

Freshwater Fish

A CAROLINA™ CareSheet

Immediate Care and Handling

When your fish arrive, immediately remove the shipping bag from the box and open it to let in some fresh air. You should have a holding pail (glass, plastic, or stainless steel) or an aquarium already set up and filled with conditioned tap water. (See our General Guidelines CareSheet for information on conditioning tap water.) It is important to gradually transition your fish into the water in which they will live. This process is called acclimation.

Begin the acclimation procedure by floating the open bag of fish in the holding tank or aquarium. After 15 minutes (or longer if the shipping bag is unusually cold), remove and discard about $\frac{1}{4}$ of the water from the bag and replace it with water from the holding tank or aquarium. Wait 15 minutes and repeat the above step.

After another 15 minutes, carefully remove the fish from the bag with a net and place them in the holding tank or aquarium. Discard the water in the shipping bag by flushing it down a sink with tap water.

Classroom Habitat

You should have your aquarium set up 2 weeks prior to receiving your fish. This allows it enough time to establish biological filtration. Choose your aquarium's location carefully. It is best to select an area with diffuse light where the temperature is a fairly constant 18 to 25° C (64 to 77° F). Tropical fish require slightly higher temperatures, from 24 to 26.5° C (75 to 80° F). **Note:** *An aquarium heater is usually needed to maintain proper water temperature in a tropical fish aquarium.*

Because fish and other aquarium animals are cold-blooded, aquariums should not be placed in direct sunlight or unusually bright artificial light. An aquarium in direct sunlight can have a water temperature as much as 5° C above room temperature. At night the water rapidly cools, stressing the fish and leaving them vulnerable to disease. To keep your fish healthy, avoid the 3 deadly stresses: temperature shock, pH stress, and toxin buildup. In addition to monitoring temperature, regularly check the water's pH and the aquarium's filtration system. For more information on setting up and maintaining an aquarium, see

FAQs

What should I do with the water in the shipping bag?

Discard all the shipping water by flushing it down a sink with tap water. It contains waste products given off by the fish during shipment and cannot be used in your aquarium.

The fish are probably hungry, so I should feed them, right?

The fish need time to recover and become familiar with their new environment. Wait a day before feeding them.

How much food should I feed the fish?

Feed the fish only as much as they can eat in a few minutes. Don't feed them more than once a day. Any food that the fish do not eat may become food for bacteria. Too many bacteria can deplete the water's oxygen content, stressing the fish and other animals in the aquarium.

How do I know if my fish are healthy?

A healthy fish is usually active, keeping its fins erect and spread. A diseased fish may have drooping fins or fins tightly pressed against its body, spend a lot of time hiding, or have fuzzy patches growing on it or long streamers of slime that trail from its fins or body. Fish should be observed daily and any change in behavior or appearance noted. A diseased fish should be removed before it transmits its disease to others. Sometimes one fish bullies another, causing the bullied fish to hide even though it is healthy. Place the fish in different aquariums if possible.

Problems? We hope not, but if so contact us. We want you to have a good experience.

Orders and replacements: 1-800-334-5551, then select Customer Service.

Technical Support and Questions: caresheets@carolina.com



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