

Burmese Python Snake Respiratory Infection

My snake has a breathing problem. Can I cure this?

By Margaret A. Wissman, DVM, DABVP

I have a 10-foot albino Burmese python that has a respiratory infection. Is there anything I can do at home to cure this problem? His daytime temperature is around 90 degrees Fahrenheit on the hot side; at night it drops to around 75 degrees. The humidity is around 60 percent, and his cage is 6 feet by 5 feet by 4 feet. Please let me know ASAP.

You need to seek the help of a herp veterinarian. This is not something that you should attempt to treat on your own. First, how do you know this is a respiratory infection? Is your snake mouth breathing? Does it have bubbles coming out of its mouth or nose? Can you hear it breathing? Is it resting with its head up to better breathe?

If this is truly a respiratory infection, you need to seek help immediately. Your snake needs to have blood work run, possibly cultures taken from the trachea to identify the bacterium involved with the infection, and to provide your vet with the correct antibiotics to treat the infection with. He may also require diagnostic radiographs. Your snake will require appropriate antibiotics and perhaps nebulization therapy with antibiotics, as well. Pneumonia is always very serious in snakes and upper respiratory infections are nothing to sneeze at, either.

In regards to your setup, the temperature is fine, as is the humidity (although a relative humidity of 70 to 80 percent would be better), but I would love to see your python in a larger habitat. It is a bit cramped for the python, as it cannot even stretch out in its current cage.

Please find a herp vet who can help you ASAP. This is beyond what you can do by yourself!

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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.