

TREATMENT OF FUNGUS IN TURTLES

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SYMPTOMS

Fungus is not always easy to spot.



Here you can see fungus on a Map Turtle foot. As you can see in the picture it comes in patches. When in the water it often looks fluffy. Here it would be easy to see out of the water. It is mostly pale grey coloured but may be greenish, brownish or yellowish.



Here's some fungus on a Spotted foot. With this animal, once you take it out of the water and the leg is withdrawn there are no clues.

The fungus can manifest itself on the feet, in the nooks and crannies of joints- in fact anywhere on the skin. In my experience I have most often seen it on the feet.

When an animal has fungus often the affected limb is withdrawn so the fungus is not readily evident. Sometimes the first clue is that the animal is not moving normally. If you have many animals it's not always easily spotted.

As fungus takes hold of the animal, it then becomes darned obvious because of the extended fluffy covering on the skin, by that time the animal is in serious danger. Initially it is on the surface but then with time it invades the body.

Turtles also normally shed skin, imagine what happens to humans when we get sun burnt and get peeling. It looks very similar and is normal.

CAUSES

There are many causes of fungus and as with humans it can be transferred from person to person. Imagine athletes foot and how that can be spread.

It is often stated that its down to poor water conditions, well that may be that case in the extreme. I do have very good water conditions but have still had doses of fungus.

However good water condition is a prerequisite, so if you are keep animals like spotted turtles start using rain water as a first step and with that should come a low ph. Likewise with Diamond Backed Terrapins check water salinity and an appropriate ph. I have no issue with tap water that has been chlorinated provided it has had a chance to breathe and disperse the chlorine .

Sometimes the lack of being able to dry out is a contributory factor so the basking spot is an important place.

CURE

1. I take out everything that can carry the fungus spore. and give the tank and the filter a good vacuuming.
2. My tank is about 60litres, into that I put about 20ml of HiBiScrub (chemist) - this is an antiseptic (an alternative is Nolvasan). It contains Chlorhexidene acetate 2%. It's used in hospitals for scrubbing down. I run the filter for about half an hour and generally make sure everything is soaked in the stuff. I then drain it all. I take out any particles of crud. I refill with rain water and bring up to temperature.
3. Each animal that was in the tank is dried off and placed into its own box with a bit of tissue on the bottom. Every animal is treated with Clotrimazole by Canesten (chemist). This is a common antifungal treatment. I apply the medication simply by dripping it into each of the four corners and let it soak in between the joints. You don't need much. I leave them in their box for about 3 hours.
4. Once the water is warmed up I give it a dose of Protozin (pet shop) which is used as a general water treatment for fungus. The dosage is on the bottle.
5. After treatment I put all the animals into the new water.

6. On day 2 I repeat the Protazin dose. I also treat the animals with the fungal infection again as before.
7. On day 3 I repeat day 2
8. On day 4 I repeat day 3
9. On day 5 I do nothing.
10. On day 6 I repeat the Protazin.
11. By day 6 the fungus should have dropped off and signs of skin flaking may occur as part of repair process.
12. By day 10 turts should be moving about and eating as normal.