

## Lizard With Bloody Red Eyes

**My bearded dragon's eyes are red and look like they are dripping blood, but with no liquid or crust. Could my reptile be sick?**

*By Margaret A. Wissman, DVM, DABVP*

I am 12 years old and have 16 different pets. Three of them are reptiles. My question is about my 2-year-old female bearded dragon. I just noticed today that her eyes are red and look like they are dripping blood, but no liquid or crust is by her eyes. What is the problem? Could my lizard be sick?

Well, I can tell you this much: This is NOT a normal condition for bearded dragons. While I can't say that I have ever seen this problem in a beardie, I would recommend that you talk to your folks about setting up an appointment with a herp veterinarian as soon as possible.

There are some lizards that can voluntarily shoot blood from their eyes, most notably some species of horned lizards (commonly called horned toads, although they are lizards).

I suspect that your beardie has some kind of infection. You didn't tell me about its habitat, temperature ranges or diet, but beardies are omnivores, meaning that they consume both plant and animal materials. Some types of plants contain plant pigments called porphyrins, and sometimes they can be present in bodily secretions. For example, rabbits that eat certain vegetables with these pigments will have unusually colored urine, often red, orange or mustard in color. That got me thinking if maybe your beardie's tears are discolored from the same thing. I can't say that I have ever heard of this occurring in herps, but it is a thought.

I assume that you would have mentioned if your lizard was not eating, or if it was acting any different, but again, I am going on very limited information here. Go back in the archives and read about the proper care of bearded dragons to make sure that you are providing the correct environment and diet.

Please ask your parents if you can have them make you an appointment to have your lizard checked as soon as possible. I hope this helps.

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### Need a Herp Vet?

If you are looking for a herp-knowledgeable veterinarian in your area, a good place to start is by checking the list of members on the Association of Reptilian and Amphibian Veterinarian (ARAV) web site at [www.arav.com](http://www.arav.com). Look for DVMs who appear to maintain actual veterinary offices that you could contact.