

POST HIBERNATION CARE SHEET

A tortoise will hibernate for 8 – 12 weeks. March is the time that most of our hibernating tortoises will start to wake up or will be woken up by their owners.

When it is time to wake up your tortoise their hibernating box should be moved from where it was being kept for their hibernation and moved to a room that is warm (room temperature). They should be left to warm up for a few hours.

Once you start to hear the first stirrings of your tortoise they can be removed from their hibernation box and placed in a warm bath. Before placing them in a warm bath you should check your tortoise over from head to tail and see if you can see any signs that things haven't gone well during hibernation. Checking the eyes, nose, mouth and tail for any discharges. Bathing them with warm water can help when checking them over and cleaning out the mouth as well.

If all looks ok, you can place your tortoise in the warm bath. The water level should be just high enough to reach under the tortoise's chin. Tortoises drink by dunking their head under the water. So offering a tortoise a bowl of water will not be enough to rehydrate them after hibernation and won't encourage them to drink. Your tortoise should be in the bath for 30 mins at a time and should be bathed twice a day.

A bath is a very good way to get your tortoise to drink so they can rehydrate after their hibernation and can be encouraged to pass urine and faeces as well. This is important as it will help clear out any toxins that have built up in the bladder. Monitoring your tortoise's urination and defecation is advised and if they haven't passed any urine or faeces then a trip to vets is essential so that they can be rehydrated and checked over to find out why they have not passed anything.

Once they have had their bath they should be placed in a vivarium or an area where your tortoise can be kept warm using a heat lamp. They should be kept indoors until the weather is warm enough for them to go outside but must always be brought back indoors in the evenings.

Once your tortoise has been warmed up and rehydrated you can start to feed them. Succulent foods should be used at first to help with rehydration and then they can be weaned back onto their normal diet.

If your tortoise has not eaten or has not passed any urine or faeces seven days after waking up from hibernation or is showing signs of ill health they should be booked in and checked over by a vet who specialises in tortoises as soon as possible.

TO MAKE AN APPOINTMENT WITH OUR EXOTIC PETS TEAM:

Call us on 020 7387 8134