Reef Supplements Overview

Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff

Your success at keeping aquarium corals and invertebrates depends upon your success at recreating natural conditions. In the ocean, there is a constant source of vital minerals, nutrients, and vitamins. In a closed aquarium environment, some of these essential minerals are depleted as corals and invertebrates use them to grow.

Aquarium additives replenish essential mineral and nutrient levels to provide an ongoing source corals and invertebrates need for proper growth, physical strength, biological function, and coloration. They also help the organism resist minor changes in water conditions, as well as diseases.

While the addition and maintenance of calcium and alkalinity in reef aquariums is well recognized, the replenishment rate of other specific minerals and trace elements is not as well understood. Use the following chart as a general guide when selecting the appropriate supplements for your corals and invertebrates. Always follow the manufacturer's recommended dosage directions.

Small or Large Polyp Stony Corals, Giant Clams

Calcium	Helps build skeleton/shell
Strontium	Helps build skeleton/shell
Magnesium	Helps prevent premature calcium precipitation & helps stabilize pH and alkalinity
Buffer (Alkalinity)	Helps build skeleton; Buffers pH & helps maintain proper calcium levels
Iodine/Iodide	Helps heal damage due to excessive light exposure
Trace Elements	Helps facilitate enzymatic and photosynthetic reactions
Plankton Suspension	Provides nutrients that are not produced by the target organism
Vitamins	Helps maintain health, color; and facilitates biological reactions

Leather Corals, Polyp Corals, and Mushroom Anemones

Calcium	Helps maintain high pH
Strontium	Helps with proper health & growth
Magnesium	Helps prevent premature calcium precipitation
Buffer (Alkalinity)	Buffers pH

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Iodine	Helps enhance coloration & coral expansion
Trace Elements	Helps facilitate enzymatic & photosynthetic reactions
Plankton Suspension	Provides nutrients that are not produced by the target organism
Vitamins	Helps maintain health, color; facilitates biological reactions
Crustaceans and other Motile Invertebrates	
Magnesium	Helps prevent premature calcium precipitation & helps stabilize pH & alkalinity
Iodine	A component of the animal's exoskeleton; aids in molting process
Trace Elements	Helps facilitate enzymatic reactions
Vitamins	Helps maintain health, color; facilitates biological reactions
Buffer (Alkalinity)	Buffers pH

Q What should the calcium level be in a reef aquarium?

A The ideal calcium level should be between 350-450ppm. Be sure to test for calcium on a regular basis to monitor and maintain ideal levels.

RELATED ARTICLES

- Supplements for Reef Aquariums
- Invertebrate and Coral Foods Simplified
- Calcium Supplements in your Reef Aquarium

RELATED PRODUCTS

Calcium Supplements

Magnesium & Iron Supplements

Vitamin Supplements

Information Provided by KENT

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