

# Quarantine

## Why is it needed?

Just like any Human, Animal or Amphibian, Leopard Geckos (Reptile) can also get sick or injured and this is an unfortunate situation we must deal with as responsible Owners. There are numerous issues that can cause the need for quarantine and it is vitally important to ensure the enclosure is set up properly and precautions are maintained as needed during the duration of it. **The primary reason for quarantine is to ensure new leos are not carrying Parasites or other communicable diseases into the home.** The transfer of Parasites or other diseases can be devastating to existing Reptile collections and can often have fatal results. You are never guaranteed to have a new leo be free of these issues. This is a necessity whether you purchased from a reputable Breeder, Pet Store, Rehoming, or rescue. Other events such as shipping or injuries can cause severe stress which can also lead to serious health issues .

**\*\***The purpose of quarantine is that you can keep your leo separated and easily monitor. By monitoring your will be able to ensure the leo is eating and has normal Bowel Movements. In this situation, you will notice issues faster and it is easier to collect fecal samples as needed.

This type of enclosure is technically considered a Clean Set-up, however, it is often called a Sterile Set-up. This can help prevent any Parasites or other Contagions from spreading as some are lethal in nature and cannot be cured. If you desire to put the leo in the final setup immediately and the leo has Parasites or other Contagions you might have to throw away most of the stuff inside since it is basically impossible to clean.

## How do you do it?

**Duration:** Ideally, any Quarantine should be 12 weeks. This way you have enough time to have the fecals checked, notice any other health issues and Veterinarian examination if warranted. Depending on if issues are found or type of issues, the quarantine could be longer.

**Setup:** The setup should be maintained as clean as possible and should be done in a separate room from other reptiles if feasible and outside of the final enclosure. Great choices for the enclosure are plastic tubs with locking lid as they can be cleaned easily and can be discarded afterwards if needed with minimal loss in cost.

A minimum of 24"/60cm x 12"/30cm x 6"/15cm. Small glass enclosures such as a minimum of 10G/38L are also fine to utilize.

**Substrate:** Paper Towels are the preferred substrate for a quarantine enclosure. They should be changed daily or more often if leo has any issues with runny stools or Parasites.

**Hides:** It is preferred these be made out of plastic and potentially disposable until a clean parasite result is provided. Once a clean parasite results are obtained you can add regular Hides. Utilizing regular hides before a clean parasite result could mean you may have to discard the hides as some parasites such as Cryptosporidium are very hard to kill and can live on surfaces for several months.

**Humid Hide:** Paper Towels are the preferred substrate. Natural materials such as Eco Earth or Sphagnum Moss could harbour bacteria or parasites and possibly prolong treatment of a sick leo. Paper Towels should be changed daily and maintained moist as the leo will need the humidity for shedding.

**Water:** Disposable dish until clean parasite results are obtained.

Calcium Dish: Disposable dish until clean parasite results are obtained. A Milk Jug Lid is great for this.

**Heat:** If possible, you should utilize an overhead heat source just as you would in the final enclosure. However, this is not feasible for a plastic tub and better suited for a glass quarantine enclosure. For a plastic tube the use of a Heat Pad/Under Tank Heater(UTH) will be the primary heat source. Any heat source must be hooked up to a proper thermostat with the probe placed appropriately. The thermostat probe for the Heat Pad will be sandwiched between the pad and the bottom of the plastic tub or glass enclosure.

Everything in the setup is designed to be easily maintained, cleaned and disinfected with as minimal cost and burden to the owner.

**Fecals:** Very important if not the main part of the quarantine. Fecal samples should be collected and as fresh as possible without the urate. Contact your Veterinarian beforehand to find out their protocol for accepting Fecals, result turnaround timeframe and costs. If you mail in your Fecals to a testing facility, a good plan is to collect poop over the weekend and send it to the laboratory on Monday. Many locations do not require the need for a Veterinarian to get a Fecal test completed. If you need information relating to mail in fecal testing please contact a Group Administrator or Moderator and we will assist getting you the needed information and contacts. If you are having issues obtaining a fecal from the leo due to failure to have

a bowel movement, a Vet visit would be warranted to be sure the leo is not constipated.

Keep in mind that you do not have to have every leo checked out by a Vet unless something specifically needs to be addressed in person. This can cause even more stress for the leo and add an unnecessary financial burden. If Leo has parasites some Vets will explain the treatment plan and provide you the medication (after you showed him the results of the fecals) and don't need to examine the leopard gecko. Other vets prefer to examine the leo before giving you the medication. When you are in doubt you can always call your vet or take your leo just to be safe. Taking the leo to the Vet during quarantine only makes sense if you notice anything really odd, injury or the leo is having bad symptoms though. Needing a worm treatment isn't necessarily a reason to put the leo through the additional stress.

