

# Common Snake Diseases

**Anorexia** - defined as a lack of appetite. May be due to internal illness, intestinal parasites, low environmental temperature, intestinal blockage, egg production in females or normal seasonal decrease in metabolism

## *Symptoms*

1. Lack of willingness to eat

## *Diagnosis*

1. Fecal exam for eggs or larvae or worm-type parasites and warm saline examination for protozoal parasites
2. Oral examination, abdominal palpation and general health examination by a qualified reptile veterinarian
3. Xray to check for eggs
4. Normal seasonal condition in some python and constrictor species from December to March
5. Blood chemistry analysis and complete blood count in cases non responsive to Routine treatment

## *Treatment*

1. Proper treatment of intestinal parasites
2. Correcting internal disease condition
3. Maintaining proper temperature ( Usually 80-85 degrees ) for the species in question

## *Prevention*

1. Yearly veterinary examination with fecal analysis

**Blister Disease** - A condition found in boa constrictors and pythons. The disease causes a blistering of the scales on the under side of the snake. Can be caused by either a viral disease or by urine scald from an unclean cage. This can be fatal in some cases.

## *Symptoms*

1. Blister and/or scab formation on the scales of the abdomen and tail.
2. Dysecdysis ( improper shed )
3. Anorexia

## *Diagnosis*

1. Biopsy
2. History of inadequate cage cleaning

## *Treatment*

1. Long term antibiotic therapy
2. Soaking in antiseptic solution or soap and topical wound care

## *Prevention*

1. Cleaning and disinfecting cage weekly
2. Veterinary health check of new purchases

**Stomatitis (Mouth Rot)** - Bacterial infection in mouth.

*Symptoms*

1. Red specs or splotches on gum tissue
2. Open mouth breathing more than usual
3. Bedding sticking to gums and skin around mouth

*Diagnosis*

1. Veterinary Examination
2. Bacterial culture and sensitivity

*Treatment*

1. Long term antibiotic therapy determined by culture and sensitivity report
2. Use of oral cleansing wash

*Prevention*

1. Cleaning and disinfecting cage - weekly
2. Yearly veterinary examination

**Skin Mites**

*Symptoms*

1. Black specs under scales in a variety of places on snake's body
2. Tiny red dots under and between scales

*Diagnosis*

1. Veterinary examination and analysis of skin scraping under microscope

*Treatment*

1. Ivermectin oral medication ( repeated in 2 weeks )
2. Washing skin with an antiseptic soap to remove majority of mites

*Prevention*

1. Veterinary examination within 1st week of purchase
2. Cleaning cage during and after veterinary treatment