

## Getting your snake to eat

Have you ever heard someone say that their snake will not eat? This is a fairly common problem for many people. The cause for a snake not eating could be anything from bad husbandry techniques, humidity problems, stress, temperature etc. For some snakes, this just seems like a natural yearly cycle. For instance, many male ball pythons and Kenyan sand boas will stop feeding in the winter and all of a sudden will start feeding aggressively a couple of months later. One of the important things to take notice of is the snake's weight. If it appears to be losing weight, than you should start becoming more concerned. Some snakes will refuse food because their environment is not ideal. The following are some tips that may cause a picky eater to start feeding again.

1. One method that I have found helpful is to provide a humidity box. This is simply a little plastic tupperware type box with a hole cut in the side and moist paper towels on the inside. I have noticed that finicky eaters have a better feeding response when they have the option of a moist place in the terrarium.

2. Sometimes if you use a smaller food item it takes care of this problem. If the food item is too large, the snake will not feel comfortable eating it. A good size for a rodent is the size of the width of the snake along the mid section of it's body.

3. Some snakes prefer the the smell of lizards, toads, gerbils, or other animals over the scent of mice. Sometimes if you rub a mouse on one of these other animals it will transfer the scent and cause the snake to start feeding.

4. Another method that is sometimes used (if you are not squimish) is "braining". This especially works with smaller specimens. Basically, you want to cut open the head of a frozen/thawed mouse so that some of the brain matter is visible. For some odd reason, some snakes prefer the smell of the brain and will eat the food immediately. I once had a hognose snake that would only eat brained pinky mice for the first 8 months of it's life!

If you have any more questions about feeding, just email me for some more tips!