

How to Feed Your Fish:

The Leading Cause of Aquarium Failure

The leading cause of failure with aquariums is overfeeding. Over-feeding can pollute a tank so rapidly, that the aquarium will appear dirty a week after we've cleaned it. One day of over-feeding can release more pollution into an aquarium than an entire month of normal fish waste accumulation.

Are You Overfeeding?

The next time you feed your fish, drop in the amount of food that you usually feed, then stand back and watch your fish eat from the front of your aquarium. If you see pieces of food going to the bottom of the tank, **YOU'RE OVERFEEDING!** Fish are cold-blooded (poikilothermic) animals. Their body temperature is nearly the same as the water they live in. They do not need to keep their bodies warm the way that warm-blooded (homoeothermic) animals do, so they use a lot less energy and therefore need less food to survive than warm-blooded (homoeothermic) animals.

Use This Method

When feeding your fish, feed them only as much as they can eat in a few minutes - a little at a time! Take a small amount of food, such as several flakes, and drop it into the tank. Then stand away from the aquarium, and watch your fish eat. When the fish have finished eating the first portion, drop a few more pieces in, and let them finish those. After two or three portions, you'll notice that the fish either lose interest, or suck in the food and spit it out. Stop feeding! Your fish aren't hungry anymore! Never throw in a "pinch" of food. A "pinch" is usually **TOO MUCH**.

If you have a Wet/Dry Filter, and food floating on the surface is drawn into the prefilter, try putting the portions of food in below the water's surface, and as far from the filter intake as possible. That way, food will not accumulate in the prefilter. When feeding frozen food, take a very small portion (or one cube), and allow it to partially defrost before feeding. Feed as you would dry flake foods, breaking off small pieces of the partially defrosted food, and waiting for your fish to eat each piece before adding more.

Don't crush the food. Even the smallest fish have teeth, and will bite off what they need. Crushed food will settle to the bottom faster, and pollute the water. Bottom feeders such as catfish and loaches should be fed a sinking type food sparingly three times a week.

In saltwater, Moray Eels and other large carnivores should be fed three to five times a week. If some of your fish are smaller or more timid about eating, don't worry-they'll get their share. As the larger, more aggressive fish get full, they'll slow down on their feeding, and the smaller fish will "clean up" the leftovers.

Signs of Overfeeding

Algae begins to grow back on aquarium surfaces within a week after it's cleaned.

Water is continually cloudy with a white appearance.

When we test the water for ammonia, we always get a slight reading. In a healthy tank, ammonia will always test at ZERO!

The algae that grows in the tank is slimy and black or red, instead of hair-like and green.

Uneaten food is left at the bottom of the tank after feeding.

Uneaten food is accumulating in the filters.

Uneaten food accumulates in the prefilter of your Wet/Dry Filtration System.

The aquarium sometimes has a "fishy" odor. Properly fed aquariums have no odor.