

## Choosing A Vet for Your Reptile

Carefully research your options for proper veterinary care before you decide to purchase a reptile. Although the animal may be sold at a low-cost, the care it would take once you own it may be more than you bargain for! A vet must be experienced in reptile care and medicine to make a good provider for your reptile pet. Reptile care and medicine requires special education.

Although your sweet, jokester of an uncle may have thought it a hoot to give little Johnny that darling baby reptile for his first pet, the joke may be on you. There is a list of vets you can access over the internet for the United States of America, International, and Canada. Check with your local vets to determine their areas of expertise, experience, and limitations.

You must make sure your vet will be comfortable handling your reptile. If the vet is uncomfortable, the animal will sense it and may become more of a problem. Once you get your animal, take it to the vet for a check-up even if it appears healthy. You may not be able to detect the problems a trained professional can find. Problems are not always readily seen by the eye. Maybe your reptile has parasites that you can't see just by looking at it.

Your vet should be willing to help you find the proper care for your reptile if he or she is not properly qualified. You will want to know this information before your pet becomes seriously ill or injured. Even if your vet isn't qualified, he/she may be able to provide temporary care until you can get your pet to the right person for the proper care.

It is a good idea to purchase a reptile that is already well-known as pet material. A pet that is new to the market will not be researched well enough yet.

Not many vet colleges offer the specialized medicine courses necessary for caring for ill reptiles. Test your vet with questions about temperature or food to see if they even have basic knowledge.

If you try to treat the animal yourself with over-the-counter medications, you could be making your pet more ill. The medication sold in pet stores often has ingredients like tetracycline that isn't good for your reptile; or the shelf medicines just simply aren't strong enough to do any good and are a waste of your money. A pet store may sell certain items just to draw money, without properly researching the items themselves for their effectiveness. After all, the clerks aren't pharmacists.

If your vet has had special schooling required for reptile care, has he/she

updated their knowledge recently? Are they aware of the latest treatments or medications? Do they have an interest in reptiles, conferences, or belong to any reptile associations?

If you're unable to contact your vet, or are unsatisfied with the information provided, you can try asking zoos, other reptile owners, or local pet adoption agencies for references to reptile vets. In any case, it will help for you to educate yourself in case of an emergency. At least you could provide basic care until you could reach a qualified professional.