



# Children's, Spotted & Stimson Python Care Guide

## Children's Python.

*Antaresia childreni*

## Spotted Python.

*Antaresia maculosa*

## Stimson Python.

*Antaresia stimsoni*

Antaresia is a genus of nonvenomous pythons that are native to Australia. Included in this category are the three Spotted, Children's and Stimsons. Although these pythons do have a specific set of requirements to ensure they thrive, they are relatively low maintenance, and if the proper care is followed, they are easy to keep as pets. Keeping of any snakes requires setting up a proper environment and continuing proper maintenance afterwards which means that a commit to your snake's health is essential. They all only grow between 3-4 feet, so they are a popular for first time snake owners.

**Please read this care guide carefully before purchasing your reptile.**

## Diet

There are many options when it comes to feeding your pythons, but the popular, readily available diet for most python keepers are frozen mice, rats, and quail. Feeding your snake depends on the age of your python. Making sure that only appropriately sized food is offered is also especially important for the health and safety of your snake. A juvenile/hatchling python should be fed an appropriately sized meal once every 7 to 10 days - this would be in the form of a pinkie mouse. It is important that your juveniles continue to eat as it fuels their growth and ensures a healthy adult. Hatchlings will only be sold once a solid eating habit has been established. Adult pythons can be fed a larger meal every 2 to 4 weeks - this would be in the form of an adult mouse/rat, depending on the size of your snake. This is not an exact period, as it is common for pythons to occasionally refuse a meal if they have had enough food or if they are coming into shed. As long as your snake is not a hatchling and they are not losing a significant amount of weight, it is normal and nothing to be concerned about. If you become concerned about your snake's lack of appetite, always seek advice from a specialised veterinarian. **Never force your python to eat before seeking medical advice.** You must also ensure that food is properly thawed/defrosted before offering it to your snake. Offering food that has not been prepared properly can be hazardous to the health of your snake. It is also recommended that you do not handle your python for at least 24 hours after feeding, as this can cause stress which can possibly lead to regurgitation. Your python should have access to water daily and it should be changed two to three times a week or more if needed.

## Heating

Having the correct and adequate temperature gradients in your python's enclosure is crucial to their health and wellbeing. Many issues related to health can be linked to improper heating and lighting within your reptile's tank. Antaresia pythons need a basking spot, otherwise referred to as the “hot end” with a temperature between 32-35 degrees. The opposite end, referred to as the “cool end” should keep a temperature of 22-26 degrees. This is known as a thermal gradient and will allow your python to choose its own desired temperature from within the range. Nighttime temperatures should not dip below 18 degrees all year round. It is important to regularly check your enclosures temperature to make sure it meets your pythons needs. The best way to do this is with a decent quality thermostat; you can set your thermostat to the required temperature and use it to set a “day/night” cycle which is important for your python. The thermostat will allow the heat to come on for 12 hours day, and cool down at night, as it would in a snake's natural environment. If you keep your python in a plastic storage box - such as suggested for juveniles/hatchlings - a heat mat or heat cord covering one third to one half the enclosure floor is needed. This will supply the required temperatures within the baby's tub as young snakes require a constant source of heat. Heat mats and heat cords can be connected to

a thermostat in order to regulate temperatures and avoid overheating. Recommended sources of heat include the use of incandescent, halogen or ceramic globes. They produce the proper amount of heat without emitting any lighting which could be damaging for your snakes' eyes. Red globes are **not** recommended for snakes.

## Lighting

There are many benefits to providing your python with UV lighting, although it is not essential if your snake has access to natural sunlight within their enclosure. 5.0 UVB tube or compact globes are an ideal source of artificial UV/UVB lighting. If you do have a light source for your snake, make sure to imitate the natural day/night cycle and ensure it is only on for 6 - 8 hours a day as it would be in the wild. Pythons also benefit from access to unfiltered, natural light, so exposure to natural sunlight is also recommended. Please note that any lighting globes must be covered by a heat cage to ensure that it does not burn your python and cause severe damage.

