

CARE SHEET

Developed with and approved by a Qualified Veterinarian

Aquatic life can be a fascinating and soothing addition to your household. It is important to keep in mind that aquatic life and the water they live in can carry bacteria that can cause illness in people. In addition to bacteria some aquatic life have defense mechanisms which can cause injury in people. Some aquatic life are venomous and exposure to such can cause an allergic reaction in people. Women who are pregnant, children under the age of 5 and people with weakened immune systems should consult their physician before handling aquatic life.

Aquatic Life

Some aquatic life have defense mechanisms which can cause injury and/or an allergic reaction in people. Aquatic life and the contents of their aquarium can also contain bacteria which can cause illness in people. The two most common bacterial diseases that can be present in aquatic life and their aquarium are *Mycobacteriosis* and *Nocardiosis*.

How to avoid injury, toxin and bacterial exposure

- Avoid contact with all spines, barbs or fangs anytime you must place your hand and/or arm into an aquarium. Ensure you are aware of all aquatic life's location within the aquarium.
- Always use a scoop or cup to capture fish instead of a net. A net can injure the fish and may increase the chance of contact with a spine, barb or fang.
- Never place your hand or arm into an aquarium if you have open skin wounds. New and healing wounds carry the same risk so it is best to wait until your wound has completely healed.
- Never drink water from an aquarium or the water in which aquatic life are transported.
- Do not touch your face after handling aquatic life or the contents of their aquarium until you have thoroughly washed your hands with antibacterial soap and water.
- Do not touch food or beverages, or their containers, until you have thoroughly washed your hands with an antibacterial soap and water.
- Always wash your hands thoroughly with antibacterial soap and water before and after handling amphibians and/or their habitat contents.

What to do if exposed to toxin or bacteria

- Immediately wash the exposed area with hot water and antibacterial soap. Try to use the hottest water temperature without burning your skin. Hot water works best to help neutralize the toxin.
- Seek medical attention if you believe you are having an allergic reaction or if you believe you are ill from a bacterial infection.
- If seeking medical attention be sure to write down the species of aquatic life you were exposed to in order to ensure proper treatment.

Note: The information on this Care Sheet is not a substitute for medical diagnosis and treatment.