



# ASSOCIATION OF SUGAR GLIDER VETERINARIANS™

## **Proper Diet and Nutrition for Sugar Gliders**

### **PART 1:**

Hi, my name is Dr. David Brust, and I've been a practicing exotic veterinarian for the last 25 years. I'm the author of "*Sugar Gliders: A Complete Veterinary Care Guide*" – and I'm also the president of the Association of Sugar Glider Veterinarians.

The purpose of this video series is to cut through all the internet misinformation out there, and teach owners like you the best - veterinary-approved - ways to raise and care for sugar gliders.

Now, just to make sure we're all on the same page here, sugar gliders are also commonly known as "sugar bears" and "honey gliders" – and with that in mind, the goal of this video is to give you the real facts about nutrition and which diet is the best for these little guys.

The topic of which diet is best for sugar gliders is a hotly debated subject out on the internet – with literally dozens of amateur websites professing that this or that diet is "approved" or "the best". In almost every case these diets are homemade concoctions that are extremely expensive and time-consuming to make.

As a practicing exotic Vet for over 25 years now, I can tell you for a fact that over 90% of all the health problems we vets see when it comes to sugar gliders are directly related to malnutrition caused by improper diet. Right now, the homemade diets most commonly promoted out on the internet go by names like: HPW, BML, Priscilla's, Leadbeater's and a wide variety of hybrids.

The problem with these diets isn't so much what's in them – but much more that they are just not practical for the average person to use on a daily basis. For example, most of these homemade diets require the owners to mix up some complicated combination of ingredients like: eggs, honey, saps, bee pollen, gums, baby food, vitamin supplements, and exotic protein powders. Not only are these items hard for most people to find – but they are also extremely expensive and hard to prepare. Then, on top of that, many of these same websites also go on to say that owners must also to feed them things like live crickets and mealworms that have been gut-loaded with calcium and other vitamins.

**For more information, go to: [www.ASGV.org](http://www.ASGV.org)**

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Well, even though these diets may be fine “in theory”, out in the real world they are so complicated and so expensive that the average owner either doesn’t follow them completely – or ends up making their own “modified” version based on whatever they can find and is easiest to make. Over time, it’s been my experience as a Vet that only a very small handful of the real “die hard” – “old school” - sugar glider owners actually stick to these complicated diets. Now, of course these people think everybody should go to all this extra work like they do- but the truth is that most people who try one of these diets just give up on them in a very short period of time.

Now, just to put this in a little perspective, this kind of thing is nothing new in exotic pet medicine. Like I said, I’ve been practicing for over 25 years now, and we Vets had the same problem back in the mid 1970’s and 80’s with exotic birds. For the first several years after these birds became popular, amateur bird lovers were pushing a handful of very complicated, homemade diets out there that tried to replicate what the animal would be eating out in the wild. But, just like with sugar gliders, they were too complex and expensive for most people to follow.

Then, eventually, once veterinary science learned more about the specific dietary needs of these birds, reputable pet food manufacturer’s came out with commercial pellet foods which were balanced – and much more nutritious and practical than all the homemade diets.

Well, the same is absolutely true for sugar gliders. In the last decade, veterinary science has learned a lot about the precise dietary requirements of sugar gliders. Because of this, a handful of very effective commercial pellet foods for sugar gliders have been developed that are proven to be extremely nutritious and well-balanced. Some of these pellet foods have as many as eighty different nutrients – and are much less expensive and easy to prepare than the outdated homemade diets.

In fact, as a part of our ongoing scientific research for other Veterinarians, we’ve extensively studied the topic of pelleted foods – and the best ones we’ve found are a product called “Glide-R-Chow™” and another called “NutriMax™”.

Nutrimax™ is made by a company called “Vet’s Pride” – and Glide-R-Chow™ is made by the Pocket Pets organization. The two are very similar, and it typically costs around \$5/month - per animal- to feed them one of these products. Either is an excellent choice as the main staple food for sugar gliders of any age.

**Nutri-Max™**  
**www.VetsPride.com**

**Glide-R-Chow™**  
**www.SugarBears.com**

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Now, having said all this, the field of animal nutrition is constantly evolving – and one of the most INTERESTING new developments for sugar gliders in recent years has been the introduction of “SMART” dietary enhancements. Basically, what’s happened is that leading sugar glider nutritionists have teamed up with top Vets and taken the best of the old ‘homemade’ diets I mentioned earlier – like HPW and BML – and made all-in-one, “SMART” versions of them, where the ONLY thing owners have to do now is just add WATER – and they’re all set. Not only are these “smart” diets now well-balanced and highly-nutritious, but they are also extremely affordable and gliders tend to LOVE the taste and variety. Now, the two smart diets that I like best are called “SMART HPW” by VetsPride – and “Glider Gravy” which is made by the Pocket Pets organization.

**Smart-HPW™**  
**www.VetsPride.com**

**Glide-R-Gravy™**  
**www.SugarBears.com**

Either one of these is an excellent ADDITION to their pellets, and the way I feed them to my own personal gliders is just to pour about 1 tablespoon over their pellets each night – so it’s kinda like a “gravy” on TOP of their pellets – and they absolutely LOVE it!..