


CHAPTER: 11	SECTION: 5	SUBJECT: SURVEILLANCE, PREVENTION AND CONTROL OF INFECTION
TITLE: <b>AQUARIUM MAINTENANCE</b>		
EFFECTIVE DATE: 2/15/99	REVIEWED/REVISED DATE: 04/30/02, 10/19/04, 11/01/05, 5/6/08, 12/14/09, 1/26/12, 02/06/13, 3/17/14, 3/17/15, 4/21/16, 4/19/17, 7/13/18	
ISSUED AND APPROVED BY:  EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR		

**I. PURPOSE:**

To establish procedures that ensure the selection of an aquarium and its placement in the program, residential homes, or personnel offices are carefully done with consideration for the consumer population, safety factors, colleagues, and infection control standards.

**II. APPLICATION:**

To all Community Mental Health of Ottawa County (CMHOC) operated programs.

**III. DEFINITIONS:**

N/A

**IV. POLICY:**

Community Mental Health of Ottawa County supports and recognizes the therapeutic value of having an aquarium in the community living area. Selection of an aquarium and its placement in the program, residential homes, or personnel offices must be done carefully with consideration for the consumer population, safety factors, colleagues, and infection control standards.

- Aquariums are cleaned and maintained on a regular basis.
- No consumers shall clean or maintain an aquarium.
- All employees who have contact with aquariums shall practice safety precautions to prevent human illnesses.

**V. PROCEDURE:**

1. With the approval of their supervisor, employees and groups of employees who request to maintain an aquarium in their work area must maintain it properly.
2. Hands must be washed after contact with aquarium water or fish and after the removal of disposable gloves when cleaning an aquarium. Gloves are disposed of in the hazardous waste container.
3. Dispose of ill or dead fish promptly. Flush down the toilet immediately.
4. Aquarium water must be flushed down the toilet, never into sinks, bathtubs or showers.
5. Aquariums should maintain temperatures as recommended for specific fish that inhabit the tank.

**Common Diseases That Affect Other Fish**

1. Velvet Disease: an external parasitic disease caused by overcrowding in aquariums or to low temperature. The fins and skin of the fish may have a bluish-white discoloration.
2. Ichthyophonus: a bacterial infection secondary to fishes being injured by careless netting, banging against solid objects in tanks which are too small for fish or by bites of tank mates. The fish will exhibit sores on skin, holes, and fin disorders.
3. Popeye Infections: usually a disease caused by either an aftermath of Ichthyophonus or Pseudomonas bacteria. The eyes protrude due to gas forming bacteria causing damage to the lens resulting in loss of sight in the affected eye.

**Aquarium Organisms That May Affect Humans**

1. Plesiomonas Shigelloides is a gram negative bacterial infection found in tropical fish tanks. It causes self-limiting diarrhea illness in humans and can cause cellulitis, a skin inflammation of the subcutaneous tissue or septicemia, a systemic disease associated with persistent pathogens.

**Aquarium Cleaning Procedures**

1. Clean aquarium as needed.
2. Wear disposable gloves.
3. Change the filter according to directions for that type filter.
4. Replace 1/4 of the water in the tank and some of the gravel every 6 months.
5. Use distilled or dechlorinated water for replacement adjusted to one degree Fahrenheit less than that recommended for the type of fish.
6. Dispose of old water by pouring down the toilet, lifting the seat prior to this procedure.
7. Clean any splashes on the toilet seat, floor, or other soiled surfaces with a disinfectant cleaner or 10% bleach solution.
8. Remove disposable gloves and discard in a plastic trash bag. Wash hands.

**VI. ATTACHMENT:**

None Applicable.

**VII. REFERENCE:**

APIC Mental Health Focus Group and BHC Standards for Behavioral Health Care, (1997-98).