

MOUNT PLEASANT HERPS

Breeding boas, pythons and colubrids

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Hatchling Feeding & Handling Instructions

Your new Mount Pleasant Herps hatchling is used to eating once every 7 days. Since one week of age, it has been eating what is called an extra-small pinkie mouse. Depending on the size of your hatchling when you take it home, you should continue to feed it one *extra-small* pinkie once per week, or you may graduate it to eating one *small* pinkie every week, depending on how large your hatchling is. A hatchling can consume a pinkie mouse whose diameter is 50% greater than its own without problems.

As your snake grows bigger, it will require larger mice for its meal. When you note that your snake is almost gulping the mouse it is swallowing it so quickly, it means it is time to graduate to feeding a larger sized mouse.

At Mount Pleasant Herps, we buy our feeder mice frozen. We thaw them in jars of very hot water changing the water often until the water no longer cools from the cold mice. This usually takes 2-4 water changes and up to 20 minutes, depending on how many mice are in the jar. Thawing one pinkie mouse requires only 5 minutes and two water changes. Once the mouse is fully thawed, it will feel warm and squishy to touch.

Pick the thawed pinkie from the hot water with rubber-tipped feeding tweezers and roll it on a paper towel to dry it so that cage bedding will not stick to the mouse. Feed it immediately to your hatchling, while the mouse is still nice and warm. Mount Pleasant Herps hatchlings are accustomed to being offered their mouse from rubber-tipped feeding tweezers, mouse nose first. It is easier for the hatchling to swallow the mouse starting with the head. Once your hatchling has taken hold of the pinkie, you should release hold of it. Always watch your hatchling to be sure it has swallowed the mouse easily and completely.

Occasionally, the hatchling will panic a little and strike the mouse without taking hold of it. If this happens, just place the mouse on the floor of the enclosure near your hatchling. Close up its enclosure and go away. It's just a little nervous but will eat after you give it some privacy. Go back to check if the mouse was eaten after 30 minutes or so. If not, remove the mouse and toss it in the garbage. Try feeding your hatchling again in a day or two with a new pinkie.

Always avoid handling your snake during the two days following feeding.

Nervousness from change is not uncommon with snakes of any age. Giving your hatchling privacy and quiet without attempts to handle it for the first few weeks will build its confidence in you. As you establish your role as food provider the hatchling will become eager for your approach. Once it is taking the mouse from you easily and without hesitation, you will know trust is being established. Begin with short handling sessions as if practicing to be held. Soon your snake will be fine with being handled and will even enjoy excursions outside of its enclosure while being carried by you. Please remember that baby snakes tend to slip and fall off since they are still learning to move around and cling to you for safety.

REPTILES CAN CARRY ORGANISMS THAT MAY CAUSE ILLNESS IN PEOPLE. ALWAYS WASH YOUR HANDS AFTER HANDLING A REPTILE OR CLEANING ITS ENCLOSURE. DISPOSE OF REPTILE ITEMS OR SOILED BEDDING WHERE NO OTHER CREATURES CAN ACCESS IT.

Thank you for choosing Mount Pleasant Herps for your new pet snake! Every year we will have new types and colors of hatchlings!

If you have any questions, we are always happy to help!
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