

The Bearded Dragon Guide

This is our complete bearded dragon care guide. It contains everything you need to know to be able to properly care for any bearded dragon regardless of age. This care sheet consists of all the valuable information that's available on our site, except we have put it into an easy to follow manual.

This care guide will start with the basics and will go through each step of bearded dragon care that people need to know to be able to raise healthy and happy bearded dragons.

How to Get the Best Bearded Dragon for A Pet

Picking out a bearded dragon can seem overwhelming, and if you don't know what you're doing you can potentially pick out the wrong bearded dragon for your need. This page lists some simple tips to follow to make sure you pick out the right bearded dragon.

Where to Get A Bearded Dragon

You can either get a bearded dragon from a local pet store or from a breeder. It's not uncommon for smaller breeders (that breed dragons as a hobby) to have the healthiest dragons because their bearded dragons have been raised in the same environment around the same dragons. This means there is a less of a chance of their dragons being stressed, sick, or injured from rival dragons.

However, you can still get very healthy bearded dragons from local pet stores as well. Just follow the steps below to make sure the bearded dragon is healthy before you buy it.



Choosing A Healthy Bearded Dragon

There are a couple of easy ways you can tell how healthy a dragon is before you buy it. The first way is to see how alert and active it is. A healthy dragon will not be lethargic and will keep its head lifted and most dragons will be alert enough to notice you approaching them.

You should also look at their body for the following things:

- Make sure they don't have any visible injuries (scars, burns, etc.)
- If you do see an injury, make sure it appears to be

- healing and is not infected
- Make sure their eyes are not runny and there is no signs of puss on their face

It is important that you make sure the bearded dragon is not missing any body parts. Bearded dragons do not regrow their tails, toes, or limbs. So if your bearded dragon is missing something, it will not grow back. With this being said it is not unusual for a beardie to be missing a few toes or the very end of it's tail (many times bearded dragons will fight over females and minor injuries like this occur).

Young VS Old Bearded Dragons

So, should you get a younger or a more mature bearded dragon? Well, if this is your first bearded dragon, then you will probably want to get a fully grown (or close to fully grown bearded dragon) to start.

This is because younger dragons are very fragile and can easily get sick, injured, or worse if you are not experienced with handling them. A good way to tell the maturity level of a bearded dragon is how long they are. If they are over 10 inches in length, they are mature, if they are smaller than 10 inches in length then they are juveniles.



Creating A Bearded Dragon Habitat

Whether you call it a tank, cage, or terrarium, your bearded dragon's habitat you create will be his or her home for the next several years. In order to have a healthy and happy bearded dragon you will need to make sure that their habitat suits their needs. This page will go over everything you need to know to make sure your tank is perfect for your bearded dragon.

Types of Tank for Your Bearded Dragon

There are different types of tanks that you can get for your bearded dragon. Below is a list of the different types of tanks you can get for your dragon:

- Glass Aquariums
- Melamine cages
- PVC cages
- Vision Cages

Glass Aquariums

Glass aquariums are probably the most popular type of enclosure for bearded dragons. These inexpensive tanks can be purchased at any local pet store and can sometimes even be found for free. These are great enclosures for bearded dragons and other reptiles.



The only problems with glass tanks is that they can be heavy (so once your tank is setup, you probably won't move it) and the glass doesn't hold in the heat as well as other materials. This is fine for bearded dragons, however, many owners say that glass tanks lack of insulation causes their dragon's color to seem a little dull. So if you have a colorful bearded dragon you may want to get a different type of tank.

Melamine Cages

Melamine cages are made out of melamine board (wood), which can be purchased at your local hardware store. You can build these tanks yourself or you can buy them offline. Bearded dragons love these cages and look amazing in them, since the white boards reflect extra light which makes your dragon happier.



The only drawbacks to melamine cages are they are fairly expensive and they are extremely heavy.

PVC Cages

PVC cages look and work exactly like melamine cages, except they are made of PVC plastic which makes them much lighter so they can be moved. They are more expensive than melamine cages, but generally have a better look since the plastic is smooth and attractive.



Vision Cages

Vision cages are professional cages made from one molded piece of plastic. They are chemical resistant and easy to clean and have heat lamp shrouds built in directly. They are expensive, but many bearded



dragon breeders will use these cages since you can stack them on top of each other to save space.

Bearded Dragon Tank Size

You need to make sure you have the right size tank for your bearded dragon. A tank too small can be very stressful for your beardie and can limit their overall growth. Use the guidelines below to help determine the best tank size for your dragon:

Bearded Dragon Tank Size

- Baby Dragons - Baby dragons need a 20 gallon tank. This gives them space and makes it easier for them to catch their food.
- 10-16 Inch Dragons - Early adult dragons need at least a 40 gallon tank. However, the larger the tank the happier your dragon will be and the larger they will grow.
- 16-20 Inch Dragons - Larger dragons will need larger tanks and it's recommended to have at least a 50-75 gallon tank for dragons of this size.
- 20+ Inch Dragons - If you have a bearded dragon that is 20 inches or longer you will need a minimum of a 75 gallon tank, but a 120 gallon tank would be ideal.

Bearded Dragon Lighting and Humidity

The brighter your tank, the happier your bearded dragon will be. Remember, bearded dragons come from the deserts of Australia so they require full spectrum lighting for 12-14 hours each day. Full spectrum lights are different from what we have in our houses and emit light in all the UV ranges (which is what bearded dragons need to remain healthy) and the light needs to be evenly spread throughout the tank. There also needs to be a way that your dragon can come within 6-8 inches of the light source. This means that you need to have either a branch, rock, or platform that your beardie can lie on which is close to the light.

