

# freshwater angel and discus care sheet



Almost all freshwater angelfish and discus for sale today are captive-bred and come in a wide variety of colors. Freshwater angelfish are relatively easy to care for and come in varying fin lengths. The body of a discus is round and laterally compressed, an unusual characteristic. Although beautiful, discus can be a challenge to care for.

## facts

includes:	freshwater angels and discus species
average adult size:	4 to 10 inches long, depending on species
average life span:	depends on species
diet:	omnivore
minimum aquarium size:	29+ gallons, depending on species
water temperature:	79 to 86°F for discus 72 to 82°F for angels



*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 angelfish or discus diet consists of:

- Food may be flakes, pellets, frozen or live.
- Freshwater angelfish enjoy the occasional treat of bloodworms, brine shrimp or mysis shrimp.
- Vary diet between vegetables and meaty foods to ensure to ensure proper nutritional balance.

### feeding

Things to remember when feeding your freshwater angelfish or discus:

- Depending on size and species, feed small amounts 2 to 3 times a day, no more than fish can eat in 1 to 2 minutes.
- Thaw frozen foods before feeding.

### housing

- Keep in an appropriately sized aquarium. Provide plenty of substrate, rocks and hiding places. Discus prefer soft water; use appropriate water conditioner.
- 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

Freshwater angelfish are taller than they are long; they like a well-planted tank with some open space in the middle for swimming. Discus are vibrantly colored and prefer the middle and lower areas of the aquarium; usually shy and peaceful.

### 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.

### compatibility

Discus are usually kept in aquariums with schools of the same species. Freshwater angelfish may be aggressive to smaller fish such as guppies and neon tetras; can become territorial. Freshwater angelfish should not be kept with aggressive tank mates such as large cichlids or large barbs. Check Petco's Freshwater Compatibility Care Sheet for more information regarding your specific species.

### signs of a healthy fish

- Clear eyes
- Healthy appetite
- Bright, even coloring
- Fins completely intact and undamaged

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
- Cloudy eyes or pop-eye
- Elevated scales
- Frayed or discolored fins
- Labored respirations
- Erratic swimming
- Weight loss
- Bloating

### 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; commercial remedies may be effective.
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.

*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
- Airline tubing
- Airstone
- Air pump
- Book about freshwater angelfish or discus

## sources

Ask a store partner about Petco's selection of books on freshwater angelfish or discus 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.