## Tank

Antaresia pythons require an enclosure with adequate ground space to accommodate their needs. However, they may climb if given the opportunity, and access to branches and other climbing accessories provides strong enrichment for your snake. For an adult python, an enclosure size of 1200 x 600 x 600 is suggested by our team. The minimum size for an adult python should be no smaller than 900 x 600 x 600. Hatchlings/juveniles should be kept in a 30 x 30 x 30 sized cube either a plastic tub or a small reptile enclosure of this size. They should be kept in this smaller enclosure for their first 10-12 months, anything larger may cause your hatchling to feel insecure and stressed. Once they are too big for their hatchling enclosure you may then move them to a larger tank. It is important that any enclosure has sufficient ventilation and a secure, lockable door/and or lid.

## Substrate

The substrate of your enclosure should be something that can be easily removed for cleaning and is of no hazard to your snake. As a hatchling, some suitable options of substrate are newspaper or paper towel. These are easy to remove and replace and pose no risk to your snake. As an adult snake, options include mulch, bark, or wood shavings. These can be mixed with products such as sphagnum moss to help retain moisture which aids in your snake's shedding cycle. All substrates must be spot cleaned regularly and a full clean and replacement of substrate should be done once a month.

## Accessories

When it comes to accessorising your python's tank, the choices are up to the snake owner. We try to replicate a natural look and provide our snakes with as many natural products as possible. Using branches and sticks found outside provide your snake with accessories to climb on should they feel inclined. Accessories to hide on/within are also needed for your snake, such as hollow logs, either natural or replicas, and snake hides. This allows your snake to hide away when needed so that they can feel safe and secured. Other things that you can put within your tank are plants, either fake or real, which provides decoration and other areas of camouflage for your snake

## Cleaning

If your tank is new or used, we always recommend doing a full clean before placing any reptile inside it. This ensures that your snake is entering a hygienic environment and will not result in any unexpected health issues. We use F10 Veterinary disinfectant. This is a total spectrum disinfectant that can be used for all cleaning needs, tank and accessory alike. It is safe to use on all equipment, and it poses no harm to your animal. Start by wiping all the surfaces of your tank with disinfectant, making sure you get into the corners and any small places that may be harbouring bacteria. This includes the top, bottom, and sides of your enclosure. Once you are done sanitising with disinfectant, wipe the tank down with water to remove any disinfectant residue. You can use a wet washcloth, paper towel or approved water-based wipes. When it comes to regular cleaning, we recommend that you perform a 'spot clean' every day. This includes removing any leftover food in their tank, providing your python with fresh water, and using a sieve to dispose of any bowel movements that your python has had. If your python leaves poo on any of the accessory surfaces, such as a branch or rock, we suggest removing said accessory and cleaning it with sanitiser before returning it to their tank. When it comes to doing a 'deep clean' of your tank, we recommend doing this every month. A deep clean is when everything is removed - accessories, substrate, water bowl etc - cleaning the inside of the tank with sanitiser and then providing fresh substrate and putting everything back again. Each owner has their own way of doing things, but this is what do to ensure our pythons stay in excellent health. A clean tank is extremely important to the health and happiness of your python. Not cleaning your python's enclosure regularly can lead to health issues, such as parasites, upper respiratory infections, and fungal growths.

## Attention

Keeping pythons as pets can be extremely rewarding, especially as they are such an interesting and unique pet. Whilst they don't crave human attention the same way as a dog or cats, providing them with regular appropriate handling and stimulation can enrich their lives. This also benefits your role as a python keeper as having a snake that can be handled will make caring for your python easier. Pythons are typically docile and friendly snakes and do not mind being held. However, this will also depend on your part as an owner and the individual temperament of each snake. Like all snakes, they are likely to strike if they feel stressed or threatened. To reduce the likeliness of this, there are a few steps that you can take. Regular handling of your snake, a few times a week, to familiarise themselves with your scent and presence and moving with slow, fluid motions are two things that can assist you with snake handling. When handling your python, allow them to move freely through your hands and don't try to restrain them.

## Shedding

Pythons will shed their skin multiple times a year. If your snake is healthy and in good condition, they should shed their skin all in one go. Snakes sometimes soak themselves in their water dish during shedding to help them shed and to stay hydrated. When snakes are preparing to shed, you may notice that their eyes changed colour and their skin develops a whitish/duller sheen. Snakes eye caps, also known as spectacles, also come off during shedding. If the eye caps do not come off, do not try to remove them yourself and consult with a specialised veterinarian. During shedding snakes often lose their appetite, so don't be alarmed if your snake refuses food during this period.

**Please contact us if you need any further assistance or information.**