You will need to have two different types of lights:

- UVA/UVB long florescent tube light
- A basking bulb/light

Bearded Dragon Lighting

This is the light that will illuminate your bearded dragon's tank and it needs to mimic natural sunlight so it needs to be full spectrum (UVA & UVB). Ideally this bulb will span the distance above your tank from one side to the other to help illuminate your entire tank. This bulb's purpose is not to generate heat, but is instead to provide your dragon with UVA and UVB rays to help keep them healthy. You will need daily UVA/UVB light to prevent [metabolic bone disease in bearded dragons](#) and to keep your dragon healthy. Remember, that over time the UVA/UVB bulbs lose their strength, so you will need to change them every 6 months (even if they seem to still be working).



Bearded Dragon Basking Light

The basking light is very important as it is the light that provides heat to your bearded dragon. If you stick to name brand reptile lights, you should not need to worry about anything else, but if you decide to get lights at a local hardware store you need to make sure it is a bright white light because bearded dragons do not do well in other types of light.



Bearded Dragon Temperature

Bearded dragons are from a desert-like environment, so their tanks need to be heated.

Generally a tank should have a hot side where the temperature is anywhere from 95 F° to 110 F° and a cool side where the temperature is around 85 F°. Because of this it is recommended that you have two thermometers (one for the hot side and one for the cool side).

Your beardie will need a basking spot where he/she can bask in the heat. The basking spot should be 95 F° for adults and 110 F° for juveniles. Do not use a heated rock for your dragon because they can easily burn the underside of them. Instead you should use one of the following to keep your dragon warm:

- A ceramic heater
- A reptile basking light (red, white, or blue)
- A household light bulb that emits heat

During nighttime hours the temperature of the tank can fall as low as 65 F°, however, it's recommended to keep the temperature around 70 F° to 75 F°. If you cannot keep your tank this warm during the night, you will probably need to invest in an under tank heater (UTH).

Bearded Dragon Tank Bedding

You will also need to get flooring for your dragon's tank. The type of flooring you use really depends on the age of your dragon. Since younger dragons will need to eat more insects than older dragons, you will need to be more careful about the flooring you use because the chances are a young beardie will eat a bit of it when he/she is catching their prey.

Flooring for Younger Dragons

- Newspaper
- Paper towels
- Butcher paper
- Reptile carpet - recommended
- Don't use anything that's loose such as wood chips, sand, etc.

Tank Accessories

You can't expect your bearded dragon to be happy in a bare tank! Get some accessories for your dragon and be creative with it. Below is a list of common/recommended tank accessories:

- Cage Furniture
- Tank backgrounds

Cage Furniture

Hammocks - You would be amazed at how much bearded dragons love hammocks. You can buy special hammocks just for bearded dragons with suction cups and hooks at the ends so you can easily stick them in your tank.

Branches - Nearly all bearded dragons love climbing, so try to have at least one branch that they can climb on. It would be even better if their branch got them closer to their basking light. If you get a real branch, make sure it doesn't have small holes in it that crickets or other insects could hide in.

Hides - It's very important that you have what's called a "hide" for your bearded dragon. This should be an enclosed area where your dragon can hide from the light as well as from people looking at him/her. These are also important for [bearded dragon brumation](#), which is when your beardie will be going to sleep heavily for weeks.

Basking Platforms - These platforms allow your bearded dragon to get closer to the light so they can more easily warm their bodies. They can be as simple as a rock or they can be as elaborate as you want. Just make sure they are within 6-8 inches of the basking light so your dragon can feel the warmth.

Tank Backgrounds

If you have a glass tank, you will need to get a background for the back of the tank. This will not only make your tank look more impressive, but it also helps make your bearded dragon feel more secure.

Bearded Dragon Diet, Food, & Nutrition

A bearded dragon's diet is vital to keeping him or her healthy and active. Feeding bearded dragons can seem complicated, however by following the easy guidelines below you will be able to keep your bearded dragon healthy and happy.

Introduction to Feeding Your Dragon

Bearded dragons are omnivores and can eat a variety of things. Normally your bearded dragon's diet will consist of vegetables, insects, and non-citrus fruit. When you give your beardie

insects you will need to make sure that the insect isn't too big for your dragon to eat. If it is longer than the space between it's eyes, then it is too large.

Baby Bearded Dragon Diet

When a bearded dragon is young it will need to eat more insects than vegetables because it's still growing. You should always leave fresh vegetables in the cage, but three times per day you should feed your beardie insects. You should give them as many insects as they can eat within a 10-15 minute time period. After the feeding time is done, you should take the remaining insects out of their tank. A typical juvenile bearded dragon can eat anywhere from 20 to 60 crickets (or other insects) each day.

Adult Bearded Dragon Diet

Adult dragons do not need to eat as many insects as younger dragons, and overfeeding your dragon can cause him/her to become overweight. Adults only need to eat insects once per day, so when you feed them, give them as many insects as they can eat within a 10-15 minute time frame and then remove the remaining insects from their tank.

Safe Insects for Bearded Dragons

There are a variety of insects that you can feed your bearded dragon. You never want to feed your dragon insects that you have caught yourself because insects in and around our homes can contain pesticides and parasites that can harm your dragon.

