

Constipation

What is Constipation?

Little to no fecal production for 2 or more weeks

What causes Constipation?

Constipation in reptiles has many different causes.

- Husbandry related causes
 - Inappropriate temperatures
 - Hypocalcemia (low calcium) or insufficient dietary vitamin D3
 - Insufficient UVB lighting
 - Insufficient water sources
 - Lack of activity
 - Inappropriate food items (long-haired rodent prey, hard-shelled insect prey)
 - Ingestion of indigestible cage substrate (rocks, gravel, sand, bark)
- Disease related causes
 - Parasites
 - Dehydration
 - Metabolic bone disease or other skeletal lesions or trauma
 - Renal (kidney) enlargement, internal mass/tumor, or eggs
 - Neurologic deficits

Symptoms:

Symptoms include little to no fecal production for 2 or more weeks, anorexia (not eating) and lethargy

How is constipation diagnosed?

A thorough history and coelomic palpation is typically enough to diagnose constipation. On physical exam your doctor may feel a large mass within the coelomic cavity. Radiographs (x-rays) may be necessary to further evaluate your pet. Additional diagnostics, such as fecal testing or blood work, may also be necessary.

How is it treated?

Treatment options vary depending on the underlying cause of constipation. Common treatments include warm water soaks, gentle coelomic massage, enemas, and a liquid diet.

How can I prevent constipation?

The first step is to address any husbandry related causes. Provide your reptile with a 15-20min soak in warm shallow water to encourage defecation.

If you are concerned your pet may be constipated please contact your veterinarian to schedule an appointment for evaluation.