

SHOPPING LIST

- 2ft tank or larger
- Fine sand
- Filter
- Driftwood
- Plants

- Water conditioner (Seachem Prime)
- Beneficial bacteria (Seachem Stability)
- Net
- Aqua One freshwater master test kit
- Gravel vacuum
- Canister filter
- Hailea® aquarium chiller

- Axolotl pellets
- Live blackworms
- Live earthworms
- Frozen axolotl dinner
- Frozen bloodworms



COMMON HEALTH ISSUES

Fungal Infections: As Axolotls are not protected by scales, they can easily cut themselves on abrasive surfaces within the tank.

If uneaten or regurgitated food (especially meat products) are left in the tank and your Axolotl comes into contact with it, this can lead to a fungal infection.

Heat Stress: Any water temp above 20°C can cause heat stress.

Ammonia Burn: Ammonia is toxic to all fish; axolotls even more sensitive to it as they have no scales.

Red flag

If you notice any of the following symptoms, please check your water quality and temperature.

- White film forming on tail or body (treat with 'Pimafix' or anti-fungal remedy)
- Gills appearing less 'fluffy' (check water quality)



AXOLOTL

Ambystoma mexicanum



LIFESPAN: 10-12 years **SIZE:** up to 30cm
TANK: Minimum 60cm length **DIET:** Meat-based diet
ORIGIN: South-East of Mexico **CARE LEVEL:** High



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AXOLOTL

Ambystoma mexicanum

Axolotls will require a minimum tank size of 60cm (2ft) in length. They are best kept solitary, but if you're wanting to house more than one axolotl, a general rule of thumb is 60cm for your first axolotl, and 30cm thereafter for each axolotl e.g. a tank housing two axolotls would be 90cm in length (60cm + 30cm). This allows them room to swim around and exercise.

If multiple axolotls are going to be kept in the same aquarium they will need to be of the same sex (males will overbreed with females and cause undue stress).

The use of an aquarium chiller is vital to maintain a constant low water temperature of 18°C as axolotls require low temperatures to thrive (heat stress is the number one cause of health problems with axolotls).

Your aquarium should be either bare base (no substrate) or a layer of fine sand can be used (normal aquarium gravel or pebbles are not suitable for axolotls as the axolotl will ingest the gravel / pebbles and it will cause internal compaction issues). Rocks and driftwood can be used inside the tank for hiding places and caves.

Live plants can be used, however they should be strong and well planted.

Axolotls are nocturnal and have no eyelids to protect them from bright light, so ideally they should be kept in normal daylight for 10-12 hours a day with adequate shelter provided.

Water chemistry is the most important aspect of keeping your pet axolotl happy and thriving and is best maintained through regular testing and an aquarium filter.

Unfortunately, most filters will not pick up large solids, such as uneaten or regurgitated food, so food waste should be removed from the tank after each feed as it can cause infection.

Unlike most fish, axolotls do not have scales which makes them more sensitive to multiple factors in an aquarium (ammonia and nitrite burn, medications, acidic or alkaline pH, aquarium salt, aloe vera products etc). To avoid health problems, the aquarium will need constant high water quality which is achieved through the use of good filtration (external canister filter ideally) regular water testing and a regular maintenance schedule. We recommend a weekly 25% partial water change along with weekly water testing of pH, ammonia, nitrite and nitrate.

The tank should be cleaned with a gravel siphon every week to ensure any pieces that the filter hasn't been able to pick up are removed. Uneaten or regurgitated food, as well as waste, can also contribute to high ammonia and nitrite levels and aquarium water should be tested weekly using water-quality test kits. A pH range of 6.8-7.4 is the desired level, although closer to 7.0 is preferred.

As axolotls are a cold-water species their required temperature range is between 14°C and 18°C. The best way to keep the temperature this low is by using an aquarium chiller. Your chiller should be running 24/7 and set at around 18°C at all times (you can use your canister filter to run the chiller).

One interesting feature of the axolotl is that any portion bitten off or seriously damaged are likely to regenerate including limbs, parts of the tail and even parts of the head.

Axolotls are carnivores, requiring a meat-based diet. They should be fed a diet of bloodworms (frozen or live) and axolotl pellets. Ideally, they should be fed a varied diet, however they can sometimes be fussy. Live feeder fish can also be fed on occasion and are a great source of nutrition and exercise.

It is recommended 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 daily, and preferably fed at night due to their nocturnal habits.

Axolotls generally swallow their food whole so it is important that care is taken to ensure they are being fed 'bite size' pieces.

Interesting Facts!

- The word axolotl is thought to roughly translate to "water monster" in the ancient Aztec language Nahuatl.
- Axolotls are also a common research subject for biologists, thanks to their capacity to regenerate lost or damaged limbs, hearts, spinal cords, and even parts of their brains—all without permanent scarring.
- Newly hatched axolotls, hungry for their first meal, will sometimes snack on their siblings' limbs. They grow back, after all.

