

## **The First Days with your Bearded Dragon**

You just brought your Bearded Dragon home now what? First and foremost, RELAX! These dragons are very easy to upkeep and only require the simplest of care! If you cover the basics of a properly heated basking rock, UV light, proper food/water, and calcium you will be successful. You have to remember that these dragons have only seen, heard, and smelled a small sample of things in their short lives. The new environment with new people, new sounds, and smells might confuse them the first day or two. It is best to make the first few days in your dragon's new home as smooth and stress free as you can.

Limit the handling of your new baby as little as possible for the first few weeks. Give your dragon time to settle in and understand that its new home is safe! Trust me, in a few days your dragon will think it's the King or Queen of its new home! If you do have to handle your dragon, remember that it could try to jump from your hand if startled. Always hold it low over a soft surface (like carpet) just in case. You can also gently place the base of their tail between two fingers to prevent them from jumping. After a few months this won't be an issue and they will calm down as they become used to you.

Don't worry if your dragon doesn't want to eat. This is COMMON! Most baby dragons will wait a day or two before eating when put into a new environment. Offer food sparingly at first, and if the new baby eats, you can continue to see how much it wants to eat. If it ignores food, give it some more time! Always make sure the insects offered are small enough for the baby to easily swallow. You can also offer small pieces of greens (mustard, turnip, dandelion, or collard greens). Make sure the leafy portion is offered so it is easier to chew. I offer greens in the morning and bugs later in the afternoon.

Offer water after a day. I usually drip a drop of water from a small spray bottle/dropper onto the dragon's nose and watch to see if it opens its mouth and drinks. If so, drip a few more drops of water on its nose. If it ignores the water, hold off on offering any more for another day to not stress it out.

This will help keep the baby hydrated (remember they are from an arid environment, so it does not take a lot). After the first few days I would offer water this way daily, but no less than every other day until your baby is comfortable drinking from a shallow water dish (You may still need to drip water into a dish so they can see the water and learn to come to it and drink)

Try to limit anything that could be stressful to the baby. Dogs or cats within eyesight might scare the dragon. If need be, you can cover the front or sides of the caging to

prevent the dragon from seeing these things. This is only temporary and not likely needed after a few weeks.

Another important part of care is to watch how your dragon uses its basking spot. If it is always right under the center of the heat source, it might not be warm enough. Try to get the temperature around 100 degrees. If your dragon is off to the side of the heat source, it might be too hot. You can move the heat source a few inches away, or lower the basking spot somehow. Giving the dragon an option to move around and pick the perfect spot with the right temperature is important.

These are just some basics to help you get started. If you have any more questions or concerns, feel free to reach out to me and ask away! Always remember you are starting out with a well-adjusted healthy baby! Relax and enjoy your new dragon!!