

# freshwater eel

## care sheet



Freshwater eels have an excellent sense of smell but can't see very well. Eels have an elongated, snake-like body and vary in size and coloration. They open their jaws to allow water over their gills for breathing. Recommended for experienced aquarists.

### facts

includes:	tire track and spiny eel species
average adult size:	1 to 3 feet long, some species can grow longer
average life span:	depends on species
diet:	carnivore
minimum aquarium size:	20+ gallons depending on species
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 freshwater eel diet consists of:

- Feed frozen, live, pelleted or freeze-dried food.

## feeding

Things to remember when feeding your freshwater eel:

- Feed once a day, usually in the evening.
- Some have teeth to crush their prey.
- Some may refuse food and eat only every 2 to 3 weeks.

## housing

- Keep in an appropriately sized aquarium; a well-sealed aquarium lid is mandatory as eels can easily escape. Provide hiding places and plenty of room to swim.
- Use of copper-based medications is toxic to eels.
- 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 eels are usually sedentary.
- They tend to be nocturnal (active at night) and live in holes or caves.
- Can be aggressive and eat smaller tank mates.

## 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

Do not house with small, slow-swimming species. May become aggressive in an overcrowded aquarium. Check Petco's Freshwater Compatibility Care Sheet for more information regarding your specific species.

## signs of a healthy eel

- Clear eyes
- Healthy appetite
- Even coloring

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
- Listlessness
- Labored respirations
- Erratic swimming

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

## common health issues

Health Issue	Symptoms or Causes	Suggested Action
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
- Filter
- Water test kit
- Full spectrum lighting
- Net
- Thermometer
- Freshwater substrate
- Heater
- Airline tubing
- Airstone
- Air pump
- Book about freshwater eels

## sources

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

