



## Gopher Snake Care Sheet:

**Species Name:**

*Pituophis catenifer annectens*

**Adult size:**

4-5ft

**Lifespan:**

15-20 Years

**Breeding age:**

3 years



Gopher snakes, often kept as pets, are renowned for their docile nature and manageable size, typically reaching 3-5 feet in length. With striking patterns resembling rattlesnakes, they're non-venomous and pose no threat to handlers. Their adaptability to various environments makes them suitable for captivity, thriving in well-maintained terrariums with proper heating and hiding spots. Gopher snakes readily accept frozen-thawed rodents as a staple diet, simplifying feeding routines. Due to their calm demeanour, they're excellent choices for beginner reptile enthusiasts. Regular handling fosters trust and diminishes defensive behaviours, resulting in rewarding interactions with these fascinating serpents.

## **Housing:**

**Enclosure:** A spacious terrarium or vivarium is essential. A mid-large plastic breeding box is suitable for hatchlings however, they will quickly outgrow these and will be much happier as an adult in a 3-4ft wooden vivarium. Ensure secure ventilation and escape-proof locks.

**Substrate:** Use a substrate like aspen bedding, cypress mulch, or coconut coir to mimic their natural environment. Maintain a depth that allows burrowing.

**Hides:** Provide multiple hiding spots on both the warm and cool sides of the enclosure. This helps reduce stress and provides a sense of security.

## **Temperature and Lighting:**

**Temperature:** Maintain a temperature gradient. The warm side should be around 29-32°C while the cool side can be around 24-26°C. Use an under-tank heating pad or heat lamp to achieve this gradient.

**Lighting:** Gopher Snakes will be happy with standard lighting from a heat bulb or ambient lighting from your home, they have no requirements for UVB however, if you chose to add UV lighting Gopher Snakes require Ferguson zone 2 lighting.

## **Humidity:**

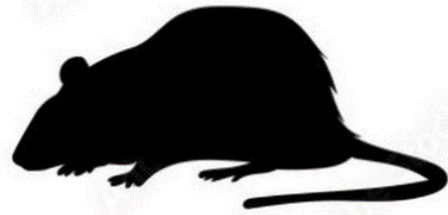
Keep the overall humidity levels in the range of 40% to 50%. This range simulates the conditions of their natural habitat, which includes varying humidity levels in different environments.

**Humid Hide:** Create a designated humid hide on the cooler side of the enclosure. This hide should have a substrate that retains moisture well, such as sphagnum moss or coconut coir. This area allows your snake to retreat when shedding its skin or when it needs a boost in humidity.

**Shedding Assistance:** If your corn snake is having difficulty shedding, increasing the humidity temporarily can be beneficial. You can do this by lightly misting the enclosure or providing a damp box.

## **Feeding:**

Diet: Corn snakes are carnivorous, and their diet consists mainly of appropriately sized mice or rats. Hatchlings can be fed pinkie mice, while adults may consume larger prey. Feed juveniles every 5-7 days, and adults every 10-14 days.



## **Handling:**

Handle your snake regularly to build trust and reduce stress. Avoid handling immediately after feeding to prevent regurgitation.

## **Health and Maintenance:**

Health Check: Regularly inspect your snake for signs of shedding problems, mites, or any health issues. Ensure proper humidity during shedding.

Shedding: Provide a humid hide during shedding to aid in the process. If your snake is having difficulty shedding, consult a vet.

Cleanliness: Keep the enclosure clean by removing waste promptly, and perform a more thorough clean at least once a month.

## **Behaviour:**

Gopher snakes are generally docile, making them excellent pets for both beginners and experienced reptile keepers. They are known for their climbing abilities, so provide branches or other climbing structures.

Successfully caring for a Gopher snake involves creating a habitat that mimics their natural environment and maintaining optimal conditions for their physical and mental well-being. Regular observation and interaction will foster a strong bond between you and your captivating serpent companion. Always consult with a veterinarian experienced in reptile care for specific health concerns or questions.