

GOLDFISH CARE

The goldfish (*Carassius auratus*) historically originates from China, but goldfish have been kept as pets for many years and numerous varieties can be seen in captivity. They can live for up to 40 years if cared for well.

HOUSING

- Goldfish naturally live in cold water so may be kept indoors or outdoors (see separate handouts for setting up a new tank and for pond fish).
- The tank should be as large as possible and positioned away from direct sunlight, room heaters or draughts to avoid sudden temperature fluctuations.
- It is vital to maintain good water quality in order to maintain a healthy fish. The easiest way to do this is by the addition of a filter. The filter will remove waste products and can provide aeration and good water circulation. There are various filter types available and some will need cleaning or changing more frequently than others so check the manufacturer's instructions for your specific filter.
- Additional aeration may be provided by adding an air-stone or air pump if necessary
- Water quality should be checked regularly, both visually and with a water quality test kit. This should include testing for pH, and toxic waste products such as ammonia, nitrite and nitrate which can quickly build up in a tank environment.
- Water should be changed regularly with ~1/3 of the tank volume removed and replaced every 1-2 weeks depending on water quality. Any uneaten food, debris or algae should also be removed at this time. New water should be treated with a water conditioner before adding in order to remove chlorine and any other potentially harmful toxins for your fish.
- Goldfish may be kept alone or with other fish with similar environmental requirements. A quarantine period in a separate tank for a minimum of 4 weeks is recommended before introducing new fish.
- Hide areas should be provided to provide security (at least one hide per fish) and aquatic plants can also be added to provide additional hide areas and an additional food source.

WHAT TO FEED

- Goldfish will eat a varied omnivorous diet, but a good quality commercial food is recommended to provide a suitable balance of nutrients. It is important that the food is stored appropriately according to manufacturer's instructions to maintain nutritional value.
- Overfeeding is a common problem so aim to feed little and often. E.g. twice daily but only as much as can be eaten within a few minutes

HANDLING

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Goldfish should undergo minimal handling since their skin is susceptible to toxins.

INSURANCE

We highly recommend that you take out a pet insurance policy. For a monthly fee your pet can receive the best treatment at an affordable cost. There is normally an excess to pay for each condition then after that costs are covered up to a set limit. Once you have the policy, please provide us with a copy of your insurance details. There are a lot of different companies and policies available and we suggest you contact a number of them for information- we have a leaflet advising what to look out for. Our advice is to choose a policy which provides cover for chronic illness for the life of your pet. If this policy is too much for you then the best cover you can afford will provide piece of mind in an accident or emergency.