

Parasites and diseases

Parasites and reptile diseases are a reptile keepers nightmare. However, with proper husbandry and care being practiced, most problems can be avoided. The most common parasite to show up on captive bred snakes is mites. Mites are an external parasite. Mites are basically small ticks that crawl under reptile's scales and suck their blood. If not exterminated, they can kill your snake and spread throughout your collection. If you notice mites on your snake, you must get rid of them immediately! Some extermination methods include oils baths and special reptile mite sprays. If you have a large snake that is infested, I would recommend an oil bath. This can be messy, but it really works! To give an oil bath you would take your reptile to the bath tub and spread vegetable oil over it's body. This covers and suffocates the mites. Make sure to avoid getting oil in the snake eyes, mouth, and nostrils. For these parts of the snake's body, you could use a cotton swab and manually remove the mites. The snake's cage should also be completely cleaned and sterilized with bleach or ammonia before returning the snake. If you are using a wood cage, you are definitely going to want to use a mite spray to prevent the cage from becoming infested again. Some products that I have noted to work well are Black Knight spray, and Prevent-o-Mite. Both of these should be used according to the instruction on the canister. Keep an eye on the snake once it's been returned to it's cage to make sure that there are no more mites. Repeat the oil bath and thorough cage cleaning about one week later.

One of the best things that you could do to prevent this problem from re-occurring is to upgrade to plastic cages if you are using wood. Wood cages offer mites many places to hide and reproduce. They are also much more difficult to sterilize than plastic cages.

Internal parasites are also very dangerous but require other means of extermination. Fortunately, a healthy captive raised reptile that is eating only captive produced rodents or insects is unlikely to contract internal parasites. When it comes to internal parasites and diseases there is no way to cover all of the materials in one short article. If you suspect that your reptile has internal parasites, you should contact a veterinarian.