



ASSOCIATION OF SUGAR GLIDER VETERINARIANS™

Proper Diet and Nutrition for Sugar Gliders **PART 2:**

Now, having said all that, it's important to point out that whether you use one of these pellet foods – or decide you're willing to go to the extra time and expense of following one of the homemade diets – this is only the first part of a sugar glider's complete daily diet.

The ideal sugar glider diet consists of three basic components. The first is the core nutritional “foundation” – which are the pellets AND GRAVY we've been talking about so far on this video. Generally speaking, this should make up about 75% of the animals daily dietary intake.

The remaining 25% a sugar glider's daily diet should be fresh fruits and vegetables. Just like with the complicated homemade diets – fruits & veggies are also a hotly debated subject out on the internet. Amateur enthusiasts often claim that fruits and vegetables should make up as much as 50%-75% of a sugar glider's diet, but that is not only false – but it's actually dangerous to the animal's health.

In many ways, sugar gliders are a lot like human children – in that if you give them a choice between eating sweet things – or things that are good for them – they will almost always eat the sweet things until they are full. In fact, this is one of the main problems with a lot of the homemade internet-based diets – because almost all of them encourage laying out a “whole smorgasboard” of different foods at the same time - like a bowl of the homemade concoction, another bowl of fruits & vegetables, a third bowl of dry food, and a whole range of other things like crickets and mealworms.

Again, not only is this completely unnecessary – but it can be dangerous to your glider's health. The simple fact is that sugar gliders love to eat sweet foods like fruits, yogurts - and especially insects – and just like little kids, if you give them a choice, they will almost always eat these things first – and instead of – other foods that are actually better for them. Then, over time, the more an animal is fed these kinds of “junk foods”, the less they will want to eat nutritious ones. Before long, the animal ends up at an office like

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mine in terrible shape – with a whole bunch of different health problems – and unfortunately many times they’re so far gone that we can’t save them.

Essentially, it would be no different than if you fed a human child a “junk food diet” of candy, cereal and soda pop all day – and then for desert put out a plate of broccoli. They just won’t eat it. The difference with sugar gliders is that since they only weight a few ounces, they can get sick pretty quickly – so it’s best not to risk it.

Now, that being said, always remember that fresh fruits and vegetables should be limited to only about 25% of your glider’s daily dietary intake. In most cases, this would be no more than 1/8th of a slice of apple– or roughly the equivalent in other fruits/vegetables – per day, per animal.

Now, the last essential element of a healthy sugar glider’s daily diet is a calcium-based multivitamin. Many of the most serious health problems we Vets see in sugar gliders are directly related to poor vitamin and mineral supplementation. Among other things, these animals need a very specific ratio of calcium, phosphorous and Vitamin D3 – and without it they can develop crippling bone disease, paralysis, and even die.

When it comes to picking out the best multivitamin for your sugar glider, it’s important to make sure and get one that is specifically made just for sugar gliders – and not other animals. Actually, the best thing to do is to get a vitamin supplement that is specifically formulated to work together with the rest of your glider’s food. For example, each of the pellet foods we mentioned earlier has a specific multivitamin supplement that is made to go with it. Between the two, they work hand-in-hand - like a “1 – 2 punch” - that meets all your glider’s daily nutritional needs; so don’t “mix & match” when it comes to their food & vitamins.

Now, the scientific field of animal nutrition is constantly evolving, so just to recap - based on the latest nutritional science and over a decade of field research - the diet we recommend is 75% pellet food AND GRAVY, 25% fresh fruits and vegetables, and a multi-vitamin supplement that is designed specifically to match the pellet food. All totaled, this should cost you somewhere around \$10-\$15 per month – per animal – making sugar gliders one of the most economical pets a person can own! ☺

Now, having said all that, let’s move on to how to feed this diet to your gliders. First, assuming that you are using a pelleted food & GRAVY as the main component of their diet, just keep about 1 ounce of this food – per animal – in their cage at all times. Just put about 10-15 pellets – per animal – in the bowl every day, and cover them with about 1-2 tablespoons of gravy each night. You just do this once a day, and this EASILY takes care of the main part of their diet.

Then, every night just before you go to bed, put the fresh fruits and vegetables in the cage. Try not to dice them up into small pieces because they will dry out quickly and

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deprive the animals of important juices. Lastly, every other night, sprinkle the multivitamin lightly over the vegetables – and you're all set.

Now, if you want to give them a little extra treat, a couple times a week you can also put a small piece of wheat bread into their cage at night. They'll love it, but just make sure to only do it NO MORE than a couple times a week.

Well, that's really about all there is to it. ☺ As you can see if you follow the diet we've just laid out for you, feeding a sugar glider is not any more complicated than a cat or a dog – and it's a heck of a lot cheaper. Now of course, just like with any pet, you are free to make it as complicated – and expensive- as you like, but the point is that it doesn't have to be a big, expensive ordeal.

So, about the only other thing that we still need to cover on this video is this big plastic box here. This is one important piece of equipment. It's basically what we call a “dining room” – and if you make one of these little beauties, it's going to save you a lot of time, trouble, and money!

The thing is, sugar gliders are playful, and they love to pick up their food and throw it all around. They also like to poop and pee while they are jumping around in their cage. Because of these little habits, if you don't have one of these dining rooms in your cage, you'll find that about 80% or more of the food you put in their cage every day gets wasted and ends up in the bottom of the cage. Even though their food isn't exceedingly expensive, it can still add up very quickly and become a big waste of money, so that's why we recommend that you make one of these little beauties.

Now, basically, it's just a plastic shoe box turned upside down with a hole cut in each end. Pretty much any kind of plastic bowl or box will work, but you just have to make sure it's about 4 inches tall, and big enough that it will hold all their food and the animals at the same time. They work really well because when it's time to change the food, you just pull the whole thing out - and everything is right there and easy to clean. It also cuts down a lot on any mess around the cage, so it really helps keep things neat and tidy.

Well, that's about it for this video, I know it was a long one, but this is an important topic that can be very confusing, expensive, and dangerous if you take the wrong advice. ☺

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