

Lizard Prolapse From Cloaca

I was wondering what I should do about this thing sticking out of my lizard's cloaca? Is it a prolapse?

By Margaret A. Wissman, DVM, DABVP

I was wondering what I should do about this thing sticking out of my lizard's cloaca? It killed one of my other lizards already. I don't know what to do now.

You have given me very little to go on, but I suspect that you are describing a prolapse, where tissue protrudes out of the cloaca. I have discussed cloacal prolapse in previous columns, so please check the archives for an in-depth discussion of the problem, as well as possible causes and treatments.

Tissue that prolapses out of the cloaca of a lizard can result in a very dangerous situation. Because you said that you already had one lizard die, presumably from complications of the prolapse, I would recommend that you find a qualified herp veterinarian in your area, so that you can have your pet evaluated and treated.

There are many different causes of cloacal prolapse, and there are even different tissues that can prolapse out the cloaca, so I cannot begin to venture a guess as to what is prolapsing and why. One of the most common reasons for prolapse is from excessive straining secondary to some inciting cause. The urinary bladder, the colon, a hemipenis (in males, of course) or the shell gland (also called the oviduct, and only present in females) may prolapse. So, you see that this is a complex problem. In addition to correcting the prolapse, the underlying cause must also be diagnosed and corrected, if possible.

Please don't wait. Find a herp veterinarian who can help you with your lizard, and the sooner, the better. That tissue protruding can become necrotic and die, causing a dangerous bacterial infection, sepsis or other life-threatening infection and toxin release. This is always a serious situation requiring the assistance of a herp veterinarian. Good luck with your lizard.

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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. Look for DVMs who appear to maintain actual veterinary offices that you could contact.