

PREPARING FOR CHLORAMINES

Fish, Amphibians and Fish Pond Owners



NEW JERSEY
AMERICAN WATER

Chloraminated water is safe for drinking, bathing, cooking, and all other uses we have for water every day. However, there are two groups that need to take special precautions when using chloraminated water: kidney dialysis patients and fish, pond and aquarium owners. Below are some answers to commonly asked questions for fish and amphibian owners.

What are chloramines?

Chloramines are a disinfectants used to treat drinking water. They are formed by mixing chlorine with ammonia at carefully controlled levels. Similar to chlorine, chloramines are effective at killing harmful bacteria and other germs. Chloramines have been used safely in the United States for many years.

Why are chloramines toxic to fish, reptiles and amphibians?

Chloramines are a combination of chlorine and ammonia, both which are harmful for fish, amphibians and reptiles. When water that contains chloramines is digested by humans that water is neutralized by the digestive system before it reaches the bloodstream. Since chloramines enters directly into the bloodstream through gills this inhibits the red blood cells ability to carry oxygen.

What precautions should fish shops, hobbyists and aquaculture businesses take?

Chloramines must be neutralized or removed from the water that is used in fish tanks, ponds and aquariums. Unlike free chlorine, chloramines do not dissipate as quickly from water. Chloramines should also be removed from the water that you use to top off fish ponds. Please consult your local pet store for more information.

Are chloramines toxic to saltwater and freshwater fish?

Yes. Chloramines is toxic to saltwater and freshwater fish, as well as reptiles, turtles, and amphibians where the water comes into direct contact with the bloodstream through its gills.

Will letting water sit for a few days cause chloramines to disappear?

No. Unlike chlorine which will eventually dissipate, chloramines may take weeks to disappear.

What methods are available to remove chloramines and ammonia?

Chloramines can be removed in two ways: a carbon filter that contains a high quality granular activated carbon, or water treatment products designed to remove chloramines. Ammonia must also be removed because of the potentially toxic effect it may have on fish. Biological filters and natural zeolites can be effective at removing ammonia.

Will chloramines harm other pets?

No. Chloramines is only potentially harmful to fish and other aquatic or semi-aquatic life. Chloramines is safe for cats, dogs and birds.

Will boiling or reverse osmosis remove chloramines?

No. Chloramine cannot be removed by boiling water, reverse osmosis, adding salt or letting water stand in an open container to dissipate.

Is there a test to determine if the water is safe for aquatic animals?

Yes. There are tests available. Aquarium owners can monitor the ammonia and "total" chlorine (not free chlorine) concentrations using a total chlorine test or combined chlorine test. These tests can be found at your local pet or pool supply stores.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

If you have additional questions, please contact our Customer Service Center at 1-800-272-1325.

Hours: M-F,
7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

For emergencies:
We're available
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