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Level 4 – 27th October 2025

Snake 'pee crystals' could help treat kidney stones

FREE online quizzes, mp3 listening and more for this lesson here:

<https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2510/251027-snake-pee-crystals-4.html>

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Please try Levels 5 and 6. They are (a little) harder.

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THE READING

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2510/251027-snake-pee-crystals-4.html>

The natural world contains many remedies. The latest discovery is about how reptile waste could help treat human illnesses. Researchers analysed "pee crystals" that reptiles excrete to get rid of waste. The crystals are a solid form of uric acid. This is created when the body breaks down nitrogen in food. It can be harmful. Too much nitrogen can lead to health problems like kidney stones. Our bodies flush uric acid waste away when we pass water.

In the study, a team of scientists who study reptiles and amphibians examined waste elimination processes of 20 reptile species. The team focused on excess nitrogen that crystallised. A researcher said the team's findings could help us understand and treat uric acid-related problems like kidney stones. She said knowing how reptiles deal with nitrogen might lead to new approaches to disease prevention and treatment.

Sources: <https://gizmodo.com/scientists-have-cracked-the-mystery-of-snake-pee-2000675053>
<https://www.popsi.com/science/reptile-pee-kidney-stones/>
<https://www.iflscience.com/reptiles-pee-crystals-but-what-are-they-made-of-scientists-wanted-to-find-out-81278>

PHRASE MATCHING

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2510/251027-snake-pee-crystals-4.html>

PARAGRAPH ONE:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. The natural | a. excrete |
| 2. The latest | b. water |
| 3. reptile waste could help treat | c. discovery |
| 4. "pee crystals" that reptiles | d. nitrogen in food |
| 5. get rid | e. human illnesses |
| 6. The crystals are a solid | f. of waste |
| 7. the body breaks down | g. world |
| 8. when we pass | h. form of uric acid |

PARAGRAPH TWO:

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. study reptiles and | a. related problems |
| 2. waste elimination | b. on excess nitrogen |
| 3. 20 reptile | c. approaches |
| 4. The team focused | d. processes |
| 5. the team's findings could | e. stones |
| 6. treat uric acid- | f. species |
| 7. kidney | g. help us |
| 8. lead to new | h. amphibians |

LISTEN AND FILL IN THE GAPS

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2510/251027-snake-pee-crystals-4.html>

The natural world (1) _____. The latest discovery is about how reptile waste could help (2) _____. Researchers analysed "pee crystals" that reptiles excrete to (3) _____ waste. The crystals are a solid form of uric acid. This is created when the body (4) _____ in food. It can be harmful. Too much (5) _____ to health problems like kidney stones. Our bodies flush uric acid waste away when (6) _____.

In the study, a team of scientists who study (7) _____ examined waste elimination processes of 20 reptile species. The team (8) _____ nitrogen that crystallised. A researcher said the (9) _____ help us understand and treat uric (10) _____ like kidney stones. She said knowing how reptiles (11) _____ might lead to new (12) _____ prevention and treatment.

PUT A SLASH (/) WHERE THE SPACES ARE

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2510/251027-snake-pee-crystals-4.html>

The natural world contains many remedies. The latest discovery is about how reptile waste could help treat human illnesses. Researchers analysed "pee crystals" that reptiles excrete to get rid of waste. The crystals are a solid form of uric acid. This is created when the body breaks down nitrogen in food. It can be harmful. Too much nitrogen can lead to health problems like kidney stones. Our bodies flush uric acid waste away when we pass water. In the study, a team of scientists who study reptiles and amphibians examined waste elimination processes of 20 reptile species. The team focused on excess nitrogen that crystallised. A researcher said the team's findings could help us understand and treat uric acid-related problems like kidney stones. She said knowing how reptiles deal with nitrogen might lead to new approaches to disease prevention and treatment.

SNAKES SURVEY

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2510/251027-snake-pee-crystals-4.html>

Write five GOOD questions about snakes in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper.
When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

	STUDENT 1 _____	STUDENT 2 _____	STUDENT 3 _____
Q.1.			
Q.2.			
Q.3.			
Q.4.			
Q.5.			

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

WRITE QUESTIONS & ASK YOUR PARTNER(S)

Student A: Do not show these to your speaking partner(s).

- a) _____
- b) _____
- c) _____
- d) _____
- e) _____
- f) _____

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WRITE QUESTIONS & ASK YOUR PARTNER(S)

Student B: Do not show these to your speaking partner(s).

- a) _____
- b) _____
- c) _____
- d) _____
- e) _____
- f) _____

WRITING

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2510/251027-snake-pee-crystals-4.html>

Write about **snakes** for 10 minutes. Read and talk about your partner's paper.

[illegible]