

Beverly's Pet Center

Preventing Fish Loss

You are officially past the 'beginner' stages and you know how to keep healthy water in your aquarium. No ammonia or nitrite and your pH is perfect, but suddenly fish begin to die. It is a frustrating experience. This guide can help put an end to these problems.

Often it is one of the last fish you bought that is the first to go, but that does not mean it was not healthy when you bought it. If the fish looked perky, with healthy fins, no white spots and was breathing at a normal rate, then you picked a good fish. The problem can be hiding away in the tissue of the fish or be carried by a fish without causing sickness or symptoms. People carry all kinds of nasty organisms around, but a healthy body fights them and keeps them in check. **STRESS** is the match to light the fuse. Stress weakens the immune system and can cause a breakout of disease. This stress can be caused by change of environment, poor environment, being picked-on and more. The new fish is subject to many of these until it establishes itself.

The killing culprit is almost always a parasitic disease. When fish die slowly, one today, one tomorrow and your water checks out good, it is usually time to start parasite treatment. Better yet, institute a parasite prevention technique before disaster strikes. We use the parasite control methods described below, including UV and copper on every system in Beverly's Pet Center, to provide you with healthier fish.

There are two common parasitic killers in freshwater and marine aquariums, caused by different organisms, but are having very similar symptoms and treatments. Ich (freshwater) or Cryptocaryon (marine) is seen as white spots on the fish similar to salt. It is easier to see and diagnose than the second more deadly bug. Velvet (freshwater) or Oodinium (marine) is difficult to see. It may appear as a fine rust colored powder, but usually attacks the gills first and may not be visible.

The most effective treatment is a formalin/malachite green compound, like *Ich Out* or *Quick Cure* for all four parasites. Prevention is smart goal that will easily pay for itself in the long run.

Preventive treatment for parasitic diseases

These methods do not give 100% protection against these culprits but they will highly reduce the number and severity of the outbreaks. A brief description of four methods follows:

Copper additives are a simple and inexpensive method to control parasites. *Coppersafe* is a form of copper that is very stable and will remain in the tank at effective levels for about 30 days. **IMPORTANT: This method is for "fish only" tanks, since copper products are toxic to many plants and invertebrates.** A retreatment dose is added approximately once a month or when needed. It is a good idea to make a small investment in a copper test kit to guarantee copper is at an effective level.

Ultraviolet sterilization uses a unit to run the tank water past a fluorescent light of specific frequencies. The frequencies produced kill the small, free swimming stages of these common parasites. It is not difficult to install and reasonably priced for significant protection.

Ozone is a more advanced system that is more expensive and harder to implement. It is mainly used in reef tank environments. One of our senior aquatic staff can explain and help you properly setup an ozone system.

Natural Expellants are the newest weapon in the fight to keep fish healthy. **Herbtana** is a new product used for parasite control. It is a unique, herbal, immune-enhancing stimulant, which reduces parasitic infections. Herbtana supports the fish's immune system, driving off the parasites. Since they cannot return to the fish during treatment, the majority of the parasites will starve without a host.

Artemiss is a sister product. It stimulates the immune system and drives off bacterial and fungal infections.

Recommendation for use of Herbtana and Artemiss:

An effective procedure when adding new fish

Use an initial dose of Herbtana and Artemiss when adding new fish to the aquarium. Twelve hours later use a second dose of both products. This gives the fish an immune system boost during the most stressful period, while acclimating to a new aquarium.

If you do not want to invest in UV or Ozone then CopperSafe is a dead simple way to limit fish loss from parasites and is highly recommended as a minimum parasite control method.

For more information visit <http://www.beverlyspet.com/Fishtalk.htm>