



LITTLE RES Q

Little RES Q's Tips for Choosing a Reptile Vet

This guide is designed for newer reptile owners looking for a veterinarian.

Tips that you can find in this guide:

- Starting off on the right foot
- Choosing a Veterinarian
- Keeping Vet Bills Manageable
- When is it time to see a Veterinarian?
- Resources



Your veterinarian is your best friend and advisor when it comes to sick reptiles.

It's difficult to spot symptoms of a sick reptile since many species show little to no signs of illness while the issue is developing. When you do see symptoms, the issue is immediate and needs to be addressed by a vet.

With experience, you may be able to diagnose and maybe even

treat some of the minor problems that arise, but your veterinarian knows the big picture.

They have access to tests, medications, and therapies that will help your reptile's well-being. They can warn you of complications and help to make sense of confusing symptoms – if you manage to find a decent reptile vet.



Starting off on the right foot

The best way to keep your veterinarian bills manageable is to strive for the best possible husbandry practices.

If your reptile does get sick, do seek advice and treatment as soon as possible. Not only will your pet suffer less, but early treatments are usually shorter, simpler, and less risky for your reptile.

Since the animals are being kept as captives, away from their natural environment, we are fully responsible for their well-being.

Choosing a Veterinarian

This is tricky. Not all vets specialize in reptiles.

Even of the ones that do, some are not familiar with updated husbandry practices.

While they can diagnose the illness, they may not be able to help you fix the habitat to prevent future problems.

Take your reptile to the vet for the first time when healthy. This is good to give your vet a baseline for your pet.

Bring a list of questions with you to your appointment and listen carefully to their answers:

- Do they recommend a large aquarium, or do they believe that a 20 gallon tank is adequate?
- Do they go to conferences to learn more about reptiles?
- Do they own any reptiles themselves?
- How many reptiles patients do they see in a year?

You can also ask on community forums for advice or

recommendations. There may be another reptile owner in your town that's scoped out the vets already!



Keeping Vet Bills Manageable

The prices for visits to the veterinarian vary greatly and while a good veterinarian costs money, the best veterinarian is not always the most expensive one.

In Canada, expect to pay around \$75 for the visit; medications are extra.

If you can't afford to pay for your reptile to see a veterinarian but you would like to help your animal, here are a few suggestions:

- Some veterinarians will treat animals at a lower cost, if the owner clearly has the desire, but not have the means to help.
- Try to find someone in a herp society who has experience with the condition your pet experiences. Maybe they can help you treat the reptile or they can help you find affordable help.
- Use the internet, books, and other reptile owners as a resource. The more you can find out about your pet's problem before seeing the veterinarian, the shorter the visit, and the more likely you can limit it to one visit and a follow-up phone call.
- Show willingness to administer treatments and medications yourself. Most veterinarians will be happy to show you how to give injections or apply medications. That way, your animal will not have to be boarded.
- Follow all instructions to the letter. This will help your pet get well faster thus, your bills will be lower.
- Once you find a veterinarian you like, establish a good working relationship. See the same person for all problems. Once a veterinarian knows you and your animals, it is often possible to get help over the phone.

- Many veterinarians have payment plans to help distribute the cost of expensive treatments over several months.
- Take all your reptiles that live in the same tank to the vet with you, even if only one is showing symptoms. Many diseases travel through water, so they may all need treatment eventually anyway. Some vets will only charge for one visit if they are all diagnosed together.

When is it Time to See a Veterinarian?

Every time you are worried.

If your reptile is sick or may be sick, and you don't know what to do, go see a veterinarian. As with people, it is much cheaper to treat the beginnings of a problem.

The money you think you are saving by putting off a visit to the doctor will be more than used later if you have an advanced disease to deal with.



“If I am worried, I go see a veterinarian for both my and the pet's sake. If you are using a home treatment, and the reptile is getting worse, go see a veterinarian. I usually give anything a few days to a week to get better. If things get better, I don't see a veterinarian. If things get worse in spite of my attempts at treatment, I see a veterinarian immediately.” - Marc Ouellette, Founder of Little RES Q

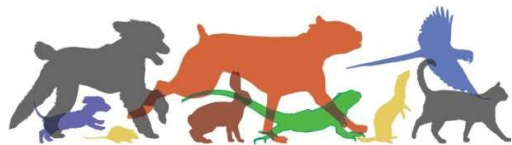
Resources:

Animal Hospital of High Park, accepting new clients. Treats reptiles and exotics. <https://www.animalhospitalhighpark.com>

Tricia's Chinese Water Dragon, Reptile, and Amphibian Care Page. (2012). Canadian Reptile Veterinarian Listing.
<http://www.triciaswaterdragon.com/canrepvt.htm>

Melissa Kaplan. Herp Care Collection. (2016)
<http://www.anapsid.org/vets/canontario.html>

Dr. Annabel Musson BSc Msc DVM, Musson Mobile Veterinary.
Serving Markham and Stouffville by appointment only.
<http://www.mmvet.ca>



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