Safe Insects for Young Bearded Dragons

- Black soldier fly larvae
- Butterworms
- Cockroaches
- Crickets
- Earthworms - Not worms intended for bait
- Locusts
- Redworms - Not worms intended for bait
- Superworms / Zophabas

Safe Insects for Adult Bearded Dragons

- Black soldier fly larvae
- Butterworms - Only as treats
- Cockroaches
- Crickets
- Earthworms - Only as treats and not intended for bait
- Locusts
- Redworms - Not worms intended for bait
- Superworms / Zophabas - Only as treats

Safe Vegetables for Bearded Dragons and Other Reptiles

It may seem boring, but plants are a staple of every bearded dragon's and most other reptile's diet. Keep in mind that many vegetables are full of vitamins and if you are already giving your

beardie vitamins you don't want to accidentally poison them with a vitamin overdose. Below is a list of the vegetables that you can feed your dragon:

Vitmain-A Information

Many vegetables contain high levels of Vitmain A and while bearded dragons can get vitmain A poisoning, it is generally not caused by overdosing on vegetables. Vegetables contain beta carotene which a bearded dragon's body converts to vitmain A when he/she needs it. If he/she does not need vitmain A then they will simply excrete the beta carotene. So the general rule of thumb is that it is unlikely for a bearded dragon to get vitmain A poisoning from vegetables, simply becuae the bearded dragon's body can excrete unneeded vitmain A from vegetables.

However, synthetic vitmain A (found in some reptilian multi-vitmains) cannot be excreted by bearded dragons. This means synthetic vitmain A will cause vitmain A poisoning if the bearded dragon has already had his/her requirements of vitmain A. Moderate to severe vitmain A poisoning occurs when 10,000 IU/kg of synthetic vitmain A is given to a bearded dragon.



- You need to cut the food into smaller pieces.



- You need to cook this food before serving it.






Ca:P - Calcium to Phosphorous ratio













A:D:E - Vitamin A / Vitamin D / Vitamin E ratio - Ideal is 100:10:1










H2O - The percentage of 100 grams of the vegetable's weight which is water

1234 IU - The amount of Vitamin A in the vegetable. The higher the value, the more vitamin A.

*Note - All the nutritional information below is based off of a 100 gram serving size.

Vegetable 100g	Frequency	Prepare	Ca:P	Vit. A	Vit. K	Iron	H2O	A:D:E
Acorn squash	Daily	 	1:0.9	367 IU	0%	4%	87.8%	367:0:0
Artichoke Heart	Occasionally		1:0.5	13 IU	14.8 mcg	1.3 mg	84.9%	13:0:1
Asparagus (Raw)	Occasionally		1:0.5	756 IU	41.6 mcg	2.1 mg	93.2%	378:0:1
Beet Greens (Raw)	Rarely		1:2.9	6326	400	2.6	91.0%	2108:0:1

				IU	mcg	mg		
Beets (Canned)	Rarely		1:1.2	23 IU	0.2 mcg	0.7 mg	91.3%	23:0:0
Beetroot			1:0.4	0 IU	0%	6%		None
Bell Peppers (Raw)	Occasionally		1:0.5	370 IU	7.4 mcg	0.3 mg	93.9%	370:0:1
Bok choy	Occasionally		1:2.8	4249 IU	42%	6%	95.5%	4249:0:1
Broccoli (Raw)	Rarely		1:0.7	623 IU	102 mcg	0.7 mg	89.3%	311:0:1
Brussel Sprouts (Cooked)	Rarely	 	1:0.6	775 IU	140 mcg	1.2 mg	88.9%	775:0:1
Butternut squash	Daily	 	1:1.5	11155 IU	1%	3%	87.8%	3718:0:1
Cabbage (Raw)	Occasionally		1:1.5	98 IU	76 mcg	0.5 mg	92.2%	98:0:1
Carrots	Occasionally		1:0.9	16705 IU	16%	2%	88.3%	16705:0:1
Carrot tops								
Cauliflower (Raw)	Rarely		1:0.5	13 IU	16 mcg	0.4 mg	91.9%	13:0:1
Celery	Occasionally		1:1.7	449 IU	37%	1%	95.4%	449:0:1
Chicory	Occasionally		1:2.1	5717 IU	372%	5%	92%	1143:0:1
Collard greens	Daily		1:14.5	6668 IU	638%	1%	90.6%	1333:0:1
Cucumber (Peeled)	Occasionally		1:0.7	72 IU	702 mcg	0.2 mg	96.7%	72:0:0

Endive	Daily		1:1.9	2167 IU	231 mcg	0.8 mg	93.8%	2167:0:1
Green beans			1:1	690 IU	18%	6%	90.3%	690:0:1
Lentils (Cooked)	Occasionally		1:0.1	8 IU	1.7 mcg	3.3 mg	69.6%	32:0:1
Kale	Occasionally		1:2.4	15376 IU	1021%	9%	84.5%	15376:0:0
Kohlrabi	Occasionally		1:0.5	36 IU	0.1 mcg	0.4 mg	91.0%	36:0:1
Mushrooms, Portabella (Raw)	Very Rarely		1:0.1	0 IU	0 mcg	0.6 mg	91.2%	0:0:0
Mustard greens	Daily		1:2.4	10502 IU	622%	8%	90.8%	2625:0:1
Okra (Raw)	Occasionally		1:1.3	375 IU	53 mcg	0.8 mg	90.2%	375:0:1
Parsley	Rarely		1:2.4	8425 IU	2050%	34%	87.7%	8425:0:1
Parsnips	Occasionally		1:0.5	0 IU	28%	3%	79.5%	0:0:1
Pattypan squash								
Peas (Green)	Rarely		1:0.2	765 IU	31%	8%	78.8%	765:0:1
Pumpkins	Occasionally		1:0.5	7385 IU	1%	4%	91.6%	3692:0:1
Radicchio	Occasionally		1:0.5	27 IU	255 mcg	0.6 mg	93.2%	5:0:1
Rutabagas (Raw)	Rarely		1:0.8	2 IU	0.3 mcg	0.5 mg	89.7%	2:0:1
Snow peas			1:0.8	1087 IU	31%	12%	88.9%	1087:0:1
Spaghetti squash	Daily		1:1.9	50 IU	0%	2%	91.6%	50:0:0



