

Mexican Walking Fish (Axolotls)—Health Guide

Ambystoma mexicanum

When keeping these fascinating animals as pets, it is very important to ensure that they are kept in the right conditions. In the same way that we monitor water parameters such as temperature, pH and GH for fish, it is vital for the good health of your Axolotl that you monitor these as well. In addition, Axolotls require all of the usual 'house keeping' activities that pet fish require, including regular water changes, appropriate diet, and adequate space.

For great tips about the right conditions in which to keep your pet Axolotl, download the "**Mexican Walking Fish Care Sheet**" from the Aquarium Industries website.

Unfortunately, as they are live animals, they may suffer from a bacterial or fungal disease on occasion. Your Axolotl will be more prone to illness if it is not being kept in the right conditions, as our experience has shown that over 90% of fish health problems are caused by poor water quality.

Once you do have a sick Axolotl, you will need to treat it to help it recover. Treating Axolotls can be difficult as many medications are toxic or unsafe for use on amphibians.

Remember water quality

As with all aquatic life, an analysis of the current water conditions is extremely important in determining if the issue is an environmental problem or pathogenic disease. If left unchecked, poor water quality will also cause disease and death. **Before treating, test your water first.** Correct if necessary.

Required Water Parameters

- Temperature: 10°C—20°C
- pH: 7.0—7.5
- General Hardness: 50—150 ppm

Before commencing any Treatment

Treatment should always be a last resort, once you have ruled out:

- Incorrect water parameters
- Incorrect or inadequate filtration
- Temperature (Remember: Axolotls like the temperature to be between 10°C - 20°C. They will be far more susceptible to disease during summer if their water heats up. For advice on inexpensive ways to cool their water during heat waves, refer to the Aquarium Industries "**Guide to helping your fish cope with extreme heat**" Care Sheet).
- Incompatible tank mates etc.

Take any corrective measures required before making a decision to commence treatment.

Medicating Amphibians

Axolotls are amphibians and need to be treated as such. They absorb many compounds through their skin, so are

very sensitive to various common aquarium medications. Below you will find list of common fish medications, divided into those which are either Safe or UnSafe for use with Axolotls.

Before commencing any treatment, read the directions carefully and follow the recommended dosage strictly. The following is a Guide only. Individual circumstances may vary—contact your local pet store for more detailed information before treating.

Safe or Relatively Safe Products

- Methylene blue - non-toxic in low dosages.
- Melafix (Aquarium Pharmaceuticals) - effective against external sores and bacteria.
- Pimafix (Aquarium Pharmaceuticals) - effective against fungal infections.
- Panacur - at low dosage levels - effective against internal parasites, specifically roundworms.
- Metronidazole (Seachem) - Used at a lower dosage for reptiles as an anti-parasitic treatment in food (inject it into a food).
- Salt baths - 6 gram/litre sodium chloride salt solution for 15 minutes.
- Triple Sulfa (tri-sulfa) - Broad-spectrum antibiotic sold for aquarium fish. Active against. Active Ingredients: sulfamethazine, sulfacetamide, and sulfathiazole.

The following products are toxic to Amphibians, and **NOT** safe to use on Axolotls.

- Sterazin (Waterlife) - contains malachite green.
- Cuprazin (Waterlife) -contains copper sulphate and other toxic cuprous compounds.
- Protozin (Waterlife) - Not safe to use with amphibians.
- Anything containing malachite green and heavy metals.

For more Care Sheets like this, and for important advice about caring for your Mexican Walking Fish, visit our website:
aquariumindustries.com.au