Turtle and Tortoise Vet Visit and Brumation Checklist

Companion Reference Sheet for: Turtle and Tortoise Vet Near Me: Shell, Beak, and Brumation Checks
Save this PDF to your phone or print a copy for field reference. This sheet does not replace an exam by a veterinarian. If your pet is in distress, call a vet now.

Key Takeaways

- Ask whether the veterinarian routinely treats your species, such as a box turtle, red eared slider, Russian tortoise, Hermann's tortoise, Greek tortoise, or sulcata.
- Ask whether the veterinarian has ARAV membership or ABVP reptile and amphibian certification, and check the veterinarian's license with your state veterinary board.
- A wellness exam can include weight tracking, shell and plastron assessment, mouth and beak checks, eye and ear examination, and a review of respiratory signs and husbandry.
- Fecal testing, bloodwork, and radiographs may be recommended when the animal's history or exam points to a need for further investigation.
- Arrange a fall health and weight check before planned brumation. Sick or injured turtles and tortoises should not brumate.
- Bring a weight log, diet and lighting details, enclosure photos, temperature readings, and information about the UVB bulb and water filtration.

How to Find a Turtle and Tortoise Veterinarian Nearby

What to verify	What it tells you	Where to check
ARAV membership	Ask whether the veterinarian has ARAV membership.	Association of Reptile and Amphibian Veterinarians
ABVP diplomate status	Ask whether the veterinarian has ABVP reptile and amphibian certification.	American Board of Veterinary Practitioners
State veterinary license	Whether the veterinarian is licensed in the state where the clinic practices. Ask the state veterinary board how to look up license status.	Your state veterinary board's license lookup

What a Chelonian Wellness Exam Covers

Test or assessment	Why a veterinarian may consider it	Useful context to share
Fecal parasite test	To look for intestinal parasites, particularly when there are digestive signs, a new animal is being evaluated, or screening is appropriate.	Stool changes, appetite, recent treatment, and when the sample was collected.
Bloodwork	To investigate illness, assess organ or metabolic concerns, or support planning for a procedure when indicated.	Changes in activity, appetite, weight, hydration, or reproductive behavior.

Test or assessment	Why a veterinarian may consider it	Useful context to share
Radiographs	To assess internal structures, shell or skeletal injury, possible egg retention, or other concerns that cannot be resolved by an external exam alone.	Trauma history, abnormal posture, straining, swelling, or trouble moving.

Checklist for Calling and Preparing

☐ **Species:** Tell the clinic whether you have a box turtle, red eared slider, another aquatic turtle, or a tortoise such as a Russian, Hermann's, Greek, or sulcata.

☐ **Experience:** Ask how often the veterinarian treats that species and whether the clinic handles animals of your pet's size.

☐ **Credentials:** Ask about ARAV membership, ABVP board certification, and the veterinarian's state license.

☐ **Capabilities:** Ask about fecal testing, bloodwork, radiographs, anesthesia, and the clinic's urgent or after-hours arrangements.

☐ **Visit records:** Gather weight history, diet, enclosure photos, lighting details, and temperature readings.

☐ **Brumation:** If you are considering seasonal cooling, book a health and weight check before starting.

If a clinic is closed, ask its recorded message or staff where to seek after-hours care.

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