Spring greens

Sweet Potato (Raw)	Rarely		1:0.6	14185 IU	1.8 mcg	0.6 mg	77.3%	14185:0:1
Swiss Chard (Raw)	Rarely		1:1.1	6116 IU	830 mcg	1.8 mg	92.6%	1529:0:1
Turnip greens	Daily		1:4.5	11586 IU	314%	6%	89.7%	1931:0:1
Yams (Raw)	Occasionally		1:0.3	138 IU	2.3 mcg	0.5 mg	69.6%	138:0:1
Yellow squash	Daily	 	1:0.4	200 IU	5%	2%	94.6%	200:0:1
Zucchini (Raw)	Occasionally		1:0.2	490 IU	0 mcg	0.8 mg	92.7%	490:0:0

Safe Plants for Bearded Dragons and Other Reptiles

You can also feed your bearded dragon a few plants as well. Since they are from the wild the chances are that they didn't always have the option of vegetables. If you want to mix it up for your bearded dragon, the following plants are safe for them to eat:



- Feed the flowers and flower buds



- Feed the leaves.



- Feed the petals.














- Feed the plant itself (remove flowers and buds).















Ca:P - Calcium to Phosphorous ratio




A:D:E - Vitamin A / Vitamin D / Vitamin E ratio - Ideal is 100:10:1

H2O - The percentage of 100 grams of the vegetable's weight which is water

1234 IU - The amount of Vitamin A in the vegetable. The higher the value, the more vitamin A.

Plants 100g	Frequency	Prepare	Ca:P	Vit. A	Vit. K	Iron	H2O	A:D:E
Alfalfa	Unknown		1:0.5	155 IU	30.5 mcg	1 mg	92.8%	155:0:0
Arugula	Unknown		1:3.1	2373 IU	109 mcg	1.5 mg	91.7%	2373:0:1
Astilbe	Unknown		-	-	-	-	-	-
Baby's tears	Unknown		-	-	-	-	-	-
Basil	Unknown		1:3.2	5276 IU	415 mcg	3.2 mg	92.1%	5276:0:1
Borage	Unknown		1:1.8	4200 IU	0 mcg	3.3 mg	93.0%	4200:0:0
Carnations	Unknown		-	-	-	-	-	-
Chinese Lantern	Unknown		-	-	-	-	-	-
Chives	Unknown		1:1.6	4352 IU	213 mcg	1.6 mg	90.6%	4352:0:1
Clover	Unknown		-	-	-	-	-	-
Coriander	Occasionally		1:1.4	6748 IU	310 mcg	1.8 mg	92.2%	1349:0:1
Dahlia	Unknown		-	-	-	-	-	-
Dandelion Greens	Unknown		1:2.8	10160 IU	778 mcg	3.1 mg	85.6%	1451:0:1
Daylilies	Unknown		-	-	-	-	-	-
Fennel	Unknown		1:1	134 IU	0 mcg	0.7 mg	90.2%	134:0:0

Ficus	Unknown		-	-	-	-	-	-
Hibiscus	Unknown		-	-	-	-	-	-
Hollyhock	Unknown		-	-	-	-	-	-
Impatiens	Unknown		-	-	-	-	-	-
Johnny Jump Up Vila	Unknown		-	-	-	-	-	-
Lavender	Unknown		-	-	-	-	-	-
Lemon Grass	Unknown		1:0.6	6 IU	0 mcg	8.2 mg	70.6%	6:0:0
Maple Leaves	Unknown		-	-	-	-	-	-
Mesquite Leaves	Unknown		-	-	-	-	-	-
Mint Leaves	Unknown		1:3.3	4247 IU	0 mcg	5.1 mg	78.6%	4247:0:0
Mulberry Leaves	Unknown		-	-	-	-	-	-
Nasturtium	Unknown		-	-	-	-	-	-
Oregano	Unknown		-	5000 IU	-	36 mg	-	-
Pansies	Unknown		-	-	-	-	-	-
Petunia	Unknown		-	-	-	-	-	-
Phlox	Unknown		-	-	-	-	-	-
Rose Petals	Unknown		-	-	-	-	-	-
Rosemary (Fresh)	Unknown		1:4.8	4924 IU	0 mcg	6.6 mg	67.8%	2924:0:0

Sage	Unknown		-	-	-	-	-	-
Thyme (Fresh)	Unknown		1:3.8	4751 IU	0 mcg	17.4 mg	65.1%	4751:0:0
Watercress	Unknown		1:2.0	3191 IU	250 mcg	0.2 mg	95.1%	1595:0:1
Yucca	Unknown		-	-	-	-	-	-

Safe Fruit for Bearded Dragons and Other Reptiles

Bearded dragons will also eat fruit. However, not all fruit is easily digested by them (such as citrus fruit), but the following fruit is safe to feed them. Just be sure to cut it up so it's easier for them to eat.



- You need to cut the food into smaller pieces.






- You need to cook this food before serving it.













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A:D:E - Vitamin A / Vitamin D / Vitamin E ratio - Ideal is 100:10:1

H2O - The percentage of 100 grams of the vegetable's weight which is water

1234 IU - The amount of Vitamin A in the vegetable. The higher the value, the more vitamin A.

Fruit 100g	Frequency	Prepare	Ca:P	Vit. A	Vit. K	Iron	H2O	A:D:E
Apples	Occasionally		1:0.5	54 IU	2.2 mcg	.1 mg	85.6%	54:0:1
Apricot	Occasionally		1:0.6	1926 IU	3.3 mcg	0.4 mg	86.4%	963:0:1
Banana	Rarely		1:0.2	64 IU	0.5 mcg	0.3 mg	74.9%	64:0:1
Blackberries	Occasionally		1:1.3	214 IU	19.8 mcg	0.6 mg	88.1%	107:0:1
Blueberries	Occasionally		1:0.5	54 IU	19.3	0.3	84.2%	54:0:1

