

Garter Snake Won't Drink

Young albino garter snake won't drink and spits clear fluid.

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I have a young albino garter snake named Draco. He seems to be rather lethargic and is spitting a clear fluid similar to the water he is drinking. He does not seem to drink on his own, but he drinks when I put his nose in the water. Do you have any ideas what could be wrong with him?

Thank you

I am very concerned about your young garter snake. Baby and juvenile snakes don't have much in the way of stored body fat. So, if they become ill and stop eating and drinking, they have little reserve energy stored in the liver and other tissues.

Please make an appointment and have your garter snake examined by a herp veterinarian as soon as possible. Your garter snake could have any number of illnesses.

Regurgitation or vomiting can be caused by a type of protozoa, called *Cryptosporidium*, that colonizes the stomach and possibly the small intestines.

Intestinal parasites, such as roundworms or strongyles, can cause impaction and result in vomiting. Certain bacterial infections can also cause the signs you are describing. A foreign body – a rock, gravel, carpeting or other foreign material – can result in an obstruction, which could be the cause of the garter snake's symptoms.

There are many different conditions that can cause what you are describing, so it is vital that you take your garter snake in to see a qualified herp veterinarian as soon as possible. If you can, bring in a fresh fecal specimen for evaluation for parasites.

Young snakes don't have as strong an immune system as adult snakes do, so they tend to not be able to fight off disease as well as adults. This is why it is so important to have a young herp examined and treated as soon as possible.

If you don't know a good herp veterinarian, you can call a few local veterinary clinics that don't treat herps and ask them who they refer reptiles to. Or, you can call local pet retailers that sell herps and ask them who they use for their reptiles. You can also check the Association of Reptile and Amphibian Veterinarians website to locate herp veterinarian members in your area.

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) website at www.arav.com. Look for DVMs who appear to maintain actual veterinary offices that you could contact.

Or, check out the state by state ReptileChannel Vet Listings.