

Subj: **FISH AQUARIUM CARE AND MAINTENANCE**

- Ref: (a) CDC, MMWR Recommendations and Reports, June 6, 2003  
(b) “Watch Your Fish Tanks for Waterborne Illnesses”, MacArthur, Steve; OSHA Healthcare Advisor, June 25, 2010

**Policy:**

Some select (must be pre-approved by Infection Control) clinical areas at NMCP command maintain a fish aquarium in the patient waiting room for the relaxation and enjoyment of patients and visitors. Because the patient population may include those who are immunocompromised, care and maintenance guidelines must be followed to avoid the possibility of infection and illness.

**Procedure:**

1. The aquarium will be labeled with the following warning: “Please do not touch the aquarium or water inside. Aquarium cover must remain closed at all times.”
2. Aquarium cleanings will be scheduled every 2-4 weeks or sooner if the tank water appears cloudy or dirty.
3. Cleaning must be done when no patients or guests are present in the waiting room area. This precaution is done to avoid the possibility of any patient or visitor coming in contact with the water or equipment.
4. The aquarium cleaning regimen is as follows:
  - a) Gather the cleaning supplies and equipment from the locked cabinet and take to area where aquarium is located.
  - b) Staff who clean the aquarium must wash hands and lower arms before cleaning the tank to avoid contaminating the fish with any foreign bacteria.
    - Gloves, i.e., household-type kitchen/cleaning gloves, and aprons must be worn to prevent tank water from contaminating clothing and skin.
    - The gloves can be used for multiple cleanings, must be allowed to air dry between cleanings, and used only for aquarium cleaning purposes.
  - c) Unplug and remove all UL® approved electronics from the tank before cleaning.
  - d) Spread a blanket or towel on the floor to place the lid, all aquarium supplies and decorations.
  - e) Using designated receptacles, remove up to 50% of the dirty water from the aquarium, leaving fish in place during this process.
  - f) Dispose of the waste water in a toilet, flushing the contents twice.
  - g) Clean the inside aquarium glass, decorations, filter, heater, and thermometer using a designated aquarium brush or sponge and plain water. Return cleaned items to aquarium.
  - h) With a designated clean bucket, refill the aquarium with fresh, temperature-appropriate water and the appropriate amounts of fresh water aquarium conditioners/chemicals.

- i) Replace the lid securely.
- j) Dispose of any used filtering materials, aquarium debris into a securely sealed plastic bag.
- k) Place dirty linens into a hospital laundry bag.
- l) Staff cleaning the aquarium should thoroughly wash arms and hands with antimicrobial soap and water.
- m) Return aquarium cleaning supplies and equipment to the locked cabinet away from patients or guests.
- n) Wipe exterior plastic surfaces of the tank with hospital-approved sanitation wipes (Sani-Cloth®), observing the correct contact time. Do not use these wipes on the glass as it causes clouding. Glass cleaner should be used for this purpose.
- o) Wash hands.
- p) Call Housekeeping to disinfect any toilets or sinks used during the cleaning process.

5. All chemicals that are used in the maintenance of fish tanks must be listed in the Materials Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) workbook and must be listed on the Authorized Users List (AUL).

Effective Date: 10 Apr 2012