What to feed a baby lizard

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Fridge cheat sheet

FOUND A WILD BABY LIZARD?

1. Healthy baby lizard in a yard or garden? Leave it.
2. Don't keep or feed a wild lizard.
3. Never pick a lizard up by the tail.
4. Injured? Wear gloves, put it in a ventilated box lined with a dry cloth, keep it warm and quiet, skip food and call a rehabber.
5. In the Southwest, leave Gila monsters alone.

Find a wildlife rehabilitator near you: ahnow.org

Found a reptile? What to do (IWRC): theiwrc.org

Should I help this wild animal? (University of Illinois): vetmed.illinois.edu

✓ Safe staples

- **Crickets** – Staple; gut-loaded, dusted, eye-gap size
- **Dubia roaches** – Staple; nymphs for babies, dusted
- **Black soldier fly larvae** – Small, soft, calcium-rich; still dust
- **Silkworms** – Soft staple; eye-gap size
- **Hornworms** – Soft, juicy; captive-bred only
- **Flightless fruit flies** – For tiny hatchlings; flightless cultures
- **Collard, mustard, turnip greens** – Daily salad for beardies and iguanas
- **Dandelion greens** – Calcium-rich green, unsprayed
- **Bell pepper** – Chopped into the salad
- **Crested gecko diet (Pangea, Repashy)** – Cresties: complete powder, daily for babies
- **Water and misting** – Shallow dish; mist for anoles and cresties

! Small amounts only

- **Mealworms** – 1 or 2 small ones; fatty, tough shell
- **Superworms** – Fatty, large; older lizards, sparingly
- **Waxworms and butterworms** – Fatty treat, once a week at most
- **Earthworms** – Feeder worms only, adults, now and then
- **Kale and cabbage** – Rotate in; goitrogens
- **Romaine and leaf lettuce** – Safe; weaker than collards
- **Squash and carrots** – Grated; smaller share of the salad
- **Banana** – Plant eaters only; fruit 5% or less
- **Apple** – A few small pieces, rare treat
- **Strawberries, blueberries, grapes** – Cut small, occasional treat

✕ Never feed

- **Avocado, onion, garlic, rhubarb** – Toxic or oxalate-heavy
- **Fireflies and ladybugs** – Deadly, even one
- **Wild-caught bugs and worms** – Pesticides, parasites, toxic species
- **Spinach, chard, beet greens** – Oxalates block calcium
- **Iceberg lettuce and celery** – Mostly water, no nutrition
- **Oranges and citrus** – On PetMD's do-not-feed list
- **Pinky mice** – Adult-only treat; never for babies
- **Raw meat and eggs** – Not on any feeding list
- **Dog and cat food** – Too much protein, fat, vitamin D
- **Milk and cheese** – Can't digest dairy; water only
- **Bread, chocolate and snacks** – Processed food lizards can't digest

Feeding schedule

Age	Looks like	Food	Amount	How often
First days after hatching	Fresh from the egg; may show a yolk scar on the belly and has not shed yet	Nothing needed while the yolk lasts. Have heat, UVB and a shallow water dish ready	Offer 1 or 2 tiny insects or fruit flies once it has shed, often around day 3	From the first shed: daily
0–3 months	Hatchling; grows fast and sheds often	Insect eaters and beardies: small gut-loaded insects. Beardies: about 70% insects plus a daily salad. Iguanas: chopped greens only. Cresties: powdered diet	What it eats in one short session, usually a few minutes; remove leftover live insects	Daily. Bearded dragons 1 to 2 meals a day (PetMD gives 2 to 3 small meals)
3–12 months	Juvenile; eating eagerly, sheds less often	Same mix. Beardies still about 70% insects, greens daily. Leopard geckos and anoles: insects only. Cresties: diet daily, insects 1 to 2 times a week	Leopard geckos: about 2 insects per inch of body length (ReptiFiles). Anoles: 2 to 3 small insects. Beardies: what they eat in one session	Daily for most species. Chewy's vet keeps leopard geckos on daily meals to about 8 months
1–2 years	Subadult; growth slows and body fills out	Beardies shift toward greens as insects drop toward the adult 20 to 30%. Iguanas: greens with some other vegetables. Insect eaters: varied insects	Leopard geckos: about 2 insects per inch of length or 15 minutes of eating; one with a tail fatter than its neck can go longer between meals	Most every 1 to 2 days; leopard geckos every 2 to 3 days (ReptiFiles); beardies salad daily, insects a few times a week
2 years and up	Adult size; growth has mostly stopped	Beardies: 70 to 80% greens and vegetables, 20 to 30% insects. Iguanas: 80 to 90% dark leafy greens, under 20% fruit. Geckos and anoles: insects	Beardies: salad daily plus insects 3 to 4 times a week (PetMD). Others: a portion eaten in one session	Adults usually 2 to 3 times a week; plant eaters can have greens daily