

hard coral

care sheet



“Stony” or “hard” corals have a hard calcium carbonate skeleton. They are a popular saltwater invertebrate for aquariums because of their beautiful colors and unique appearance. Corals are a popular addition to any reef system. Not recommended for beginning marine aquarists.

facts

average adult size:	depends on species, feeding habits and age
average life span:	depends on species
diet:	photosynthetic and/or filter feeders
minimum aquarium size:	29 to 50+ gallons, depending on species
water temperature:	72 to 78°F
specific gravity:	1.023 to 1.025



Note: The information on this Care Sheet is not a substitute for veterinary care. If you need additional information, refer to the Sources section or contact your veterinarian as appropriate.

Developed with and approved by a qualified veterinarian.

hard coral

includes brain corals, montipora, acropora, bubble corals, frog spawn and torch corals

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diet

A well-balanced hard coral diet consists of:

- Some corals contain photosynthetic algae in their bodies called "zooxanthellae" which help provide most of their nutritional needs.
- Liquid or powdered coral diet.
- Mysis shrimp, brine shrimp, krill or micro-plankton can be fed to some species.
- Supplements such as calcium and strontium may need to be added weekly.

feeding

Things to remember when feeding your hard coral:

- Feed tiny bits of brine shrimp, krill, mysis shrimp or micro-plankton once or twice a week.
- Naturally feed at night.

housing

- Keep in an appropriately sized aquarium; full spectrum, high-intensity lighting and strong filtration are essential.
- Use of copper-based medications is toxic to invertebrates.
- **Stable water quality and parameters are critical to the health of aquatic life. If you are unsure of your water quality, Petco provides free water testing.**

normal behavior

- Large stony polyp corals consist of a calcium skeleton with large fleshy polyps.
- Some hard corals require increased lighting, filtration and strong, intermittent water flow.
- Short polyp stony corals consist of a calcium skeleton with numerous small polyps.

habitat maintenance

- **Daily:** Check filter, water temperature, specific gravity and other equipment.
- **Weekly:** Check water quality at least once a week.
- **Monthly:** Change 10 to 25% of the total volume of water every 2 to 4 weeks, or as needed.
- Provide stable décor or rocks for attachment by sessile corals.

compatibility

- Some hard corals can injure others and must be kept segregated.
- Some aquatic life may feed on coral polyps.
- Check Petco's Marine Compatibility Care Sheet for more information regarding your specific species.

signs of a healthy fish

- Bright, even coloring
- Extended polyps
- Free of pests

Avoid overcrowded conditions, which are a major cause of stress and disease. Maintain good water quality with regular water changes and adequate filtration.

red flags

- Loss of color
- Tissue deterioration
- Polyps retracted for extended periods of time

common health issues

Health Issue	Symptoms or Causes	Suggested Action
Body or surface erosion	Poor water quality; nutrient deficiency.	Test and treat water immediately; maintain proper diet.

If you notice any of these signs, check water quality and improve as necessary.

shopping list for needed supplies

- Appropriately sized aquarium
- Appropriate food, dry and frozen
- Décor
- Water conditioner
- Marine aquarium salt
- Filter
- Water test kit
- Full spectrum lighting
- Net
- Thermometer
- Protein skimmer (recommended)
- Marine substrate
- Heater
- Hydrometer
- Book about hard corals

sources

Ask a store partner about Petco's selection of books on hard corals and the variety of private brand products available for the care and happiness of your new pet. All private brand products carry a 100% money-back guarantee.

Because all aquatic life are potential carriers of infectious diseases, such as *Atypical Mycobacterium* and *Salmonella*, always wash your hands before and after handling your aquatic life or habitat contents to help prevent the potential spread of disease.

Pregnant women, children under the age of 5, senior citizens and people with weakened immune systems should contact their physician before purchasing or caring for aquatic life and should consider not having aquatic life as a pet.

Go to cdc.gov/healthypets and petco.com/caresheet for more information about aquatic life and disease.

This Care Sheet can cover the care needs of other species. Go to petco.com for more information.

