

plecostomus

care sheet



Plecos are well-known algae eaters that originated in the rivers of the Amazon jungle in South America. Plecos attach themselves to hard surfaces with specially adapted mouth parts. They are scavengers and will eat almost anything. Recommended for beginning aquarists.

facts

average adult size:	up to 20+ inches long, depending on species
average life span:	depends on species
diet:	omnivore
minimum aquarium size:	20+ gallons, depending on species
water temperature:	72 to 82° F depending on species, as some prefer temperatures outside these parameters



Habitatitude



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 pleco diet consists of:

- Algae and sinking algae wafers.
- Supplement with raw zucchini as a treat once or twice a week. Raw vegetables should be anchored near the bottom of the aquarium.

feeding

Things to remember when feeding your pleco:

- Feed daily.
- Typically feeds at night.
- Some plecos require driftwood as part of their diet.

housing

- Keep in an appropriately sized aquarium; provide proper filtration to maintain health. Acrylic aquariums are not recommended for large plecos as they will scratch the acrylic.
- 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

- Spend most of the time on the bottom or hanging from the side of the aquarium.
- Attach to glass, rocks and other hard surfaces with their mouths.
- Very territorial toward other plecos.
- Will uproot or eat most live plants.
- Primarily nocturnal (active at night).

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

- Can be kept with community fish; keep only one pleco per tank.
- Check Petco's Freshwater Compatibility Care Sheet for species specific information.

signs of a healthy fish

- Clear eyes
- Eats vigorously
- Attaches to the side of the aquarium or décor or moves along the bottom 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.

red flags

- Loss of color or appetite
- Spots or fungus on body or mouth
- Erratic swimming
- Labored respiration
- Cloudy eyes
- Weight loss
- Bloating
- Frayed fins

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 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 respiration.	Quarantine fish immediately; use a commercial ich remedy as directed.

shopping list for needed supplies

- Appropriately sized aquarium
- Algae or sinking wafers
- Décor
- Water conditioner
- Filter
- Water test kit
- Full spectrum lighting
- Net
- Thermometer
- Freshwater substrate
- Heater
- Airline tubing
- Airstone
- Air pump
- Book about plecos

sources

Ask a store partner about Petco's selection of books on plecos 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 and 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 for more information.

