

# AXOLOTL CARE SHEET

**Size:** Approximately 25- 30cm on average

**Temperament:** placid but anti-social

**Maintenance:** low-medium

**Life expectancy:** Approximately 10-15 years in captivity

## **What you will need:**

- Tank
- Turtle rocks
- Filter
- Stress Coat (Water conditioner)
- Stress Zyme (Live bacteria additive for healthy aquarium maintenance)
- Quick Start (optional)
- Shelter (cave, rock, hide etc.)
- Food (earthworms, axolotl pellets etc.)

\*It is important to have your aquarium set up and filtering with the advisable water treatments for at least a week prior to introducing your axolotl to the aquarium with water testing to ensure safe water for your axolotl.\*

## **How big does the tank need to be?**

With axolotls, the bigger the tank the better. Length is more important than height, as axolotls tend to spend most of their time walking around the tank floor. For one adult axolotl, a 2ft tank is the minimum size. After that, a good rule of thumb is 1ft per axolotl.

**Companion Petz recommend: Aqua One opti-clear tank size 5**

## **Which substrate should I use?**

Substrate is not a requirement for axolotls. When adding substrate it is important that the size of the chosen substrate is no smaller than the size of the axolotl's mouth. Sand and river rocks are a suitable choice.

**Sand is the ideal substrate for axolotls** - It looks good, and is safe from them being impacted.

**River rocks**, when they are all bigger than the axolotls head, can be a nice substrate. Although, food and poo get caught in it easily - and it is very hard to keep clean.

**Small gravel is a major no-no for axolotls-**

Axolotls can, and will, eat anything smaller than the size of their heads because the way that they eat is by sucking water into their mouths which can cause them to inhale gravel, causing impaction. Impaction is a common occurrence, which can cause blockages, floating, serious impaction and death.

**Companion Petz recommend:** Pisces Turtle and Axolotl aquarium pebbles

## **Decorations, Plants and Hides:**

Axolotls need to have hides to feel secure. It is recommended to have at least two hides per axolotl. Aquarium ornaments, PVC pipes (a good cheap hide), plants, or terracotta pot plants are just a few of possible hides for axolotls.

## **Light-**

Axolotls prefer low-lighted areas as they don't have any eyelids to shield their eyes from bright lights. if using a light in the tank, make sure the gravel is darker, and they have plenty of space to hide during the day.

**Companion Petz recommend:** Aqua one tropicglow 60cm 18w to suit opti-clear tank 5

### **Filtration-**

Axolotls excrete lots of waste, so filters can really help keep the water levels cleaner, and lessens water changes (although does not eliminate them). Axolotls don't like currents, so having a spray bar helps push the water out evenly. Putting a few tall plants near the out-take also lessens the currents, but doesn't interfere with the filtration. Poor water quality can damage and affect an Axolotls gills and overall health.

**Companion Petz recommend:** Aqua one Nano Flow 150 filter to suit Opti-clear tank 5

### **Temperature-**

Temperature is very important to axolotls, although they are from Mexico, their native lakes were glacial fed - so were quite cool. Their temperature should be between 15°C-19°C. Higher temperatures than 22°C can lead to high levels of stress which can result in disease and often death. Temperature fluctuations are also stressful for them, even by only a few degrees. Pre-frozen ice bottles or aquarium chillers are advisable. However, when ice bottles are in use it is important to have the follow up ready to replace as fluctuations in temperature can be problematic.

### **Diet:**

Axolotls are carnivores, so meat is essential for their diet. They do have small teeth, but these are used to grab their prey, holding them in place, rather than chewing. They swallow their food whole. When an axolotl goes to eat something, they open their mouth, vacuuming in water, and anything else that is close (food, gravel, etc). Axolotls will eat non-live food, but the movement of live food entices them to snap.

#### **Earthworms:**

Earthworms are the best possible diet you can give your axolotl, and are a perfect staple.

#### **Pellets:**

Pellets are also a good staple diet for axolotls. Pellets are available for axolotls, or soft salmon pellets are also another popular choice.

#### **Blackworms:**

Are available online, or from some fish stores. They are aquatic worms, so will not die in the tank which is a plus. Blackworms are very nutritious, although are small, and may not hold much of an interest for adults.

#### **Bloodworms:**

Midge fly larvae, live or frozen bloodworms are also a nutritious meal for axolotls, although are very messy to deal with.

#### **Tubifex:**

Are good, but too small to hold interest for adults.

#### **Crickets:**

Can be OK as a treat. They aren't the best nutritionally - and can be difficult to get underwater!

#### **Frozen Food:**

Is widely available, and can be good treats, although not the best staple available. Popular frozen food can include: Brine Shrimp, Bloodworms, Tubifex and Bloodworms.

**Companion Petz recommend:** Bloodworms

### **Tank Mates:**

Axolotls cannot be housed with any other animals, other than other axolotls. If you house axolotl's with other creatures, one tank mate can be injured or eaten, these aquariums should be kept strictly of axolotls.

### **Axolotl health and lifespan:**

If handled too often, stressed or injured, axolotls may suffer fungal or bacterial infections due to damage of the slime-coat which covers their skin. These conditions can be treated with varying success with medications available at pet stores. Should these not work quickly, see your veterinarian for stronger treatments. Prevention is better than cure so stress should be kept to a minimum.

**Referenced from:** <http://all-about-axolotls.blogspot.com/p/axolotl-tank-set-up.html>