

Axolotls

Ambystoma mexicanum

Introduction and Origin

Axolotls are from the south-east of Mexico.

Axolotl's are neotonic, meaning they remain as larvae for life, yet they still breed and produce offspring. Axolotls

are the larval form of the Salamander. Commonly known as "Mexican Walking Fish", the Axolotl is a true amphibian and

not a fish (they are cold-blooded and have vertebrae).



Did you know
Axolotls are short
sighted and need
to be hand fed?

Diet & Water

Axolotls are carnivores, requiring a meat-based diet. In the wild, Axolotls eat a variety of aquatic creatures (e.g. worms, insects, crustaceans and small fish). Fortunately at home we can substitute this diet quite closely with a diet of live crickets, blood worm (frozen or live) and Axolotl pellets. Ideally, they should always be fed a varied diet although sometimes they can be fussy. Live fish can also be fed on occasion and are a great source of nutrition and exercise.

It is advised that Axolotls are hand fed using tongs or large tweezers as this reduces the amount of waste and uneaten food in the tank. They should be fed two or three times a week, more often in warmer conditions. It is also advised that Axolotls be fed at night due to their nocturnal habits.

Axolotl's mouths contain small teeth on the margins of the upper and lower jaw, sometimes also appearing on the roof of

the mouth. They are for gripping rather than biting and therefore their food is generally swallowed whole. As a result, Axolotls depend solely on their digestive system to digest food and great care should be taken to feed them with "bite size" pieces.

Housing & Heating

To house one or two Axolotls comfortably, a standard 2' (61 cm) tank or larger would be appropriate, allowing plenty of room for them to swim. When setting up the enclosure, large gravel should be used to avoid swallowing smaller gravel. Rocks can be used for hiding places and caves. Live plants can also be used but they should be strong and well planted.

Axolotls are nocturnal, to an extent, they will be more active in dim light. They have no eyelids to protect them from bright light so ideally they should be kept in normal daylight for 10 to 12 hours a day with adequate shelter provided.

Axolotls

Young Axolotls require more oxygen (due to their fast growth rate) and obtain the oxygen they require through large, feathery external gills and through their skin. As they grow their metabolism slows down, therefore oxygen requirements are lower. For young Axolotls, an air pump should be provided.

Water Conditions

Water quality is very important and is best maintained using an aquarium filter. Unfortunately most filters will not pick up large solids (e.g. uneaten or regurgitated food) so using a gravel siphon should be routine. Uneaten or regurgitated food as well as waste from the Axolotl can contribute to high ammonia and nitrate levels and should be monitored using water-quality test kits. A pH range of 6.5 to 7.5 is the desired level, with the lower end (around 6.5) being preferred.

**Learn more
from the team
at Kellyville Pets**



Health & Sexing

The Axolotl's regular life span is generally known to be between 10-12 years. One interesting feature of the Axolotl is that any portions bitten off or seriously damaged, are likely to regenerate including limbs, portions of the tail and even parts of the head.

Axolotls should be handled carefully due to their soft skin and netted cautiously as they can easily get tangled. Sexual maturity is usually reached at about twelve months and sexing Axolotls is not possible until this age. The males are generally more slender with longer tails and the male's head is longer and narrower than the female's. Between the two back legs, the cloaca is also more swollen in the male.

Further information on diet, hygiene & medication and much more is available from the team at Kellyville Pets.



Axolotls live in cold water with a preferred temperature range of between 14°C and 18°C.

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Phone 9629 3282 OPEN 7 DAYS
106B Windsor Rd Kellyville NSW 2155
www.kellyvillepets.com.au

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