



Semi-aquatic Newts

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Semi-aquatic newt species commonly kept as pets include: fire belly newts (*Cynops pyrrhogaster*), Eastern newts (*Notophthalmus viridescens*), crested newts (*Triturus cristatus*), Kaiser's spotted newts (*Neurergus kaiseri*).

Health Care: Newts can be very good at hiding illness. We recommend biannual exams and fecal float. Weighing your pet at home can be a good way to catch illnesses early. Please bring them in to see us if their weight changes by 10%, or more. Common problems include: nutritional deficiencies from diets lacking variety, wounds, fungal infections.

Husbandry concerns: House new amphibians by themselves until cleared by your veterinarian, often a quarantine period of six months. Do not keep different species in the same enclosure to avoid introducing diseases and because some species produce compounds through their skin that can be harmful to others. Keep handling to a minimum as the oils in human skin are harmful to amphibians. Always wash your hands before and after handling. Be sure the lid is well fitted and does not contain any holes through which the newt can escape as they can be very crafty and are good climbers. Newts do not generally tolerate high temperatures well and should be kept between 62 and 68F. Note that this is a lower temperature than is recommended for most pet fish species, making it inadvisable to house newts with fish. Fish also tend to nibble at newts toes and can easily injure them. White lights should be turned off at night. Semi-aquatic newts should have an aquarium that is divided in half with glass or plexi-glass secured with aquarium silicone glue. The water side should be lined with gravel with a sloping gradient so the salamander can easily get out onto the land side, and should have a filter. A water aeration system will help keep humidity up and the water well oxygenated. Put 2 inches of aquarium gravel on the land side, topped with sterile potting soil (available from plant nurseries), topped with a piece of turf. Provide multiple cave hides. Drilling a couple of holes in the bottom of the land side will allow for better drainage. Either a mesh top or rows of drilled quarter inch holes should provide some airflow to decrease pathogen growth in the habitat. Mist animals daily. A water change should be done twice a week. Using a filter is recommended to maintain water quality. Be careful with the use of disinfectants when cleaning and wash them off very well, as they can be toxic if absorbed through amphibian skin. In water dishes and tanks, always use dechlorinated water or bottled water as chlorine can be harmful to amphibians.

More on the back!

Diet: Food items should be rotated and varied to provide a balanced diet. Food should be smaller than the newt's head is wide, with the exception of soft worms. Earthworms, dubia roaches and other insects are good for semi-aquatic salamanders. Do not feed fireflies as they are poisonous! Provide food for any insects left in the cage so they don't chew on the newt! Avoid lots of mealworms, feed mostly as treats. Aquatic prey options include daphnia or water fleas, which can be found in streams or ponds, or brine shrimp or tubiflex worms which can be purchased at pet stores. Feed daily as much as the animal will eat at one time. Salamanders typically do not adapt well to eating killed prey. Insects should be housed separately from the amphibian, with only a few offered for feeding to avoid stress.

