

### MOUTH FUNGUS TIPS

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#### **Columnaris. Flex. Mouth Rot. Cotton Mouth.**

Call it what you want, this is a dangerous disease which, if left untreated, can quickly kill your fish. Caused by Flexibacter Columnaris bacteria, it can flourish in tanks low in oxygen and high in biological matter. Often mistaken for a fungus, the bacteria appears on fish as tiny white or grey specks after stressful conditions such as transportation, a change of water conditions or attack from other fish.



**This bacteria can quickly spread and kill** if not identified and controlled. The disease usually begins with small white to gray marks on the head, fins, or gills. The lips may be involved and the disease may progress to the inside of the mouth. The lesions grow to resemble white, fluffy, fungus-like tufts, but coarser and grayer in color than most fungal infections. Affected fish should be removed and isolated to help prevent the spread of the bacteria to other tank-mates.

#### **PREVENTION**

A healthy tank with well oxygenated, low pH water kept at the proper temperature, free of biological waste will help discourage bacteria growth.

- Keep your water as clean as possible
- Do more frequent water changes and gravel vacc's
- Do not overfeed your fish
- Watch your fish for aggressive behavior
- Make sure your water is well oxygenated - check your air pump and replace air stones
- Check your mechanical filtration, maintain and replace filters as needed
- Regulate the water temperature - check your thermometer and heater - this bacteria will grow more readily in temperatures over 76°F
- Check any new fish for signs of illness - before and for days after introducing to your tank
- Try to keep your fish stress free and healthy
- Adding Aquarium salt at 1 tablespoon per 5 gallons can help prevent most outbreaks

#### **TREATMENT**

A medicated fish food with Oxytetracycline can be fed to affected, isolated fish to stop growth of the bacteria. If the fish have stopped eating, an antibiotic will need to be added to the water. ANIMART's Wet & Wild Staff can help recommend effective treatments for your fish.