



ASSOCIATION OF SUGAR GLIDER VETERINARIANS™

Do I have to get 2 gliders, or will 1 be ok by itself?..

Hi, my name is Dr. David Brust, and I've been a practicing exotic veterinarian for the last 25 years. I'm the author of "*Sugar Gliders: A Complete Veterinary Care Guide*" – and I'm also the president of the Association of Sugar Glider Veterinarians.

The purpose of this video series is to cut through all the internet misinformation out there, and teach owners like you the best - veterinary-approved - ways to raise and care for sugar gliders.

Now, just to make sure we're all on the same page here, sugar gliders are also commonly known as "sugar bears" and "honey gliders" – and with that in mind, the goal of this video is to give you the facts about whether you need to get at least two of these little guys – or if one will be ok by itself.

One of the most common things found out on the internet about sugar gliders is that they will die of loneliness if you just have one. Like most things found on the internet nowadays, this rumor started with a grain of truth – and then got distorted from there based on people's personal opinions and agendas.

Well, here are the facts from a veterinary standpoint, so you can make your own best judgment.

First, almost any pet – with just a few exceptions – is happier if they've got another one "of themselves" to play with; so based on just that alone, we always tell people – if you can afford it – it's always best to get at least two gliders whenever possible.

Secondly, sugar gliders are "colony" animals that normally live in a group of 6-15 other gliders. This makes them very social animals by nature, and they absolutely love to play around and have fun. In other words, they are always happiest when they are giving love to – and getting love from – something else.

All that being said, the truth is that a lot of people out there have individual gliders in their homes as pets – and in most cases they appear to be very happy and well adjusted. In these cases, the owners typically spend at least 1-2 hours per day directly playing and interacting with their gliders – and in most cases they do just fine.

Now, veterinary studies have shown that sugar gliders are susceptible to boredom - and can suffer from clinical depression - when housed alone with very little human interaction. Some potential signs of depression include a lack of appetite, sitting motionless for long periods of time during the evening (when they should be running

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around), and excessive licking, fur-pulling or self-mutilation. In some cases, excessive barking can also be a sign that they're lonely – but they can also bark for a wide range of other reasons.

Now if you've already got one glider and you're thinking about getting another, the basic rule of thumb is "the sooner the better". Like many animals, they bond to each other best when they are younger, and two babies will almost always get along great right off the bat. When introducing older gliders to each other, it's usually best to go much slower and set up a couple cages a few inches apart so they can get used to each other's presence and smell for a week or two before trying to put them together. Even then, go slow and always keep a close eye on them for the first few days, just to make sure everything is going smoothly.

The bottom line here is that as long as you (or your family) are able to spend at least a couple hours a day interacting with your glider – it will probably be just fine. Now, just to be clear on what this means, "spending time" with your gliders can be as simple as them just snuggling in your pocket or a bonding pouch – and if you spend as much time as you can with them each day, then chances are your sugar glider will probably be just fine. However, just like almost every other pet out there, they will always be happier if they have a little buddy to play with – so if you can – I strongly suggest that it's a good idea to get two. Many reputable breeders will even give discounts on a second baby just for this reason, so if you decide to get just one, keep an eye out for any of the warning signs and be prepared to give – and get - lots of love. ☺

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