

## Box Turtle - Diet

The most common medical condition for which box turtles are presented to veterinarians is malnutrition. Box turtles are omnivorous meaning they eat both plants and animals. Their primary diet consists of whole animals, such as mealworms, snails, slugs, earthworms, and other invertebrates that may live in their natural habitat. These should comprise from 1/3 to 1/2 of their diet.

Box turtles also should be fed fruits and vegetables, as roughage is a necessary part of their diet. Fruits that can be offered include berries of all types, bananas, pears, peaches, papayas, guavas etc. Always make sure that all seeds and pits are removed. Vegetables that can be offered include fresh or thawed frozen mixed vegetables, squash, yams, carrots, pea, alfalfa sprouts, green beans etc. Do not offer lettuce as it has no nutritional value. make sure all fruits and vegetables are cut or chopped into appropriately sized pieces. Fruits and vegetables should comprise between 1/3 to 1/2 of their diet.

Other foods that can be offered occasionally in addition to the above items may include cottage cheese, chopped hard boiled or scrambled egg, grated cheese, and yogurt.

Vitamin and mineral supplementation is advised but should not be overdone. Powdered vitamin and mineral supplements can be sprinkled over moist food to ensure adherence.

Reptiles, as with most wild or exotic species, instinctively hide illnesses as long as possible. This is a survival instinct which does not diminish in captivity. Once an illness has presented itself, it usually is due to the fact that the animal can no longer hide the symptoms. At this point, the illnesses or diseases may have been present for quite a while and thus have progressed to a point that medical treatment may or may not help. Ensuring a proper diet and proper husbandry is essential for all reptiles and exotic pets, and can help prevent potential health concerns