					mcg	mg		
Chayote	Occasionally		1:0.9	0 IU	4.1 mcg	0.3 mg	94.2%	None
Cherries	Occasionally		1:0.6	64 IU	2.1 mcg	0.4 mg	82.2%	64:0:1
Cranberries	Occasionally		1:0.6	60 IU	5.1 mcg	0.3 mg	87.1%	20:0:1
Figs	Occasionally		1:2.4	10 IU	15.6 mcg	2.0 mg	30.0%	5:0:1
Grapes	Occasionally		1:0.5	66 IU	14.6 mcg	0.4 mg	80.5%	66:0:1
Grapefruit	Occasionally		1:1.2	1150 IU	0.0 mcg	0.1 mg	88.1%	1150:0:1
Guava	Occasionally		1:0.5	624 IU	2.6 mcg	0.3 mg	80.8%	624:0:1
Kiwi	Rarely		1:1	87 IU	40.3 mcg	0.3 mg	83.1%	29:0:1
Mangos	Occasionally		1:0.9	765 IU	4.2 mcg	0.1 mg	81.7%	382:0:1
Melons	Occasionally		1:0.6	3382 IU	2.5 mcg	0.2 mg	90.2%	3382:0:1
Nectarine	Occasionally		1:0.2	332 IU	2.2 mcg	0.3 mg	87.6%	332:0:1
Papayas	Occasionally		1:4.8	1094 IU	2.6 mcg	0.1 mg	88.8%	1094:0:1
Peaches	Occasionally		1:0.3	326 IU	2.6 mcg	0.3 mg	88.9%	326:0:1
Pears	Occasionally		1:0.8	23 IU	4.5 mcg	0.2 mg	83.7%	23:0:1
Pineapple	Occasionally		1:1.6	58 IU	0.7 mcg	0.3 mg	86.0%	58:0:0

Plum	Occasionally		1:0.4	345 IU	6.4 mcg	0.2 mg	87.2%	345:0:1
Pomegranate	Rarely		1:0.3	0 IU	16.4 mcg	0.3 mg	77.9%	54:0:1
Prickly Pears	Daily		1:2.3	43 IU	0 mcg	0.3 mg	87.6%	43:0:0
Prunes	Occasionally		1:0.6	781 IU	59.5 mcg	0.9 mg	30.9%	781:0:1
Raisins	Occasionally		1:0.1	0 IU	3.5 mcg	1.9 mg	15.4%	0:0:1
Raspberries	Rarely		1:0.9	33 IU	7.8 mcg	0.7 mg	85.7%	16:0:1
Starfruit	Rarely		1:0.3	61 IU	0 mcg	0.1 mg	91.4%	61:0:1
Strawberries	Occasionally		1:0.7	12 IU	2.2 mcg	0.4 mg	90.9%	12:0:1
Tomatoes	Rarely		1:0.4	833 IU	7.9 mcg	0.3 mg	94.5%	833:0:1
Watermelon	Occasionally		1:0.6	569 IU	0.1 mcg	0.2 mg	91.5%	569:0:1

Foods to Avoid

To keep your bearded dragon healthy you will need to make sure they stay on their diet. There are also some foods which are unhealthy for them or lethal for them to eat. Make sure they do not eat any of the below items:

Lettuce

Since lettuce is mostly water it is not nutritious for bearded dragons. Because of this it is best to avoid feeding your bearded dragon lettuce or any greens with the word "lettuce" in the name.

Spinach

Spinach is also another food to avoid. While spinach is healthy, calcium binds easily to it which can make it hard for your bearded dragon to digest.

Insects Captured in the Wild

Never feed your bearded dragon any insects you catch yourself. The insects you catch probably have parasites on them and contain trace amounts of pesticides, both of which can make your bearded dragon sick.

Fireflies or Insects that Glow

If a bug or insect glows in the dark, then do not feed it to your bearded dragon. Even one of these bugs can be lethal to an adult bearded dragon.

Avocados

Do not feed your bearded dragons avocados. They are toxic, but their toxicity levels are unknown; however, they are deadly for birds.

Poisonous Foods & Plants for Bearded Dragons and Other Reptiles

Below is a list of plants and food items that could be poisonous for bearded dragons. Please note, this list is a compiled list of plants/foods that veterinarians do not recommend feeding pets because of potential toxicity. Therefore, it is not targeted specifically towards bearded dragons, however it would most likely be best to avoid these foods.

Item	Toxic Parts	Item	Toxic Parts
Acokanthera	All but fruit	Larkspur	All
Amaryllis	All	Laurel	All
Angel's Trumpet	Flowers, leaves, seeds	Lily-of-the-Valley	All
Azalea	All	Lobelia	All
Balsam Pear	All	Locoweed	All
Baneberry	All	Lupine	All
Belladonna	All	Marijuana	All
Bird of Paradise	Flowers, seed pods	Milkweed	All
Bittersweet	All	Mistletoe	All
Black Locust	All	Mock Orange	All
Boxwood	All	Moonseed	All
Braken Fern	All	Monkshood	All
Buckthorn	All	Morning Glory	Seeds

Burdock	All	Narcissus	All
Buttercup	All	Oak	All
Caladium	All	Oleander	All
Calla Lily	All	Peony	All
Catclaw Acacia	Leaves, twigs	Periwinkle	All
Caster Bean	All	Peyote	All
Chinaberry	All	Philodendron	All
Clematis	All	Poison Hemlock	All
Coral Plant	All	Poison Ivy	All
Crocus	All	Poison Oak	All
Cycad	All	Poison Sumac	All
Wild Daffodil	All	Poinsettia	All
Daphne	All	Poppy	All
Death Camas	All	Pokeweed	All
Delphinium	All	Primrose	All
Dieffenbachia	All	Privet	All
Elderberry	All	Ragwort	All
Elephant's Ears	All	Red Maple	All
Euonymus	All	Rhododendron	All
European Pennyroyal	All	Rosary Pea	All
Four o'clock	All	Shamrock Plant	All
Heliotrope	Leaves	Skunk Cabbage	All
Henbane	All	Snowdrop	All
Holly	Berries, leaves	Sorrel	All

