

# **Betta Fish Parasite Guide**



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# Introduction

There are many types of fish parasites out there. This guide will help you identify each one and learn the various proper treatments.

First to know there are 3 types of parasites that can infect fish. They are crustacean, worms, and protozoa. Though some of the following conditions are rare, especially in betta fish, it is still best to be prepared for anything.

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# Section 1:

## Protozoan Parasites

### Ichthyophthirius (Ich,Ick)

For a full look at Ick, click here:

[Betta Fish Ick](#)



**Classic Parasitic Symptoms:** You

will see your betta clamping his/her fins and rubbing against objects due to irritation. In the final stages of ick you will notice lethargy and severe weight loss.

**What sets Ich apart:** The number one indicator of ich will be small white specks that look like grains of salt on your betta's body.

**Treatment:** Raise the water temperature in your tank or bowl. Add one teaspoon of aquarium salt per gallon of water. After a 2 days perform a [water change](#). If more drastic medicating is required I recommend General Cure from API.



## Oodinium (Velvet, Gold Dust Disease)

For an in-depth look at Oodinium, click here: [Betta Fish Oodinium](#)

**Classic Parasite Symptoms:** Your betta will clamp his/her fins and rub against objects. Other symptoms include appetite loss and lethargy.

**Whats sets Velvet disease apart:** A gold dusting or film on the body. If you turn off the lights and use a flashlight you'll have a betta shot at spotting the growths.

**Treatment:** This parasite is related to algae so the first step is to turn off the lights. In darkness the disease will suffocate. Also, much like the treatment for Ich, raise the water temperature and add 1 teaspoon of aquarium salt per gallon.

**Costia**

**Chilodonella**

**Epistylus**

**Trichodina**



These four parasites are all diagnosed and treated the same so I've lumped them together rather than repeating the same information.

**Classic Parasite Symptoms:** Clamping of the fins and lethargy. Fish lays on the bottom of the tank.

**What sets these infections apart:** Increased mucus on the skin which will look white and milky. Also rapid gill movement caused by labored breathing

**Treatment for Costia, Chilodonella, Trichodina and Epistylus:** Costia will respond to increased water temperature but the other three tolerate a pretty wide range in temperature. They all tolerate salt pretty well so medication will be necessary. Use a medication that includes the ingredients formalin and malachite green. If you are having a tough time diagnosing your fish use General Cure by API. It treats all parasitic infections.

## Section 2:

### Crustacean Parasites



#### Lernaea (Anchor Worms)

For an in-depth look at Lernaea, click here: [Betta Anchor Worms](#)

**Classic Parasite Symptoms:** An infected betta will be lethargic half of the time and will rub against items in the tank when not laying about.

**Whats sets Lernaea apart:** White or green threads will be visible hanging from the body of the fish. More advanced infections will cause open wounds and lesions.

**Treatment:** You can manually remove worms with tweezers if the worms are mostly external. Then treat with Stress Coat. A salt bath consisting of 1 tablespoon aquarium salt to 1 gallon of water is beneficial. Dip your betta in the bath for about 5 minutes. Be sure to monitor for any adverse reactions. General Cure from API can be administered if nothing else will work.

## Argulus (Fish Lice)

Fish lice can be seen by the naked eye and is the biggest parasite of the fish world. They are incredibly rare in indoor fish but can be acquired by live food.



**Classic Parasite Symptoms:** None.

**Whats sets Argulus apart:** You will see visible moving discs usually around the gills and fins. Hemorrhaging may occur due to embedding between scales.

**Treatment:** When you net your betta fish you will notice that the lice will abandon ship. So prepare a container of water as you would for a water treatment. Net your betta and dunk him in and out of his tank a few times to shake the lice off. Then place your betta in the new water and perform a complete [water change](#) on his home. If you house your betta fish in a large tank with other fish you will need to use a parasite treatment such as, you guessed it, General Cure by API.

## Section 3:

### Parasitic Worms

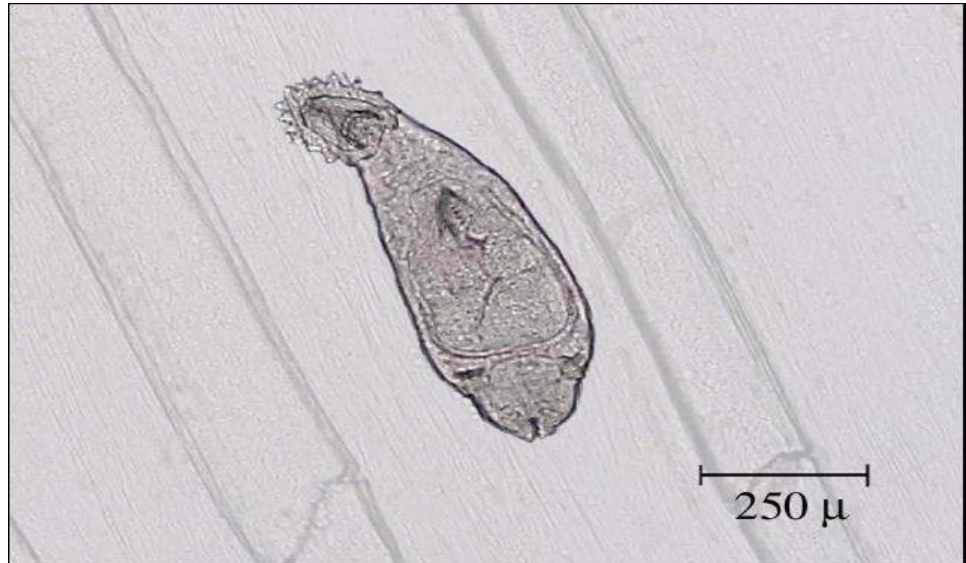
#### Camallanus



**Symptoms:** Bloated belly as this is an internal parasite. This will cause your betta to lose interest in eating. As the worm ages and feeds on the blood of your fish it will eventually pass out of the body. At this point you will see red worms protrude from your bettas anus.

**Treatment:** You will need to treat your betta fish with a medication that contains a de-wormer. Many products will be effective including Dylox, Parasite Guard and General Cure. After treatment be sure to perform a [water change](#) and thoroughly vacuum your gravel with a siphon to remove any larvae.

## Flukes



For an in-depth look at Flukes, click here: [Betta Fish Flukes](#)

**Classic Parasite Symptoms:** Flukes will cause your betta to rub up against items and have an increase in mucus.

**Whats sets Flukes apart:** You will see tiny dark spots on your betta's gills and his/her breathing will be labored.

**Treatment:** The best treatment is a daily salt bath for three days. For the salt bath put 1 tablespoon of non-iodized salt in 1 gallon of water. Place the infected fish in this water for five minutes then return it to its tank. Be sure to watch your betta closely to watch for any adverse affects. If this treatment fails purchase a medication that contains the ingredient formalin.



## Tapeworms

**Symptoms:** Your betta will have a swollen stomach with weight loss elsewhere. Loss of balance is common as well.

**Treatment:** Just as Camallanus requires a de-wormer so does the treatment of Tapeworms. Many products will be effective including Dylox, Parasite Guard and General Cure. I also recommend you purchase anti-parasite medicated food. Strictly use the medicated food for at least 1 week.

Now that you have learned about the various parasites that could harm your betta, keep this guide handy for when you need it most. Prevention is the best key to keeping your betta happy and healthy.



To read about other various betta diseases you can visit our betta health section here: [Betta Fish Health](#)

Wanna be really prepared? See what we recommend you should keep around the house - [Betta First Aid Kit](#)



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