

# Freshwater Fish

## Carolina™ CareSheet

### Before your fish arrive

Have a holding pail (glass, plastic, or stainless steel) or an aquarium set up and filled with conditioned tap water before receiving your fish (you must chemically treat most US tap water to remove chloramines to make it safe for animals that have gills; see our “General Guidelines on Living Materials from Carolina Biological Supply Company” at [www.carolina.com](http://www.carolina.com) for information on conditioning tap water). If you delay in setting up a habitat until your shipment arrives and dump your fish into a hastily prepared tank, the likely result will be a tank of sick fish. A bit of preparation will greatly improve your chances of success.

### Immediate care and handling

When your fish arrive, immediately remove the shipping bag from the box and examine your fish. Because there may be temperature and chemical differences between the shipping water and your local water, you must gradually transition your fish from one to the other. This process is termed acclimation. Do not delay in doing this.

### Acclimation

Cut open the top of the bag and roll the top down about 3 turns to make a flotation collar, then float 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 ¼ 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. Wait another 15 minutes, then repeat again. 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. Watch our “Freshwater Fish Acclimation” video at [www.carolina.com](http://www.carolina.com) for a demonstration of this procedure.

### Classroom habitat

It is best to have your aquarium set up 2 weeks prior to adding fish. This allows it enough time to establish biological filtration. Although we make every effort to ship healthy stock, new fish occasionally carry diseases that can infect a tank. We recommend that you keep new fish in a tank by themselves for at least 2 weeks. If they remain healthy, you can transfer them into an established tank that already has fish.

Choose your aquarium’s location carefully. It is best to select an area with diffuse light where the temperature is constant, between 18 and 25° C (64 to 77° F). Tropical fish require slightly higher temperatures, from 24 to 26.5° C (75 to 80° F). We recommend

an aquarium heater to maintain proper water temperature in a tropical fish aquarium. For heaters, allow 5 watts per gallon for aquariums that hold up to 30 gallons; allow 3 watts per gallon for aquariums that hold more than 30 gallons.

Because fish and other aquarium animals are cold-blooded, do not place your aquarium 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 *Carolina's Freshwater Aquarium Manual* at [www.carolina.com](http://www.carolina.com).

## 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 you should not add it to your aquarium.

### **Why is the shipping water blue?**

This is due to a medication we add to the water to reduce shipping stress on the fish.

### **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, have fuzzy patches growing on itself, or long streamers of slime that trail from its fins or body. Observe your fish daily for any changes in behavior or appearance. Remove a diseased fish 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: 800.334.5551, then select Customer Service.  
Technical support and questions: [caresheets@carolina.com](mailto:caresheets@carolina.com)



*World-Class Support for Science & Math*

**[www.carolina.com](http://www.carolina.com)**

© 2014 Carolina Biological Supply Company