

loss. Overfeeding promotes fish waste to build up to a harmful level. It is best to feed goldfish only enough flakes that they can eat in five minutes. If food is seen sitting on the bottom the fish have been overfed.

How to handle cloudy water and algae

A few days after fish are added to the aquarium, the water may turn cloudy. This is normal and happens to many new aquariums. If you have a filter, in a few days, the cloud will disappear as the aquarium becomes established. To eliminate this waiting period products are available to help the aquarium clear cloudy water fast. These products are designed to make all floating particles stick together so they can then be caught in the filter.

If you have a fish bowl periodic cleaning and water changes are mandatory. In fact most fish bowls need a water change every 3 to 5 days. Whenever new water is added or a water change is performed you must use a water conditioner.

Eventually you may begin to see algae grow on the glass or gravel. It may appear brown or green. You can use an algae scraper to remove algae from the glass. Products are available that can be used to control algae growth and help reduce maintenance.

A clean aquarium is a healthy aquarium

Dirty aquariums not only look bad, they are unhealthy for the fish. By following a few simple maintenance steps the aquarium will always look beautiful. The following steps are an ideal regiment for keeping a great looking aquarium.

To keep your fish healthy every week or sooner if the water is cloudy you should change about half of the water in your goldfish bowl or aquarium. First, remove half of the old water. Then mix the hot and cold tap water until it is the same temperature as the water your goldfish is swimming in. Next fill a bucket with tap water and add a water conditioner to remove the disinfectants that are toxic to your fish. Now, refill your goldfish bowl or aquarium to the usual level. And, don't forget to add the aquarium salt for the amount of water that you have exchanged.

Goldfish Guide Pamphlet Provided by PIJAC
Pet Industry Advisory Council, Washington DC

© 2003 Pet Industry Advisory Council

GOLDFISH GUIDE

Owning a goldfish is fun! Goldfish come in a variety of colors and shapes.

Goldfish will thrive in a variety of conditions, goldfish bowls, aquariums and even outdoor ponds. If we want our goldfish to live a long life and provide us years of pleasure we must follow a few simple rules.

Getting Started

Goldfish bowls or small aquariums are what hobbyists normally select to keep their goldfish. Bowls have been used to keep goldfish in for years however a small aquarium is a better choice. The larger the bowl or aquarium the more room your new pet will have to move around in and the less often you will need to change the water. Remember your goldfish will grow.

You will need to find a location for your bowl or aquarium where it won't easily get bumped or be disturbed. The location should not be in direct sunlight or near heating vents.

Now you should rinse and clean your goldfish home with tap water. Remember, never use soap or household cleaning products to clean your goldfish home or decorations. You should clean both inside and outside with a safe cleaner. Glass cleaners normally used for home windows may not be suitable. Your pet

shop should have an aquarium cleaner that is safe and easy to use, suitable for this purpose.

Decorating your goldfish home will make your goldfish happier. Make sure to use only decorations like gravel, rocks, ornaments and plants that are designed for use with fish. In fact rocks are available that are not only decorative but help provide a healthy environment for your fish by removing toxic ammonia. Decorations provide a hiding place for your goldfish during times of stress.

Decorations also can add an added interest when you and your friends are looking at your goldfish.

Air pumps are a great addition. They increase the oxygen which helps your goldfish breathe easier and look nice to. You can hook the air pump to a bubbling ornament or air stone.

If you want your goldfish to be happy and healthy, you're going to have to keep the water clean. A small filter is the best way to keep your new goldfish home clean. To select the best filter tell the people in the pet shop about your goldfish and they'll help you select a filter.

Selecting Goldfish

We often think of goldfish as coming in a gold color. Today goldfish are available in many different shapes, colors and patterns. The original breeders in eastern Asia began to see different markings in the offspring they were breeding and started to breed them for these unique traits.

Today you can choose from the common goldfish often called a Comet which is the least expen-

sive. There are wide deep bodied goldfish such as Ryukins and Fantails, varieties with unique eye structures such as the Bubble-Eye or Telescope-Eye. If you desire a goldfish that has scales that resemble pearls there is even a Pearlscale goldfish where each individual scale protrudes in a raised design resembling pearls.

Shapes are not the only choices available. In fact if you desire you can select a completely black colored goldfish called a Black Moor. The Black Moor is a fabulous looking goldfish with a sleek design. From solid colors to patterns and unique features or a combination of these are all available. Take your time and choose what you like and enjoy.

Adding water

Don't ever add goldfish to any aquarium filled with plain tap water. It could be full of dangerous chemicals that can harm the fish. It is important to be aware that municipal tap water is treated with disinfectants (chlorine and chloramines) that are poisonous to goldfish. Using a water conditioner instantly neutralizes these chemicals, making tap water safe for goldfish. In the future when you add water lost due to evaporation you must always use a water conditioner to make tap water safe for your goldfish.

Electrolytes are essential for the uptake of oxygen and release of carbon dioxide and ammonia through the gills. Without the proper amount of electrolytes goldfish cannot properly breathe making them more vulnerable to disease. Adding aquarium salt supplies the important electrolytes goldfish need to help them breathe easier and remain active.

Goldfish can adjust themselves to a wide range of pH. While goldfish will adjust to many pH levels they will be best kept at a pH of 7.5. If your pH is far off from this level your goldfish show signs of loss of appetite, reddening of the fins, sluggishness, and poor health. Products are available to help set the proper pH goldfish need. To help you determine the pH of your aquarium purchase a pH test kit from your local pet shop.

Adding fish to your aquarium

The new fish will be stressed from netting and bagging. The best method to add new fish is to float the unopened bag of fish in the filled aquarium for 10 minutes to allow the fish to adjust to the water temperature. Then, open the bag and gently release the fish into their new home. The bag water may contain fish waste (ammonia), so try to avoid adding the bag water to the aquarium. Whenever fish are netted and handled their protective slime coat is rubbed off. When adding fish to any aquarium, be sure to add additional water conditioner to help relieve stress.

Proper feeding of your fish

Goldfish require a good diet to develop beautiful colors and stay healthy. Goldfish should be fed a well-balanced fish food fortified with vitamins and minerals providing them with the proper nutrition needed for maximum growth and vibrant colors.

Overfeeding is one of the major causes of fish