

# betta

## care sheet



Bettas are known for their jewel-bright colors and spectacular fins and come in a wide variety of morphs. They have been referred to as Siamese fighting fish due to the male betta's extreme aggressiveness toward other bettas.

### facts

|                        |                                     |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| scientific name:       | Betta splendens                     |
| average adult size:    | 2 ½ inches long, not including tail |
| average life span:     | up to 3 years with proper care      |
| diet:                  | carnivore                           |
| minimum aquarium size: | ¼+ gallons                          |
| water temperature:     | 72 to 82°F                          |



**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 betta diet consists of:

- A variety of flakes, pellets, freeze-dried bloodworms and frozen food to ensure complete nutrition.

## feeding

Things to remember when feeding your betta:

- Feed sparingly and no more than fish can eat in 1 to 2 minutes; overfeeding can quickly foul the water, especially in smaller, unfiltered aquariums.
- Thaw frozen foods before feeding.
- Baby bettas require a smaller pellet or finely crushed flake food when feeding.

## housing

- Keep in an appropriately sized aquarium. Bettas must be able to breathe from the surface of the water. They prefer water with little or no current.
- Male bettas are kept individually and do best in habitats of one liter (approximately a quarter of a gallon) or larger. Male bettas can live successfully in a community tank that does not have aggressive fish (such as tiger barbs) or fish that bettas may become aggressive toward (such as fancy guppies). Female bettas may be housed with other community fish or other female bettas.
- 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

- Bettas breathe from the water's surface with their labyrinth organ in addition to their gills.
- Bettas will "flare" fins when threatened or disturbed and to show aggression.
- Male bettas will attack other male bettas and males have also been known to attack similar-looking fish and fish with flowing fins.

## habitat maintenance

**Daily** - Check filter, water temperature and other equipment (if used).

**Weekly** - Check water quality at least once a week. Do a 50% water change for small habitats (less than 2 gallons) once a week. In larger aquariums, change 10 to 25% of the total volume of water every 2 to 4 weeks, or more often as needed.

## compatibility

Male bettas must be kept in individual tanks or be the only betta in a community aquarium. Female bettas can be kept in a community tank. Do not keep male and female bettas together.

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

## signs of a healthy fish

- Active and alert
- Eats regularly
- Reacts aggressively to outside stimulus

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
- Elevated scales
- Unnaturally frayed fins
- Listlessness
- Labored respirations
- Erratic swimming
- Weight loss
- Bloating

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

## 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 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.       |

## shopping list for needed supplies

- Appropriately sized aquarium
- Appropriate food, dry and frozen
- Décor
- Water conditioner
- Net
- Freshwater substrate
- Book about bettas

## sources

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

