


# The Big Sleep

## ***Brumation Survival Guide***

*Keep your sanity intact!  
Guide to Bearded Dragon Brumation!*



*What's Wrong  
Buddy?*



Chapter 1:

## *Is My Dragon Dying? Phase*

### What is Brumation, Really?

Think of brumation as the reptile version of hibernation, but with a few key differences.

### The Biological Clock:

It is a dormant period triggered by seasonal changes (shorter days and cooler temperatures).

### The Survival Mechanism:

In the wild, it allows dragons to survive the Australian winter when food is scarce.

### The Variability:

No two dragons brumate the same way. Some sleep for four months; some just take a nap for two weeks.



## *The Identifying the Signs (The Checklist)*

Check your bearded dragon  
for these specific behavioural shifts:

The Cold Shoulder:

Spending more time on the cool side of the tank.

Appetite Suppression:

Refusing even their favourite bugs or greens.

Increased Hiding:

Burying themselves in substrate  
or staying in their hide for days.

Lethargy:

Minimal movement, even when handled.

Defecation Stop:

Since they aren't eating,  
their digestive system slows to a halt.

## *Your Pain Points*

### The Guilt Factor:

You feel you are doing something wrong (e.g, My dragon hates me/my setup).

### The Safety Anxiety:

The constant fear that your dragon is actually sick or dehydrated.

### The Loss of Interaction:

You miss the personality of your pet during the 2-4 months of dormancy.



## *The Pre-Brumation Protocol*

**Before letting your dragon sleep you must do these 3 things**

1. **The Vet Check/Fecal Exam:** Ensure the dragon doesn't have a high parasite load. Sleeping with parasites can be fatal as the dragon's immune system is lowered.
2. **The Empty Tank Rule:** Never let a dragon go into deep sleep with undigested food in its stomach. It can rot and cause infection.
3. **The Weight Baseline:** Weigh the dragon. A healthy brumating dragon should lose very little weight (less than 5-10g). Rapid weight loss indicates illness, not brumation.

## Chapter 5:



Step 1: Lighting & Heat. Should you turn them off? Generally, keep the lights on a reduced schedule (8-10 hours) to maintain a rhythm, but don't force basking.

Step 2: Hydration. Offer a quick soak or water droplets on the snout once every 2 weeks. Do not wake them up fully; just keep them hydrated.

Step 3: Hands Off. It's tempting to wake them up to check on them. Constant waking causes stress. If their weight is stable, let them sleep.

Step 4: The Weekly Wellness Check. Once a week, do a visual check. Check for sunken eyes (dehydration) or black beards (stress/pain).

**IF YOU ARE AT ALL WORRIED, PLEASE CONSULT A  
QUALIFIED EXOTIC VET!**

## Chapter 6:

# *The Great Awakening*

What happens when they wake up?

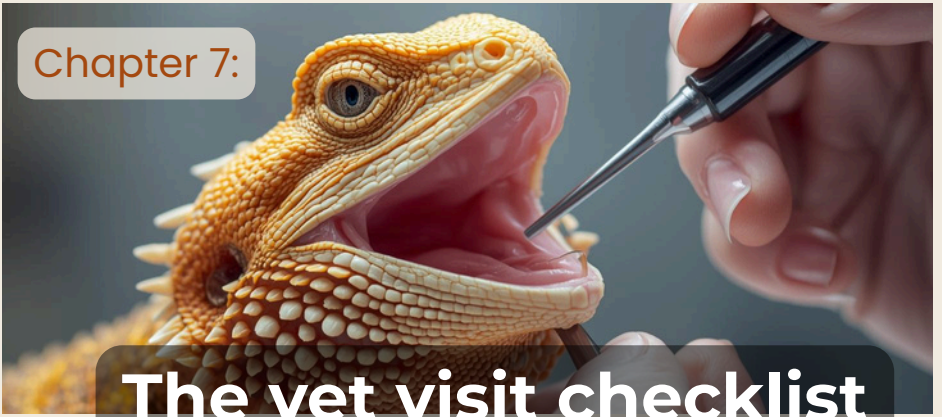
The Hunger: They will be ravenous. Start with easy-to-digest greens before moving to heavy protein.

The Shed: Expect a massive shed shortly after waking.

The Spring Fever: Males may become extra active or glass dance as their hormones surge for breeding season.

**WAKE  
UP!**





## The vet visit checklist

Before you officially start the brumation season, take this checklist to your exotic vet. It ensures your dragon is physically capable of the long sleep.

- 1: Fecal Float Test: Are they clear of Coccidia, Pinworms, or other parasites?
- 2: Physical Exam: Is the fat pad on the head firm? Is the base of the tail thick?
- 3: Mouth Check: Any signs of mouth rot (stomatitis) that could worsen during dormancy?
- 4: Weight Recorded: Ensure the vet logs an official pre-sleep weight.
- 5: Hydration Status: Is the skin elastic and the eyes bright?



We hope  
Kim's Reptile Retreat Brumation Guide  
gave you the confidence  
you needed.



© 2026 Kim's Reptile Retreat. All Rights Reserved.  
No part of this publication may be reproduced  
or shared without written permission.



if you would like to know more about your dragons  
quirky ways get In touch, we'd love to hear from you!  
[info@kimsreptileretreat.co.uk](mailto:info@kimsreptileretreat.co.uk)

@kim's Reptile Retreat