

## Crested Gecko Care

### Crested Gecko Lighting Tips

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I recently purchased a crested gecko from one of the larger pet store chains and was instructed to set up both a Sun Glo heat light and a light that emits UVA and UVB light. I have seen many people online say that because crested geckos are not diurnal, but rather nocturnal, that a UV light is unnecessary, and also that a 24-hour heat light may be used to keep the cage between 70-85 degrees. There seems to be a lot of ambivalence on the lighting used with the little fellow. Could you possibly give me some sound advice on the best way to light the vivarium for him? I want to provide the best care necessary, but there seems to be so much conflicting information that it is difficult to tell what is correct.

At first glance, it does seem strange to be providing nocturnal lizards with full-spectrum light that simulates sunshine, but if you think about it, it makes sense that nocturnal creatures would probably receive some sunlight during twilight as they prepare for their nightly adventures. Likewise, as dawn approaches, they will again be exposed to some sunlight from time to time as they settle in for their sleep during the day.

I raise both leopard geckos and viper geckos, and with my setups for them, I use a heat strip under the tank and provide full-spectrum fluorescent lighting on a timer set during natural daylight hours. My nocturnal lizards sleep during the day, but it's funny, as my viper geckos tend to sleep with their heads hidden but their tails stick out, exposed to the UVB rays from the full-spectrum light. So, the ultraviolet rays might help them properly utilize calcium.

Although I don't, many herpers use red light bulbs at night so they can watch their nocturnal geckos while they are active. Blue bulbs can also be used for this purpose, and these colored bulbs produce some heat, so that must be taken into account when figuring out their temperature gradients.

Nutritional secondary hyperparathyroidism (NSHP), which is also called metabolic bone disease, is not very common in nocturnal geckos, but it can develop. I think it is safest to provide UVB lighting for them, so they can receive the benefits that ultraviolet light provides. The confusion comes because it is true many keepers find their nocturnal geckos do fine without providing them with ultraviolet lighting.

The same arguments are also used when discussing nocturnal sugar gliders. I have seen these little marsupials succumb to NSHP in cases where they have not been provided with full-spectrum light including the UVB spectrum.

So, if you have the choice, I would opt for providing full-spectrum lighting during daylight hours. It can't hurt them, and it can provide essential wavelengths that enable them to manufacture their own vitamin D3, which is essential for proper calcium utilization.