Horse Chestnut	All	Spurges	All
Horse Nettle	All	Star of Bethlehem	All
Hyacinth	All	Sweet Pea	All
Hydrangea	All	Tobacco	All
Iris	All	Tulip	All
Ivy	All	Virginia Creeper	All
Jack-in-the-Pulpit	All	Vetches	All
Jerusalem Cherry	All	Water Hemlock	All
Jonquil	All	Waxberry	All
Juniper	All	Wisteria	All
Lantana	All	Yew	All

Vitamins & Minerals Your Bearded Dragon Needs

Similar to people, bearded dragons need vitamins and minerals to stay healthy. Below is a list of the supplements that bearded dragons need:

Iron

Iron is more important for baby bearded dragons. If you do have a baby bearded dragon and you are giving him/her Iron supplements, be sure to give it to them sporadically because too much Iron can cause [bearded dragon health problems](#). Generally, you can give your bearded dragon enough Iron through vegetables and plants.

Vitamin A

Bearded dragons also need vitamin A, but they will usually get enough of this from the plants and vegetables in their diet. You want to be careful not to give your dragon too much vitamin a because that can cause [vitamin A toxicity](#).

Vitamin D3 & Calcium

Vitamin D3 and Calcium are two of the most important vitamins and minerals you need to make sure your bearded dragon gets. It helps with the development of their bones and is important for female dragons that are gravid (carrying eggs). You will have to give your bearded dragon Vitamin B3 and Calcium at the same time, since bearded dragons cannot absorb calcium without vitamin D3.

In the wild, bearded dragons will get most of the vitamin D3 they need from natural sunlight, so the amount of vitamin D3 you give your bearded dragon depends on how much exposure he/she has to natural sunlight (or full spectrum lighting). If your dragon is frequently outside in the sunlight or if your bearded dragon's cage has full spectrum lighting, then you can reduce the dosage by half.

- **Baby Dragons** - Need a daily dose of Vitamin D3 and Calcium to stay healthy (since they are still developing and need the bone support).
- **Juvenile Dragons** - Need a Vitamin D3 and Calcium supplement with a meal 3-4 times per week.
- **Adult Dragons** - Need a Vitamin D3 and Calcium supplement with a meal once per week.

When choosing a Vitamin D3 and Calcium supplement, make sure the one you purchase has a calcium to phosphorus ratio of 2:1 or 3:1 - the higher the better because you don't want your dragon to have too much phosphorus.

Bearded Dragon Health, Illness, & Disease

Learn how to determine how healthy your bearded dragon is and discover the signs of common bearded dragon illnesses and diseases.

Normal Bearded Dragon Behavior

Healthy bearded dragons will go through a few cycles each year where he or she may seem ill, but in reality they are perfectly healthy. Please consider the following stages if you suspect your beardie is ill.

Bearded Dragon Brumation

Brumation is a naturally occurring hibernation cycle that bearded dragons go through. Bearded dragons will go through a brumation stage in the winter or fall in response to the change in lighting or temperatures. Some bearded dragon owners will try to force or prevent brumation by manually adjusting the [temperatures and lighting](#) of their dragons cage, however it is recommended to let your bearded dragon do what comes naturally.

Each bearded dragon is different during the brumation period. Some dragons will take very long naps off and on for the entire cycle, while other dragons will sleep without waking for the entire cycle. The brumation period also varies based on the dragon. Some bearded dragons don't go through brumation at all, others will only have a brumation period for a week, and some will be in brumation for several months.

During the brumation cycle your bearded dragon will become less active and will sleep for much longer periods of time. Your bearded dragon may also have a decreased appetite or stop eating all together. This is natural and your bearded dragon should not lose any weight even without eating for the duration of the brumation period if he/she is healthy. Normally bearded dragons will only lose weight during brumation if they have

[parasites](#), so it's generally a good idea to have your dragon tested for parasites when you suspect they are about to enter a brumation cycle. Some owners will weigh their dragon before and during the brumation period to make sure they do not lose weight, but this is unnecessary unless you suspect your beardie has parasites.

Some owners will turn the lights off during brumation and will stop feeding their bearded dragon until the brumation cycle ends. However, since every bearded dragon is different it's recommended to keep the cage lights on for the same cycle throughout the brumation period and to continue [feeding the bearded dragon](#). Many bearded dragons will wake up occasionally during the brumation period and will eat and/or bask in their [basking light](#). To do this, simply keep a bit of fresh food in their cage and monitor if it's been eaten or not.

Most owners will wake their [bearded dragon for bathing](#) and to make sure they eat. However, doing this can cause the brumation cycle to increase. For example, waking your bearded dragon every week can extend a 2 month brumation cycle to 3+ months as opposed to leaving your beardie undisturbed.

Bearded Dragon Shedding

Bearded dragons are reptiles and so they will shed their skin. [Baby and juvenile bearded dragons](#) will frequently shed their skin in response to them growing, however adult bearded dragons may only shed their skin once or twice per year.

Before a bearded dragon will shed you will notice their color will become more dull and their eyes will appear to be puffed out much further than normal. These things are normal and are signs of a healthy shed.

During the shed, you will want to make sure that your bearded dragon stays clean and hydrated by [bathing him/her](#) with warm water. It is also recommended to use a spray bottle to occasionally mist your bearded dragon's skin to keep it hydrated during the shedding cycle. This is because in the wild the high humidity will help keep the skin moistened to make the shedding faster, however since their tank is low in humidity it can make it more difficult to shed without the use of a spray bottle.

