

amphibian safety

While amphibians are fun to observe in their habitats, it is highly recommended you handle them as infrequently as possible. Handling amphibians can cause great stress on your pet. As part of their self defense, all amphibians secrete a toxin which can cause an allergic reaction in people. In addition to toxin, amphibians and the water they live in can carry bacteria that may cause illness in people. Women who are pregnant, senior citizens, children under the age of 5 and people with weakened immune systems should consult their physician before handling an amphibian.

Important information:

The most common bacterial diseases that can be present in amphibians and their habitat contents are Mycobacteriosis and Nocardiosis, in addition to *Salmonella*, an orally transmitted infectious disease generally acquired through contact with an amphibian's fecal matter. Human infection can take place by not washing your hands after having contact with any amphibian, the amphibian's habitat, water, décor or substrate. *Salmonella* is of greatest concern for children due to their weakened immune systems.

How to avoid toxin and bacterial exposure:

- Handle amphibians as infrequently as possible
- Always wear latex or nitrile gloves when you need to handle amphibians and/or clean their habitat; always use a net and wet latex or nitrile gloves when moving aquatic frogs
- Gently scoop amphibians into your gloved hand in order to move them

- ❑ Never drink water from an amphibian's habitat or the water in which they were transported
- ❑ Do not touch your face after handling amphibians or the contents of their habitat until you have thoroughly washed your hands with antibacterial soap and water or use hand sanitizer
- ❑ Do not touch food or beverages or their containers until you have thoroughly washed your hands with antibacterial soap and water or used hand sanitizer
- ❑ Always wash your hands thoroughly with antibacterial soap and water or use hand sanitizer before and after handling amphibians and/or their habitat contents

If exposed to toxin:

- ❑ Immediately wash the exposed area with hot water and antibacterial soap, trying to use the hottest water temperature without burning your skin, as hot water works best to help neutralize the toxin
- ❑ Seek medical attention if you believe you are having an allergic reaction or if you believe you are ill from a bacterial infection
- ❑ If seeking medical attention, be sure to write down the species of amphibian you were exposed to in order to ensure proper treatment

If exposed to bacteria:

- ❑ Thoroughly wash your hands with an antibacterial soap and water or use hand sanitizer

Note: The information on this Care Sheet is not a substitute for medical diagnosis. If you suspect you or a family member may be infected, seek medical attention.

Additional information can be found at the Centers for Disease Control at [cdc.gov/healthypets](https://www.cdc.gov/healthypets) and [petco.com/caresheet](https://www.petco.com/caresheet), or contact your local veterinarian or family physician.