The recommended tests you should have performed are 1-2 for oxyurids, flagellates, amoeba and 2-3 tests for Cryptosporidium (PCR) done. A leo that tests positive for Cryptosporidium is highly contagious, minimal treatment available for symptoms, and is absolutely 100% lethal. One test is not enough as you easily get a wrong-negative result as Cryptosporidium Oocysts are not in every fecal so you need more than one test.

**Other:** Wash hands before and after any contact with your leo and other reptiles. It is generally advised to not have contact with other reptiles until clean fecal results are obtained. Utilize different tongs etc to feed the leo and never use the tongs to feed other reptiles. If you have access to exam gloves (Latex etc.) they can be utilized as an additional barrier to parasites etc. Give the leo time to settle in a bit before you start offering food. If you try to feed immediately he/she may decline the food. Generally, the 3rd day for a feeding attempt is fine

Finally, as indicated above you should clean the setup daily to prevent the leo from getting infected again (for example if the parasite is found in the fecals and you do not clean it. Even if you start a treatment the leo still has contact to the parasite and could get infected again).

Main Sources used:

„leopardgecko“ by Karsten Griebshammer and Gunther Kohler

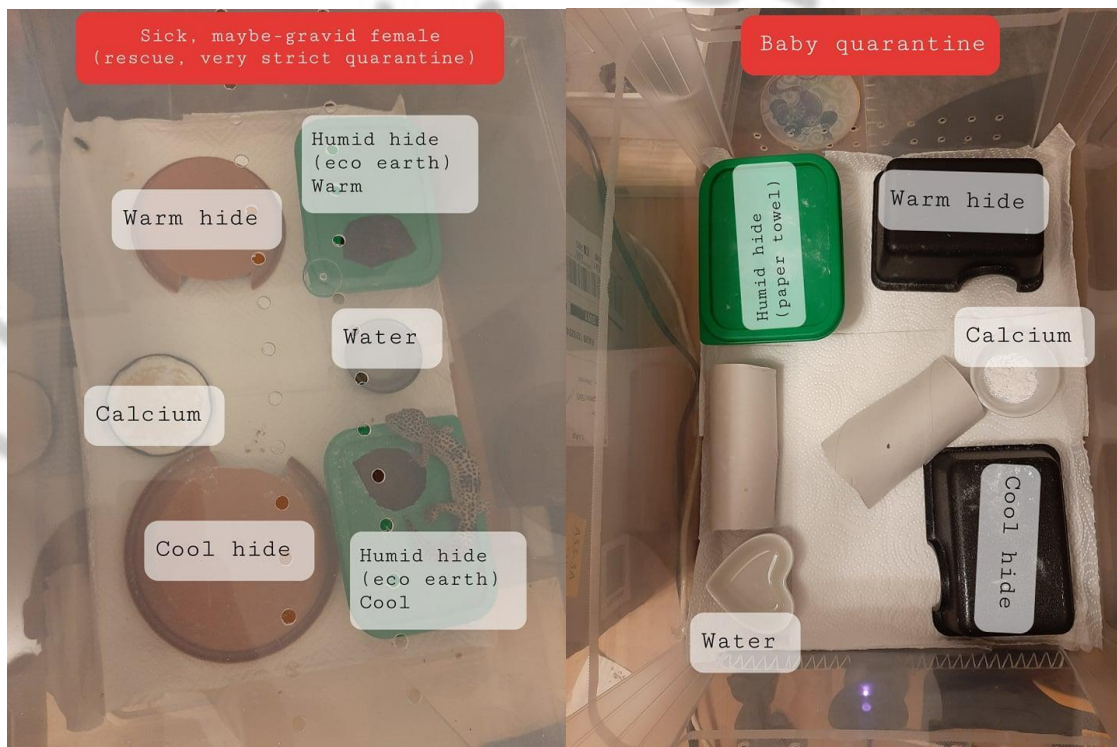
<https://www.der-leopardgecko.de/>

**Example for a quarantine setup:**





picture by Victoria French





Photos courtesy of Mriam Meuller

**Sickly female** = known negative for crypto, has pinworms, easy to disinfect interior but no big danger of needing to throw everything away

**Baby** = nothing seemingly wrong, just very small which is why I don't trust it with eco earth, hole for humid hide in front for easier access

**Sick, maybe-gravid rescue female** = unknown crypto status yet, therefore only stuff to throw away in the worst case, warm/cool humid hide in case she's gravid for more egg laying options (known pinworms).

**Sick, rescue male** = unknown crypto status yet, therefore only stuff that can be thrown away in worst case (known pinworms)