



## Pet Turtle Facts

- ✓ Turtles are reptiles, which means they're cold-blooded
- ✓ Pet turtles are either aquatic (water) turtles, like the Red Eared Slider, or terrestrial (land) turtles, like Box Turtles.
- ✓ Turtles can grow to be over 30 cm long and live for over 50 years!
- ✓ **Turtles are a "look at me!" pet.** They do not like to be picked up.

## Getting A Turtle

- ✓ Turtles can be fun but you need to take good care of them to keep them healthy. Always talk to your parents before getting a pet.
- ✓ Pick a turtle from the store that looks clean, healthy and is moving around. Never bring home a turtle from outside.



## Caring For Your Turtle



Turtles eat all kinds of stuff from mice to worms to insects, as well as vegetables and fruit. They need to be kept in a big tank with special lights and just the right temperature, and water turtles need a place to swim.

### Handling Your Turtle

Being picked up is very scary for your turtle, so only do it if you have to. Hold your turtle by the shell halfway between the front and back legs so it can't scratch or bite you. Tell an adult if you get bitten by accident. **Always wash your hands really well as soon as you put your turtle down.**

### Cleaning Your Turtle's Home

- ✓ It is very important to keep your turtle's home clean so it doesn't get sick, or make you sick!
- ✓ Make sure your turtle always has nice clean fresh water and that its leftover food doesn't go bad.
- ✓ Use a "poop scoop" to get rid of the turtle poop every day.
- ✓ Ask an adult to clean the whole tank once a month.
- ✗ **Never put anything from the turtle tank, or your turtle, in the kitchen or anywhere near food.**
- ✓ Remind everyone to wash their hands really well after touching the turtle or its tank, even if they don't look dirty.

## Is My Turtle Sick?

If you think your turtle is sick, tell an adult. Your turtle may need to go to the veterinarian to find out what's wrong. Some of the signs you might see if your turtle is not feeling well are:

- ✗ Moving less than normal
- ✗ Snotty nose
- ✗ Weird patches of skin or shell
- ✗ Eating less than normal
- ✗ Very soft or runny poop
- ✗ Bad smell

## Can My Turtle Make *ME* Sick?



**Yes.** Most turtles have bacteria in their poop that can make people very sick, especially kids and people who are already sick from something else. Sometimes the bacteria also make your turtle sick, but most of the time your turtle will be fine and you can't tell if these bad bacteria, which are called *Salmonella*, are there.

- ✗ Every time you touch your turtle, or something your turtle has touched, you can get these bacteria on your hands. If they get in your mouth or on food you may get sick.
- ✓ It is very important to wash your hands right away if you touch your turtle or put your hands in the turtle tank.
- ✗ Don't touch your face or anything else until you have washed your hands so you don't get the bacteria in your mouth by accident or spread the bacteria around.
- ✗ Don't let your turtle wander around anywhere in your house, even in your room.