

CARE SHEET

Developed with and approved by a Qualified Veterinarian

Amphibians are some of the more fascinating companion animals you may bring home to be part of your family. 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, children under the age of 5, and people with weakened immune systems should consult their physician before handling a terrestrial invertebrate.

Amphibians

All amphibians secrete a toxin which can cause an allergic reaction in people. In addition to toxin, all amphibians and the water they live in can carry bacteria, such as *Salmonella*, that can cause illness in people. The two most common bacterial diseases that can be present in amphibians and their habitat contents are *Mycobacteriosis* and *Nocardiosis*.

How to avoid toxin and bacterial exposure

- Handle amphibians as infrequently as possible.
- Always wear wet 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 place your hand or arm into a habitat if you have open skin wounds. New and healing wounds carry the same risk so it is best to wait until your wound has completely healed.
- 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.
- Do not touch food or beverages, or their containers, until you have thoroughly washed your hands with an antibacterial soap and water.
- Always wash your hands thoroughly with antibacterial soap and water before and after handling amphibians and/or their habitat contents.

What to do if exposed to toxin or bacteria

- Immediately wash the exposed area with hot water and antibacterial soap. Try to use the hottest water temperature without burning your skin. 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.

Note: The information on this Care Sheet is not a substitute for medical diagnosis and treatment.