

lion fish

care sheet



Lionfish are solitary creatures and quite popular with aquarists. Be careful handling lionfish, since their dorsal spines are venomous and can feel like a strong bee sting.

facts

average adult size:	6 to 18 inches long, depending on species
average life span:	depends on species
diet:	omnivore
minimum aquarium size:	50+ gallons, depending on species
water temperature:	72 to 78°F, depending on species
specific gravity:	1.020 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.

diet

A well-balanced Lionfish diet consists of:

- Frozen food (silversides, krill, squid) and freeze-dried krill.
- May need to feed live food and transition over to frozen food or freeze-dried krill.
- Vary diet to ensure proper nutritional balance.

feeding

Things to remember when feeding your lionfish:

- Feed 1 to 2 times a daily.
- If necessary, feed live fish in the beginning, gradually enticing them to eat other foods.
- Thaw frozen food before feeding.

housing

- Keep in an appropriately sized aquarium; provide rock and décor for hiding places and plenty of room for movement.
- **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

- Mostly solitary, not a very active swimmer.
- Lionfish attack their meal in one swift motion.
- Use caution: dorsal spines are venomous and can feel like a strong bee sting; although most people are not affected by lionfish stings, some humans may be allergic to the venom.

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.
- Introduce new inhabitants to the aquarium gradually.
- Be aware of the lionfish's location within the tank when performing maintenance to avoid getting stung.

compatibility

- Compatible with fish of similar or larger size; will eat smaller fish.
- Check Petco's Marine Compatibility Care Sheet for more information regarding your specific species.

signs of a healthy fish

- Clear eyes
- Healthy appetite
- Bright, even coloring
- Swims slowly

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 or appetite
- Spots or fungus on body or mouth
- Erratic swimming
- Labored respiration
- Cloudy eyes
- Weight loss

common health issues

Health Issue	Symptoms or Causes	Suggested Action
Fin rot	Frayed or disintegrating fins; the base of the fins usually reddens.	Improve water quality; consult your aquatic veterinarian for treatment.
Marine ich	Cysts on fins, gills and skin; labored respiration, excess skin mucus or pale skin.	Treat entire aquarium with a commercial parasite remedy and improve water quality; freshwater dips can dislodge the parasites.

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 lionfish

sources

Ask a store partner about Petco's selection of books on lionfish 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.

