

# freshwater crustacean care sheet



The unique characteristics and wide variety of freshwater crustaceans provide an appealing addition to your aquarium.

## facts

includes:

algae shrimp, bamboo shrimp, ghost shrimp, freshwater lobsters and crayfish species

average adult size:

depends on species

average life span:

depends on species

diet:

omnivore

minimum aquarium size:

5+ gallons  
depending on species

water temperature: 72 to 82°F



## petco



**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.

Developed with and approved by a qualified veterinarian.

## diet

- A well-balanced freshwater crustacean diet consists of:
- Typically feeds off excessive food or debris in aquarium.
  - Plant (algae) or animal matter.
  - Sinking pellets and wafers.

## feeding

- Things to remember when feeding your freshwater crustacean:
- Feed daily.
  - Ensure food reaches the bottom of the tank; if unsure, drop sinking pellets into the tank at night; alternate protein- and algae-based pellets.
  - Feed a variety of food to ensure complete nutrition.

## housing

- Keep in an appropriately sized aquarium; provide hiding places and plenty of room for movement. They need calcium to grow their shells and some species like soft water. Most crustaceans benefit from freshwater salt; follow package instructions.
- Copper-based medications can be toxic to crustaceans.
- 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

- Crustaceans are characterized by their hard, jointed exoskeleton, which they molt during growth periods; they may burrow or hide during molting stages.
- Scavengers that will help keep tank clean by consuming excess food.
- Some shrimp feed exclusively on algae and are great for algae control.

## 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.

## compatibility

Some species can be aggressive towards fish and other crustaceans. Check Petco's Freshwater Compatibility Care Sheet for more information regarding your specific species.

## signs of a healthy crustacean

- Even coloring
- Healthy appetite
- Active movement

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

## red flags

- Loss of color or appetite
- Spots or fungus on body or mouth
- Listlessness

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

## common health issues

Health Issue	Symptoms or Causes	Suggested Action
Body or surface erosion	Poor water quality; nutrient deficiency.	Test and treat water immediately; maintain proper diet.
Loss of appendage or antennae	Fighting between crustaceans or due to an aggressive fish.	Will usually regenerate. An iodine supplement can help with the molting process.

## 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
- Airline tubing
- Airstone
- Air pump
- Book about freshwater crustaceans

## sources

Ask a store partner about Petco's selection of books on freshwater crustaceans 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.

