

# catfish

## care sheet



Catfish can be identified by their whisker-like barbels, which they use to locate food in dark waters. Catfish vary from small, peaceful species to larger, more predatory species. These scaleless bottom feeders eat a wide variety of foods, including algae, small fish, prepared foods and scavenged debris.

### facts

includes:	various catfish species
average adult size:	2 to 48 inches long, depending on species
average life span:	depends on species
diet:	omnivore
minimum aquarium size:	10+ gallons, depending on species
water temperature:	72 to 82°F



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**Note:** The information on this Care Sheet is not a substitute for veterinary care. If you need additional information, refer to the Sources section or contact your veterinarian as appropriate.

## diet

- A well-balanced catfish diet consists of:
  - Sinking pellets, flake foods.
  - Brine shrimp, mysis shrimp and bloodworms (live or frozen).
  - Preferences vary by species.

## feeding

Things to remember when feeding your catfish:

- Will scavenge food but need to be specifically fed.
- Feed prepared foods according to the directions on the packaging.
- Thaw frozen foods before feeding.

## housing

- Keep in an appropriately sized aquarium; provide proper filtration to maintain health and provide plenty of space for swimming and hiding places.
- Stable water quality and parameters are critical to the health of aquatic life. If you are unsure of your water quality, Petco provides free water testing.

## characteristics

- Some catfish prefer to live in schools but can be happy alone (such as corys).
- Most catfish like to swim at the bottom of the aquarium and need plenty of hiding places.
- Will scavenge for food and eat almost anything.
- Many species have barbs for defense.

## compatibility

Some can be kept with most community fish of similar size and temperament, including other catfish.

Check Petco's Freshwater Compatibility Care Sheet for more information regarding your specific species.

## signs of a healthy fish

- Clear eyes
- Eats vigorously
- Swimming at the bottom or sides of the aquarium

Avoid overcrowded conditions, which are a major cause of stress and disease. Maintain good water quality with regular water changes and adequate filtration.

## habitat maintenance

**Daily** - Check filter, water temperature and other equipment.

**Weekly** - Check water quality at least once a week.

**Monthly** - Change 10 to 25% of the total volume of water every 2 to 4 weeks or as needed.

Introduce new inhabitants to the aquarium gradually.

## common health issues

Health Issue	Symptoms or Causes	Suggested Action
Fin rot	Frayed or disintegrating fins; the base of the fins usually reddens.	Improve water quality; consult your aquatic veterinarian for treatment.
Fungus	White cottony growth and/or discoloration of the eyes.	Quarantine fish; use a commercial antifungal remedy as directed.
Bacterial infections	Cloudy eyes, open sores and/or reddening of the skin.	Improve water quality; use a commercial antibacterial remedy as directed.
Ich	White spots appear on fins and body; fish rubs against hard objects or swims awkwardly. Rapid respirations.	Quarantine fish immediately; use commercial ich remedy as directed.

## red flags

- |                                    |                        |
|------------------------------------|------------------------|
| ■ Loss of color or appetite        | ■ Labored respirations |
| ■ Spots or fungus on body or mouth | ■ Erratic swimming     |
| ■ Cloudy eyes                      | ■ Weight loss          |
| ■ Listlessness                     | ■ Bloating             |

If you notice any of these signs, test water quality and improve as necessary.

## shopping list for needed supplies

- Appropriately sized aquarium
- Appropriate food, dry and frozen
- Décor
- Water conditioner
- Filter
- Water test kit
- Full spectrum lighting
- Net
- Thermometer
- Freshwater substrate
- Heater
- Hydrometer, depending on species
- Airline tubing
- Airstone
- Air pump
- Book about catfish

## sources

Ask a store partner about Petco's selection of books on catfish and the variety of private brand products available for the care and happiness of your new pet. All private brand products carry a 100% money-back guarantee.

Because all aquatic life are potential carriers of infectious diseases, such as Atypical *Mycobacterium* and *Salmonella*, always wash your hands before and after handling your aquatic life or habitat contents to help prevent the potential spread of disease.

Pregnant women, children under the age of 5, senior citizens and people with weakened immune systems should contact their physician before purchasing or caring for aquatic life and should consider not having aquatic life as a pet.

Go to [cdc.gov/healthypets](http://cdc.gov/healthypets) and [petco.com/caresheet](http://petco.com/caresheet) for more information about aquatic life and disease.

This care sheet can cover the needs of other species. Go to [petco.com](http://petco.com) for more information.

