity. Snakes generally do not eat while they are in the shed cycle. Ball Python Water Always have fresh, clean water available for your ball python. Check the water daily. The size of the water dish is up to you. If it is large enough for the ball python to crawl in to and soak, sooner or later your snake will make the most of the opportunity – ball pythons seem to enjoy a nice soak from time to time. Ensure that the water bowl is not too deep for juvenile animals – 1 inch or so will suffice. Snakes of many species will defecate in their water bowls from time to time, so be prepared to clean and disinfect the water bowl. The water bowl should be cleaned and disinfected on a weekly basis. Having a spare water bowl for such occasions can be handy, so that one may be used while the other is being cleaned. Ball Python Handling and Temperament Ball pythons are generally shy and will spend much of their time hiding. Your ball python may initially see you as a threat and it must learn who you are. The goal is to establish trust between you and your snake. Once a ball python realizes that you will not hurt it they often seem to enjoy being handled. Some ball pythons may try to hide when handled and occasionally there are ones that may even bite due to excessive fear. These ball pythons may require a bit more time to settle in and establish trust. If a snake looks like it is going to strike, it is best to not handle it. Relax when holding your animal – sit down and give the animal a chance to settle. Some snakes may not eat for several hours or longer after being handled, so avoid handling if you plan to feed. After a snake has eaten it may be a good idea to limit the handling because it may be uncomfortable for the animal. Kevin McCurley is the source for Ball Python care and information. Visit his website at [NewEnglandReptile.com](http://NewEnglandReptile.com).

**Chapter 9 : Ball Python Care - Download Your e-Book Today!**

*How to Care for Your Ball Python. In this Article: Making the Commitment Providing a Good Home Maintaining the Environment Providing Food and Water Community Q&A Ball pythons are a very popular choice for many people who are looking for a pet snake.*

This e-book was written by Brandon Cornett, a veteran snake keeper with more than 20 years of experience. In addition to all of his other snakes, Brandon keeps four ball pythons as pets. He has researched every aspect of ball python care, and all of that knowledge has gone into this e-book. You will learn the basics of keeping ball pythons, as well as many advanced "tricks" that Brandon has picked up over the years. Why We Call It the "Ultimate" Guide This e-book offers more information on ball python care than any other book on the market today. Most ball python books offer a brief chapter on care, followed by several chapters on color variations, snake breeding, etc. This kind of information is very useful to a first-time snake keeper. In fact, this e-book gives you pages of information related to the care and keeping of ball pythons. For example, consider the following: Most books on ball python care offer a couple of pages on feeding. They explain what you should feed your snake, and how often you should feed it. But this does not answer many of the questions a first-time keeper will have. What do I do when my snake refuses to eat? Do I need to supplement the meal with vitamins of some kind? The feeding chapter of this book gives you 15 pages of information, on this one subject alone! The same goes for other topics, such as housing and handling your ball python. We offer plenty of details about these topics, to make you a better snake keeper! Table of Contents This e-book deals exclusively with the care and keeping of ball pythons. It does not deal with advanced topics, such as breeding. Because of this tight focus, the e-book offers plenty of specific advice: Introduction Ball pythons are one of the most popular types of snakes kept as pets. Chapter 3 - Handling Your Ball Python Have questions about the right way to pick up and handle your ball python? Chapter 4 - Feeding Your Ball Python An in-depth look at feeding methods, types of prey, frequency of feeding, etc. Chapter 5 - Snake Maintenance This chapter will help you maintain your ball python with tips for cleaning, maintenance, monitoring, and basic health care. Appendix - Helpful Checklists A compilation of the various checklists offered throughout the book a feeding chart, a maintenance tracker and more. We Are On a Mission Every day we get emails from visitors to our website, asking about snake care. Many of these emails are disturbing, because the people sending them have no idea how to care for a ball python, or any other type of snake. This is why so many ball pythons die in captivity every year. To accomplish our educational goals, we publish a snake care blog, care sheets on a wide variety of species, and e-books like this one. That is our mission. This e-book is a direct result of those efforts.