

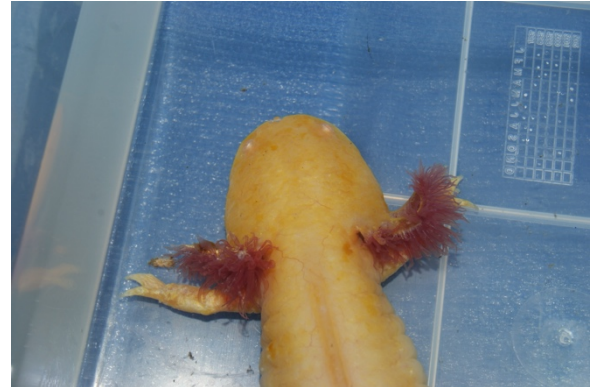


Axolotl Myths and Facts!

Axolotls are increasing in popularity and we have been seeing more and more people bring their axolotl in to our veterinary clinics for various problems. A lot of the problems we see are related to incorrect husbandry as many people don't realise that axolotls require a specialized set up to ensure they can live a healthy and happy life. Today's article dispels a few myths about axolotls, discusses some interesting facts and also looks at a case we had in recently that required surgery.

Myth 1 – Axolotls are fish.

Axolotls are commonly referred to as Mexican walking fish however they are actually not fish at all! They are amphibians and are more similar to a frog than a fish.



Myth 2 - Axolotls like warm water.

Axolotls come from cool, still, fresh water mountain lakes in parts of Mexico. They like their water temperature to be between 17-18°C and can develop serious problems if their water becomes over-heated. This is particularly problematic in some warmer parts of Australia as it can be difficult to keep the water cold enough for them. It is very important to monitor the water temperature of your axolotl aquarium closely.

Fun fact 1

Axolotls have amazing regenerative ability where in some cases they can completely regrow their appendages if they are accidentally damaged or cut off. They are so good at regrowing parts of their body that human doctors are looking into how they do this to see if there is any way that this ability could be used to help people.

Fun fact 2

Axolotls can breathe by 4 different mechanisms! They can use their lungs to 'gulp' air from the surface of their tank as well as using their gills, buccopharyngeal (throat) area and skin to absorb oxygen from water.

Fun fact 3

Axolotls are actually carnivores and like to eat a range of fish, crustaceans and insects.

Case Study – Axel the axolotl

Axel came in to see Dr James as he had developed a lump on one of his gills. After examining him and performing some testing it was determined that the best course of action was to remove the lump and to send it to the lab to be analysed. This involved anaesthetizing Axel to allow the surgery to be performed.





Axolotls can be anaesthetized by adding a specialized solution to their water. We achieved this with Axel by using a number of different baths that all had different concentrations of the anaesthetic solution. Once anaesthetized the lump was able to be successfully removed and Axel recovered well.

