# Gem City Axolotls LLC Properly Caring for Your Axolotl

## Habitat:

Axolotls should be kept on a bare bottom tank or a thoroughly rinsed, fine sand substrate. Gravel or stones are absolutely NOT recommended, as axolotls can and will eventually, even if by accident, ingest anything they are able to fit in their mouth. Gravel causes impaction which can be fatal. So it’s best to avoid gravel altogether.

The general rule for tank size is 20 gallons for the first axie, and an extra 10 gallons per additional axolotl. Shallow/long tanks (or “breeder” tanks) are preferred to taller tanks since they are mostly bottom dwellers, more surface area is best. Axolotls are very delicate and have soft bodies, so keeping with other fish/snails is not safe for them, no matter how small. Remember, they will try to eat anything they can fit in their mouths, and some fish will even be tempted to pick at your axolotl. Axie tanks should be kept AXIE ONLY!

## Filtration:

Filtration is a personal preference but I have found the best results with sponge or box filters. They are affordable, quiet, extremely low maintenance, and the sponges seemingly last forever- the best part is no replacing cartridges every week! SCORE! Simply remove the sponge and a small bucket of tank water, and give it a thorough squeezing to remove the debris. This way, you still keep that good bacteria you worked so hard to establish! Replace the sponge on the filter and you’re good to go! If you decide to use a box filter, they are just like the sponge filters, except you add your own media which leaves plenty of room for options. Whether you top it off with a trimmed sponge or some Poly Fill, just be sure to rinse it out the same way as you would the sponge filter. Axolotls also don’t need a lot of water flow, so the aeration from the sponge and box filters is just enough. If you decide you’d like a little more movement, you can add an air stone (I like the disc shaped ones!) and they will be just fine. Sometimes you might even catch them playing in the bubbles!

## Temperature & Lighting:

Axolotls are cold water amphibians. So NO heaters!! Their water temperature should be anywhere in the low to mid 60s Fahrenheit. Temps over 70 will lead to stress, loss of appetite, and possibly death. If you’re struggling to keep your temperature down, make sure they are kept in a room away from direct sunlight, and if you use a tank light, decrease the amount of time you keep their light on.

Lighting is okay but not necessary because your axolotl has sensitive eyes. If you choose to use lighting over your aquarium, make sure they have plenty of tubes, tunnels, or cave spots to hide in. They will love you even more!

## Water & Parameters:

Your parameters and having a properly cycled tank is the most crucial part to your lotl’s health. Shrunken, curled, or “featherless” gills are a common indicator of poor water conditions. Make sure you have a complete nitrogen cycle before adding your new pet. Keep in mind this can take about a month, and ammonia and nitrites are harmful to your sensitive salamander, so it’s best to plan ahead. If you haven’t had time to plan ahead, the link below explains a more “safe” way to prepare your aquarium for your axolotl.

Please visit this link below for instructions on how to properly cycle your tank:

<https://axolotlcity.com/how-to-cycle-an-axolotl-aquarium/>

Tap water is fine as long as you use a water conditioner to treat your water changes and remove any chlorine. We highly recommend SeaChem PRIME (comes in a white and red bottle). Other brands like API can damage their slime coat and aren’t considered as safe for your amphibious critter. Once your tank is established, 25-50% weekly water changes are recommended. And if you don’t have one already, invest in a siphon and a 5 gallon bucket. You won’t regret it!

## Diet:

Axolotls kept together will nip at each other if they are hungry, often resulting in the loss of tails, limbs, and gills. To avoid this, make sure they are well fed. Frozen worms and krill are okay, but don’t have much nutritional benefit. Frozen shrimp (peeled) from your grocery store are a good treat if thawed and cut into pieces, but it is not a staple diet. Red wiggler worms and nightcrawlers are a good nutritious staple food. Simply keep a pair of “worm designated scissors” nearby to cut the worm into 2 or 3 pieces. If you prefer to go another route, you can feed sinking salmon pellets, or any other carnivore pellet. Just be sure to remove any uneaten food or it will quickly foul your water. Guppies, mollies, and ghost shrimp are nice treats for them as long as they’ve been quarantined for 30 days to be positive they are disease free. Avoid small feeder fish like Rosie Minnows and goldfish as they contain Thiaminase, which can cause severe vitamin deficiencies and can be fatal if not treated by an exotic veterinarian.

## Our Policy:

Further questions in regards to your new pet can be answered by direct messaging me on Facebook at “Gem City Axolotls LLC”

If you purchased from me locally and later decide your axolotl(s) aren’t for you, please reach out to me via Facebook, email or text and I will reimburse you 50% the cost of the animal IN EXCHANGE for your axolotl. This is to prevent them being rehomed to someone who is either misinformed or who lacks experience.

Best Wishes,

Jessica

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