

Axolotl Care Sheet

Scientific Name: *Ambystoma mexicanum*

Average Lifespan: 10-15 years

Size: 9-12 inches

1. Tank Setup

- **Tank Size:** Minimum 20 gallons for one axolotl; larger if adding another.
- **Substrate:** Sand or bare bottom (avoid gravel; axolotls may ingest it).
- **Water Temperature:** 60-68°F (15-20°C). Avoid high temperatures; axolotls can't tolerate heat well.
- **Filtration:** Low-flow filter to keep water clean but gentle on axolotls.
- **Lighting:** Low or indirect light; axolotls prefer dim environments.
- **Hiding Spots:** Provide hides like caves or plants to reduce stress.

2. Water Quality

- **pH Level:** 6.5-8.0
- **Ammonia, Nitrite, Nitrate:** Ammonia and nitrite should be 0; nitrate below 20 ppm.
- **Dechlorinated Water:** Use a dechlorinator to remove harmful chemicals from tap water.
- **Water Changes:** 20-30% weekly to maintain water quality.

3. Diet

- **Primary Foods:** Worms (earthworms, blackworms), axolotl pellets, and occasional treats like bloodworms.
- **Feeding Frequency:** Young axolotls (under 1 year) can be fed daily; adults 2-3 times per week.
- **Avoid Overfeeding:** Remove uneaten food after 15 minutes to keep the water clean.

4. Handling

- **Minimal Handling:** Avoid picking up your axolotl unless necessary; they are sensitive and can be injured easily.
- **Transporting:** Use a net or small container for transport rather than direct handling.

5. Health Signs

- **Healthy Signs:** Active, clear eyes, smooth skin, and responsive behavior.
- **Warning Signs:** Loss of appetite, curled gills, skin lesions, floating uncontrollably. If observed, check water quality or consult a vet.

6. Common Issues

- **Heat Stress:** If water is too warm, axolotls may become lethargic. Use fans or a chiller if needed.
- **Impaction:** Caused by ingesting gravel or large food. If noticed, consult a vet.
- **Fungal Infections:** White patches on skin indicate a fungal issue. Improve water quality and consider salt baths.

Reminder: Consistent water quality, temperature, and a proper diet are key to a happy, healthy axolotl. Regularly monitor tank conditions and observe your axolotl for any changes.