Do not pull off your beardies shedded skin unless it is ready to come off. Any skin that is ready to come off should be literally falling off their body. If you are helping your bearded dragon shed by pulling off his/her skin, the skin you pull off should come off without any resistance and should not be damp or wet. If the skin is damp or wet and has resistance when you pull at it, it's not ready to come off and you can damage their new scales by removing it.

You will need to monitor the shedding at the tip of the tail and on their toes. These are some problem areas where the skin does not come off easily, however if the skin is left on it can tighten and restrict blood flow to these areas which can kill their skin tissue. Therefore it is recommended to help your beardie shed in these areas. Make sure they stay damp and gently work the skin over a couple of days to help promote shedding.

Signs of A Healthy Bearded Dragon

Most of the time bearded dragons will only act different if they are feeling ill. However, below are some ways you can tell if a bearded dragon is healthy.

Activeness / Energy

The first way you can tell how healthy a bearded dragon is, is by seeing how active an alert he or she is. A healthy bearded dragon will keep his/her head perked up if they are awake and will be very alert when someone is approaching their tank.

Healthy Appearance

You can also determine a bearded dragon's health by their appearance. You should look for any puss or unusual fluid around their eyes and mouth. You should also look at make sure their mouth and joints are not swollen.

Abnormal Bearded Dragon Behavior

If your bearded dragon is behaving abnormally, then the odds are that he or she has an issue that needs to be addressed. Sometimes it can be as simple as [making sure the lighting is right](#) and other times you may need to take your bearded dragon to the vet. Below are some of the most common abnormal behaviors you should watch out for.

Bearded Dragon Impaction

Bearded dragons should have a fairly regular bathroom schedule. If you notice your bearded dragon has stopped defecating for several days, yet is still eating daily, it could be an issue. The longer the beardie goes without using the bathroom, the more serious the problem.

Normally, you can solve the problem by [giving your dragon a bath](#) in warm water (95-100 F) for 10-15 minutes. When bathing your bearded dragon, gently massage your dragon's stomach (don't push too hard) while it is still in the water for a few minutes. Doing this will help your bearded dragon use the bathroom within 24 hours if their constipation was due to being too cold, if there was a minor blockage, or if they have a small case of intestinal parasites. However, if your bearded dragon still continues to be constipated, you will need to see a vet as soon as possible. This is because blockages can cause long term health issues if not dealt with.

Diarrhea

Temporary diarrhea can be caused by stress, [some bad food](#), or by a change in diet. However, this should not last. A healthy bearded dragon's fecal matter should be solid and if you notice your bearded dragon having diarrhea frequently it could be a sign of parasites or worms. If this is the case then you should take your bearded dragon to your vet to be checked.

Dehydration

Keeping your bearded dragon properly hydrated is important for their health. If you suspect your bearded dragon is ill, then hydration becomes even more important.

The following are signs of dehydration:

- Sunken eyes
- Your dragon perks up after drinking
- Wrinkled skin
- Lack of appetite
- Lack of energy

One way you can test to see if your bearded dragon is dehydrated is by gently pinching their skin with your fingers (where the skin is generally loose). If the skin holds its shape after you let go for a few moments (instead of immediately going back to place) then your bearded dragon is most likely dehydrated.

If you suspect your bearded dragon is dehydrated then you need to try to coax them into drinking water, Pedialyte, or sports drinks like Powerade (diluted 1:1 in water). You should try to get them to drink first by giving them fresh water, but if that doesn't work you can try using an eye dropper or a small syringe without the needle.

Droopy Eyes

Droopy eyes is when one or both of your bearded dragon's eyes seem to droop (similar to the way a bloodhound's eyes normally look). Droopy eyes can be caused by kidney issues and if you suspect your dragon's eyes to be droopy you should consult a vet. If you suspect your bearded dragon's eyes are swollen from parasites or an infection, you should see a vet because lack of treatment can cause blindness and other permanent eye issues in your bearded dragon.

Swollen / Puffed Out Eyes

Swollen eyes can be signs of shedding, an [overdose of Vitamin A \(Hypervitaminosis A\)](#), parasites, or an eye infection. However, mites and parasites rarely cause any eye issues so the chances are swollen eyes are caused by something else.

Paralysis

Paralysis in bearded dragons is usually caused by [feeding your dragon food](#) that is too large for them to eat. The general rule is to never feed your dragon anything that is larger than the space between his/her eyes.

When a bearded dragon eats food that is too large it puts pressure on their spinal cord during the digestion process. If the pressure lasts too long it can cause long term paralysis or even death. If you suspect your bearded dragon has eaten something that is too large, you need to keep them off their stomach. This allows their stomach to hang freely, which keeps pressure off their spine. Some owners will cut a hole in a small towel and will put their beardie on top of the towel in a position so their stomach hangs freely through the hole.

If you suspect your bearded dragon is paralyzed or may become paralyzed then you need to contact your vet immediately because the condition can be reversed with quick medical care.

Remember, it is normal for bearded dragons to extend their hind legs when basking, however if they are doing this abnormally, then touch their toes to see if they move their legs to determine if they are stretching or have a medical issue.

Bearded Dragon Malnutrition Signs

Bearded dragons can easily become malnourished through [improper diet](#) or inadequate UV exposure. Below are some of the most common types of malnourishment with bearded dragons.

Too Much Vitamin A (Hypervitaminosis A)

Bearded dragons can easily get too much vitamins, and vitamin A is one of the most common vitamins that bearded dragons overdose on. The signs of vitamin A overdose are swelling of the eyes, throat, body, and lack of energy.

