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## CORN SNAKES

Below is some starter information for you to help you on your way in choosing and setting up your brand new family member. There is also a ton of information on corn snakes online and in your local library.

As for purchasing a corn snake. These snakes can be found at most pet stores and usually are in good health as they are all born in captivity these days. I would shop around a bit and see who has one you like as far as color and also see what pricing is like. You should expect to purchase a baby for around \$50-\$70 depending on color. When choosing an animal you want to be sure they are active and alert. You don't want a snake that just lies there and doesn't really move around as this could indicate it is unhealthy. Also, check with the store people and find out how often they are feeding it and what it has been eating. They should answer something like once a week and pinkies. Ask to hold the snake too and be sure it moves around a lot and is alert.

As for a setup: You should house the animal in a room where the temperature stays consistent. A bedroom is fine as long as you don't put the tank in front of a window or under the vent. I would suggest a minimum tank size of 20 gallons and preferably a 40-gallon tank, which will last the animal its entire life. Substrate should be Aspen Bedding as it is cheaper in the long run than the Calci-sand and keeps the enclosure smelling better. Buy the biggest bag for the best savings and put an inch to an inch and a half on the bottom of enclosure. You can spot clean the enclosure once or twice weekly and change substrate altogether once a month. You want a water bowl big enough for the animal to soak in and when they are young not too deep that it could drown. Water should be changed at least every 4 days. Use a human heating pad purchased at a drug store for a heat source and place on one half of the bottom of enclosure. Use heating pad according to temperature changes in the house and outside. I usually never use more than the medium setting. A "reptile heating pad" can cost you 3-4 times as much! You want to purchase a clamp lamp from a hardware store and a UV Day Bulb from the pet store no more than a 50-watt with 5.0 rating and this should be put on one side of the enclosure as well so that the animal can get away from it if he wants to. Usually you want some sort of structure like a hide log underneath the lamp so that the animal can bask when it wants to. The light should be on during regular daylight hours just like we have. They are active during the day and at night.

It is safe to handle the animal once a day when they are babies and as they grow older you can do more handling for greater periods.

Food wise: You should try and stick to pre-killed frozen pinkies and mice. Pinkies when they are young and then size increases with the snake. You can purchase pre-killed rodents at most pet stores these days and you want to thaw out the pinky to room temperature just by letting it sit out on a paper plate or something. Then using a pair of tongs you can offer the pinky to the snake. Feed once a week.

Corn snakes are the only snakes I do recommend as a pet snake as they are extremely nice and very un-inclined to be biters. There is a ton of information for you on the web and in the libraries to help you along and of course I am here as well. Advice is always free and we wish you luck with your new family member.