



Sugar Gliders

Petaurus breviceps

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Sugar gliders are native to rainforests in New Guinea and Australia. They are marsupials and should not be confused with flying squirrels. They can glide up to 150 feet. They can live 12-14 years. Adult females weigh 90-130 grams, and males 115-160 grams. Sugar gliders make a lot of vocal sounds, especially at night: a variety of chirping and chattering; “Yaps” are an alarm sound, a bit like a small puppy barking; “Crabbing” sounds somewhat like an electric pencil sharpener. Males have scent glands on their forehead.

Health care: Sugar gliders can be very good at hiding illness. We recommend exams every 6 months to make sure your pet is healthy. Neutering helps prevent reproductive tumors, unexpected pregnancies and can be helpful with behavior modification. It is ideal to neuter sugar gliders between 4 and 6 months of age. Weighing your pet at home can be a good way to catch illnesses early. Please bring them in to see us if their weight changes by 10%, or more. Common health problems in sugar gliders include malnutrition leading to obesity, hind leg paralysis, diarrhea or constipation, depression, and pneumonia. Remember, the sooner we see a problem, the easier it is to treat!

Husbandry concerns: Sugar gliders are nocturnal, meaning that they should be active at night and sleep during the day. It is important for their mental health to maintain this natural schedule. They should be kept somewhere that is quiet during the day. It is also better to restrict interacting with gliders to night time, whenever possible. Avoid bright lights. Sugar gliders should not be kept alone. Social interaction is very important for sugar gliders’ mental health and they should not be kept alone! Lone sugar gliders are particularly prone to depression and self-mutilation. In the wild they live in groups of 7-12. In captivity at least 2 sugar gliders should be kept together. Sugar gliders are very active animals and need large cages. We recommend cages that are at least 5 feet tall and 3 feet wide on each side with lots of branches and perches for exercise. Fresh non-toxic tree branches for climbing can be good enrichment: cottonwood, maple, elm, birch, but be sure to avoid potentially toxic woods: cedar, plumb, cherry, redwood, or oleander among others. Cages should be wire sided to provide good ventilation. Wire spacing should be less than 1/2 inch to

More on the back!

prevent escapes. A wooden nest box lined with shredded news paper, paper towels or pelleted bedding should be provided for gliders to sleep in, positioned near the top of the cage. Avoid cedar or pine bedding as the strong smells and oils in the wood can be irritating for animals. In the wild, gliders sleep in tree hollows lined with leaves. Sugar gliders should always be supervised when outside their cages. Sharp nails are important for sugar gliders to help them climb! Do not trim their nails! Nails can get caught in fabric causing toes to get wrapped up. This can be serious and lead to toe amputation. Baths are not recommended.

Diet: Sugar gliders have an extremely varied diet in the wild; in the winter they eat eucalyptus and acacia gums and in the summer flower nectar and insects. Sugar gliders should not eat nuts, grains or seeds. Do not feed gliders dairy products as this can cause cataracts! Feeding your pet a balanced diet in captivity is the most important thing you can do to keep them healthy! Feed at night to keep to their natural schedule and mix foods together to keep from picking out favorites. Gliders should always have access to fresh water and food dishes should be cleaned out daily. Place food and water dishes where it is easy for gliders to reach them, but they are unlikely to pee or poop on them from perching above. Here are a couple of tried and true options:

-The San Diego Zoo Diet: Feed 1 small ice cube of Bourbon's Modified Leadbetter(BML) mix and 1 tablespoon commercial glider pelleted diet (Mazuri or Zupreem brands)

To make BML: Put in blender:

- 1/2 cup honey
- 1 egg (boiled or microwaved, no shell)
- 1/4 cup mixed fruit blend of juice (ex. apple-white grape)

Blend well, turn off blender, add the following:

- One 4oz bottle premixed Gerber juice with mixed fruit yogurt (mixed fruit)
- 1/2 Teaspoon Rep-Cal Herpivite Vitamin Supplement (blue label)

Blend until smooth, turn off blender, add the following:

- 2 Teaspoons Rep-Cal Calcium Supplement Non-Phosphorous with Vitamin D3 in it (pink label)
- Two 2 1/2 oz. jars of Chicken baby food.
- 1/4 cup Wheat Germ
- 1/2 cup dry baby cereal (mixed or oatmeal)

Blend until you reach a very smooth consistency. Pour into ice cube trays, cover, and FREEZE. Add fruits and vegetables fresh when feeding, without freezing them.

-The Fresh Glider Diet: Feed 1 small cube per glider per day and 1 tablespoon commercial glider pelleted diet (Mazuri or Zupreem brands)

· 1 cup of finely chopped fruit fresh or frozen: oranges, papayas, tangerines, pineapples, mangos, cantaloupes, bananas, kiwi, peaches, strawberries, blueberries, raspberries or cherries that have been pitted. If you peel a fruit before you eat it, then peel it for your sugar glider.

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- 1 cup finely chopped fresh or frozen vegetables: sweet potatoes, kale, collards, green beans, beets, peas, lima beans, carrots, jicama, bok choy, squash, bell pepper or snow peas.
- 6 ounces plain full fat yogurt with no artificial sweeteners: Specifically check the label and do not use yogurt that contains xylitol!
- 3 ounces orange juice
- 4 cups applesauce
- 6 ounces cooked protein: chicken, ground turkey or eggs
- 2-3 ounces uncooked oatmeal

Combine all ingredients in oatmeal and stir, adding more or less oatmeal to keep the mixture from becoming too runny or lumpy. FREEZE in an ice cube tray with approximately 2 tablespoons per cube.

-Chicago Zoo diet: Per glider: Feed ½ a hard boiled egg yolk, 1 teaspoon finely chopped apple, carrot, sweet potato, banana and lettuce, 1 teaspoon commercial glider pelleted diet (Mazuri or Zupreem brands), and 12 mealworms.

Reproduction: Female sugar gliders reach sexual maturity at 8-12 months old, and males at 12-14 months old. They breed throughout the year with an average of 2 litters per year and 1 or 2 joeys (baby marsupials) per litter. Their gestation is 16 days. Joeys then migrate to the pouch and remain there for 70 days. They become independent at 4 months old.