Lack of Vitamin B1 (Hypothiaminosis)

This is when your bearded dragon does not get enough thiamine in their diet and causes muscle twitches and tremors. Unfortunately, these are the same symptoms of a more common issue with bearded dragons called [Metabolic Bone Disease](#), which causes hypothiaminosis to be misdiagnosed as MBD.

Usually hypothiaminosis is caused by not feeding your bearded dragon fresh enough [greens and vegetables](#). Vegetables and greens that have been frozen or stored for extended periods of time lose their vitamin B1.

Bearded Dragon Mites & Parasites

Mites and parasites are organisms that suck the blood from your bearded dragon and can transmit diseases and illnesses among dragons. Normally the scales on your bearded dragon are too tough for mites to penetrate so the mites will generally attack sensitive areas like the eyes, ears, and other areas on the body where your dragons scales are thinner.

In bearded dragons there are good parasites, which help with digestion, and there are bad parasites which cause health issues and problems. Unfortunately there is no way to tell if your bearded dragon has unhealthy parasites without doing a stool sample, which should be done by an experienced vet.

Bearded Dragon Diseases

Below are some of the most common diseases that bearded dragons get.

Metabolic Bone Disease

Metabolic bone disease (MBD) is caused by a lack of Calcium, Vitamin D3, and/or Phosphorus and is the weakening of the bones of your bearded dragon.

Sings of Metabolic Bone Disease:

- Bumps in the legs (that you can feel and sometimes see)
- Bumps in the vertical columns of the back and tail
- A swollen bottom jaw
- Jerky movements
- Twitches, ticks, spasms, or tremors

MBD can be treated if caught early enough simply through [proper diet](#), correct UV light, and [temperature](#). If you suspect your bearded dragon has MBD you should consult a vet as they can do tests to determine the severity of the MBD.

Mouth Rot

Mouth rot is where a yellowish/white substance appears in and around the mouth of your bearded dragon. Sometimes your dragon's mouth can be swollen and their teeth can be loose. Many dragons who suffer from mouth rot have a decreased appetite. If you suspect your bearded dragon has mouth rot, you should take him/her to the vet where they can get treated.

Bearded Dragon Respiratory Infection

Bearded dragons rarely get respiratory infections, however if they are exposed to low temperatures, high humidity, and/or an incorrect habitat – respiratory infections can occur.

The following are symptoms of a respiratory infection:

- [Bearded dragon gaping](#) their mouth
- Visible breathing difficulties
- Puffing up their body and/or throat
- Excess mucus around the mouth and nostrils

Signs of Discomfort in Your Bearded Dragon

Most animals will not show or complain of pain, because in nature that makes you a target for predators. Because of this it can be difficult to tell if your bearded dragon is in pain or is uncomfortable; however the following signs should help you to determine if there is something wrong with your bearded dragon.

Keep in mind that if it is breeding season or if your [bearded dragon is shedding](#), they may show unusual behavior, however if these are not the case, you should look for the following signs:

- Lack of energy
- Jerky movement
- Limping
- Swollen body parts
- Aggressiveness
- Change in behavior or mood
- Hunching over
- Reluctant to lie down
- Not eating
- Abnormal defecation

If you notice any of the above signs or symptoms you should consult your vet. If you are familiar with your bearded dragon and you feel something is not quite right, it is always safer to consult your vet.

Bathing Bearded Dragons

Just like people, bearded dragons need to be bathed frequently. There are many benefits to bathing your bearded dragon including keeping him/her clean and hydrating your bearded dragon as beardies will often drink bath water more than their water dish.

Bathing Frequency

You can bathe bearded dragons as often as once per day, but most bearded dragon owners will only bathe their bearded dragon this frequently to aid in bowel movements. Some bearded dragons will not defecate in their tank, but will only go when they are given a bath. However, it is recommended to bathe your bearded dragon once every four to eight days. Of course, if your bearded dragon is dehydrated, is constipated, or is shedding you should bathe him/her more frequently to help. If your bearded dragon does defecate in the bath, you should remove the fecal matter quickly so you do not contaminate the bath water (remember most beardies will drink their bath water).

Misting Your Bearded Dragon's Cage

In nature, bearded dragons receive moisture on their skin every day from the morning dew, and it is recommended to mist your bearded dragon's cage each morning to replicate this. By misting their cage you will also reduce the number of baths you need to give your dragon.

Preparing the Bath

Water Temp - Bearded dragons are reptiles, which means they are cold blooded, so they will need very warm water. The ideal temperature of the water should be around 94-96 F°. While bearded dragons can swim, you should never fill the bath where your bearded dragon cannot easily keep his head out of the water. Ideally the water should be no higher than his/her elbows on their front legs (usually about 1-2 inches deep depending on the size of your dragon).

Bathing Location –You can bathe your bearded dragon in a bathtub, sink, or even in a large Tupperware container. As long as you can easily rinse off your beardie then it's okay. However, it is more fun to watch the dragon swim around in bathtubs. Keep in mind that you will need to thoroughly clean whatever you bathe your dragon in both before and after you give your beardie a bath.

The Bath – You should let your bearded dragon bathe for 10-30 minutes. You may need to add more warm water to the bathtub to keep it a comfortable temperature for your bearded dragon. Some dragons will like baths more than others and if you feel bathing your bearded dragon is making him/her stressed, you should consider putting a rock in their bath so they can take a break. You may notice that your bearded dragon inflates their belly when they are in the bath, this is normal and they do this to help keep them buoyant. If your dragon is shedding, you may want to gently rub the problem areas (toes, feet, tail, etc.) with a soft brush or a washcloth.

After the Bath – After you've bathed your beardie you will want to dry him/her off with a soft dry towel. Many owners will do a quick cleaning of their beardies tank before putting their now clean bearded dragon back into his/her tank.

Source: <http://www.thebeardeddragon.org/bearded-dragon-care.php>