

# Fish Diseases and Treatment

By Casey Yeaton

Sometimes no matter how much preventative care you take to protect your fish from disease and pests, it can happen. I have decided to make a list of some of the more common ones, their symptoms and treatment.

## Anchor Worm.

**Symptoms:** Anchor worms are parasites, they are elongated with two egg sacks attached to the end. They are usually found embedded in the muscle of the body wall.

**Treatment:** Manually remove the adults with fine forceps, firmly grip the worm at the point of attachment and pull away. Apply a topical antiseptic to the site. To remove the free living juveniles, treat with metrifonate or other organophosphorus.

## Cotton-Wool Disease

**Symptoms:** Off white marks around the mouth, fins or even the body of the fish. Typical white cotton-wool-like tufts appear in the mouth region, frayed fins and a reddened edge on any ulcers may appear as the infection worsens.

**Treatment:** If caught early it can be treated with an antibacterial or phenoxyethanol based remedy.

## Dropsy

**Symptoms:** Swollen belly, protruding scales ( pine cone effect ). Reddening at the base of fins or vent, long pale faecal casts.

**Treatment:** There is no known treatment that works well. The first thing to do is move the fish to a separate tank and give them the best foods. If this does not help you can treat them with a broad spectrum antibiotic.

## Finrot

**Symptoms:** Stumpy, ragged or split fins. Fins often have white edge.

**Treatment:** Any suitable antibacterial usually cures it. Adding salt to the water helps prevent it in some fish.

## Fish Fungus

**Symptoms:** Appearance is similar to cotton-wool disease. Grey, brown or white tufts on the skin and fins.

**Treatment:** Treat lightly affected fish in the aquarium with a fungus remedy. Heavily affected fish should be moved to a quarantine tank and treated there.

## Hole-in-the-Head Disease

**Symptoms:** The most obvious symptom are small hole that appear around the head and occasionally on the body. These holes gradually develop into tubular eruptions. Often a yellow mucus will trail from these lesions.

**Treatment:** The best method of treating this disease is with medicated food. Unfortunately affected fish often refuse to eat. A few drugs may be used to treat the tank water. Among these are metronidazole and dimetridazole.

## Poe-Eye

**Symptoms:** One or both eyes protrude from the head.

**Treatment:** You can isolate the affected fish and treat with an antibiotic ( preferably by injection ). This method is only affective if it is caused by a bacterial infection. Otherwise carefully monitor the fish and keep it in optimum condition with a good varied diet. If the fish is in distress destroy them painlessly.

## Swimbladder Disorders

**Symptoms:** Difficulty in maintaining their position in the water.

**Treatment:** The exact causes of this disorder are not known. If it is obvious the problem is caused from air-gulping holding their food underwater may help. If it is not caused by air-gulping try moving the fish to shallow water (5 in ) and slowly increase the temperature to 90 degreee farienhiet . Despite the best attempts

at treating, it is often not successful.

#### **Velvet**

**Symptoms:** Yellow-grey coating on the skin, often referred to as gold dust. Scrapping against rocks, in advanced cases peeling of the skin.

**Treatment:** You can use any brand of velvet, white spot or a broad spectrum anti-parasite treatment.

#### **White Spot Disease ( Ich )**

**Symptoms:** White spots on the skin, fins or gills.

**Treatment:** When attached to the fish this parasite will not be affected by chemical treatments. The only way to eliminate it is when it is in its free-living stage with a good white spot remedy.

Here are a couple of the chemicals used to treat some of the diseases.

**Methylene Blue:** Egg fungus, external protozoans.

**Nifurpirinol:** Finrot, cotton-wool disease, systemic bacterial infections.

**Malachite Green:** Fungus, white spot, sliminess of the skin, velvet.

**Copper:** Skin and gill protozoans, flukes etc.

**Dimetridazole:** Hole in the head disease.

**Levamisole:** Internal nematodes.

Information gathered from Manual of Fish Health by Dr. Chris Andrews, Adrian Exell and Dr. Neville Carrington.