



Reptile handling & understanding behavior

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Intro

- ▶ Reptiles often give us many signals to tell us how they're feeling. It's very important to watch out for these signals in order to keep both you and your pet safe!



Snake behavior

- ▶ Snakes can be very expressive but sometimes it can be subtle so you have to pay close attention!
- ▶ Snakes will only bite for two reasons:
 - 1) Food bite
 - 2) Defense



Snake behavior

➤ Aggressive behaviors

- hissing
- tail rattling
- striking out
- picking up the head and arching it back

Some snake breeds are more aggressive than others, so do your research before hand!



When grabbing your animal..

- Make sure the animal is aware your in ***their*** space to prevent being startled
- Make sure they know its not feeding time!
- Never hold or pick up your pet by the tail, they need body support



Handle your pets daily, so they are use to you to prevent any issues such as food aggression



Handling

- Use the palm of your hand to scoop them up from underneath, as they don't like when you come from above
- If the lizard is large, use two hands - one hand to support the front of the body, and the other hand to support the lower abdomen, hips, and the base of the tail.



Lizard behavior

- ▶ Signs of aggression:
 - flattening the body to appear larger
 - open mouth
 - tail-whipping
 - head bobbing
 - running away
 - some large lizards will hiss



Amphibians (frogs and toads)

- Most frogs and amphibians should be handled only when necessary.
- Many have toxins in their skin that can cause reactions in humans, and we also have toxins on our skin that can be dangerous to them. Over-handling can also dry their skin out.





Tips

Things to avoid:

- Don't restrain the head tightly unless necessary, such as for medical reasons. This causes more stress than what is wanted.
- Don't squeeze too tight, just right
- Smell like food

Things to do:

- Handle daily
- Give body support
- Move slowly
- Be CONFIDENT!

Will I get bit?

- ▶ Anything with a mouth can bite! Its your job as the pet parent to do your best to learn warning signs!



- ▶ When and if you get bit....

Don't pull, force, yank off your pet as you can damage their jaws and teeth. Instead use water or slowly remove them. For snakes you can use Listerine mouth wash

Questions?

