

First Aid Kit for Aquarium Fish

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basic essential tips for aquarium first aid



Despite our best effort to keep aquarium inhabitants healthy, unexpected events can occur. While it may be difficult to predict these events, every hobbyist should be prepared with an aquarium first aid kit.

A basic first aid kit should include a [quarantine tank](#), [medication](#), and fundamental items including [water conditioners](#) and [testing equipment](#). The following overview offers useful tips to optimize aquarium care and reduce stress on you and your fish.

⊕ Invest in a Quarantine Tank

Similar to insurance, the immediate need for a quarantine tank may not seem evident. However, a quarantine tank is an essential part of proper aquarium husbandry. It offers an effective means to prevent and treat illnesses without compromising the main aquarium system. [Aquarium kits](#) like the Eclipse System 12 make great quarantine tanks. Since they already include a filtration system, setup is fast and easy. Generally, quarantine tanks should be about 10 to 20 gallons, but a 29-gallon aquarium or larger is preferable to accommodate larger fish.

I have a sick fish but I also have invertebrates sensitive to medications. What should I do?

A. Whenever possible, the treatment of sick fish should always take place in a separate quarantine or treatment tank. This prevents the unnecessary treatment of healthy aquarium inhabitants and those sensitive to medication.

⊕ Quarantine Tank Tips:

- ▶ **Provide a sense of security.** Use aquarium decorations such as artificial plants to offer shelter for quarantined fish. Artificial plants are inexpensive, easy to disinfect and clean, and help reduce additional stress on your fish.
- ▶ **Keep a record.** A journal, notebook, or even a calendar can be used to keep track of vital information. Document observations, water parameters, length of quarantine period, as well as the medication(s) you are using to treat your fish.
- ▶ **Prevent cross contamination.** Dedicate fish supplies (i.e., [nets](#), [siphon/water changer](#), etc) for quarantine tank use only.

⊕ Keep Basic Medication on Hand

Aquarium fish illnesses due to disease-causing organisms fall under three general categories. They include [bacterial infections](#), [fungal infections](#), and [external](#) or [internal parasites](#). While it is uncommon for aquarium fish to "suddenly" be affected by disease-causing organisms, it is prudent to have on hand a general-purpose remedy for each of the three disease categories. Natural botanical remedies are a great choice for bacterial and fungal infections. For freshwater fish, [aquarium salt](#) serves as an excellent general tonic and stress reducer. It can also be used as a short-term bath to



treat external parasites. [Garlic-based products](#) are gaining popularity for their antioxidant and immune-boosting properties. The active ingredient in garlic helps fish resist harmful bacteria, fungus, and parasites. Keep in mind that the diagnosis of tropical aquarium fish disease is extremely difficult. Misdiagnosis is not uncommon and the medication may not always offer the desired result.



+ Disease Treatment Tips:

- ▶ **When using any type of medication**, never use more than the recommended dosage. Always follow the manufacturer's directions as indicated on the product.
- ▶ **For best results**, isolate and treat the infected fish in a separate quarantine aquarium.
- ▶ **Properly diagnose fish disease.** Hobbyists anxious to help their fish often begin a treatment regimen based on general symptoms. Before starting any treatment program, spend time to properly identify the disease. The most accurate way to diagnose fish disease is to identify the actual disease-causing agent using a microscope.

+ Maintain Water Quality with [Conditioners](#) and [Test Kits](#)

Fish stress due to poor aquarium water quality is the most common cause of disease outbreak. If you observe symptoms of disease, perform a thorough test of vital water parameters. Some key parameters to check include pH, ammonia, nitrite, and oxygen levels. Ammonia and nitrite levels in an established aquarium should be zero. If water parameters are off, perform a partial water change and other corrective measures to reduce fish stress and improve water quality. Fundamental water conditioners to have on hand include chlorine and chloramine remover, ammonia neutralizer, and a bacterial additive.

+ Water Conditioner and Testing Tips:

- ▶ [Chlorine and chloramine removers with aloe vera](#) offer added benefits. On top of effective neutralization of harmful tap water pollutants, they help replace the natural slime coat fish need in times of stress.
- ▶ **Certain ammonia neutralizers** convert ammonia into a nontoxic form. Your aquarium water may test positive for ammonia even though it is in a nontoxic form.
- ▶ **Certain bacterial additives** such as [Immune-Plus](#) have probiotic properties. These products establish a healthy population of "good" bacteria that make it difficult for disease-causing bacteria to thrive.

