

## Iguana Coloration

### Should you be able to see through the dewlap of a green iguana?

*By Margaret A. Wissman, DVM, DABVP*

I recently acquired a green iguana (about 8 months old) from a child who had grown tired of her. She is somewhat skinny but has a hearty appetite. Her coloring worries me. She is bright green, which she should be, but the crest of her neck is see-through in the sun, and she has a white and turquoise color to her head. The last time I ran into a turquoise iguana it had Hepatitis C. Is this coloring on the head and neck normal in some species, or should I be worried about my two other iguanas, two bearded dragons, horny toad and frilled lizard? If this is normal in some iguanas, which species am I actually looking at?

Young iguanas, those less than a year of age, often have more brilliant coloring than older adults. So, it sounds to me that her head color is normal variation.

If you are referring to the dewlap area of her neck (the ventral white fleshy bit of skin that hangs down), it is often see-through in bright light. This is even translucent in adults, as well.

Iguanas don't get Hepatitis C, which is a human viral disease. Most viruses are quite species-specific, meaning that other types of animals can't acquire them (except for the rare virus, like rabies). Was this diagnosed on testing by a vet, based on histopath samples?

Please seek out the advice of a good herp vet, and get your little iguana checked out if you have any concerns. At the least, you should have your new iguana checked for parasites and treated if any are diagnosed.

The green iguana that you have is *Iguana iguana*, as they are all the same genus and species. There are many variations in coloration based on the region where the iguanas are found, so it would be impossible to ascertain exactly where yours came from. There are other types of iguanas, of course, such the ground iguana, *Cyclura* sp.

Margaret A. Wissman, DVM, DABVP has been an avian/exotic/herp animal veterinarian since 1981. She is a regular contributor to REPTILES magazine.

### 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.