
Information concerning the care of leeches for medical use

Leeches are sensitive animals which need some minimal conditions for their survival. In the summer time, during the reproduction period, they are especially susceptible for outside stress factors.

With their well developed perception organs they are able to sense changes of light, insufficient chemical conditions of the water, temperature changes etc. Increased stress (for example thunder storms) may cause a decline in vitality or lead to death.

Minimal conditions for medical use are as follows:

Container with water: 2 – 3l are sufficient for 20 – 50 leeches.

Temperature: 15° Celsius are optimal, room temperature is also possible.

Light: Semi dark is optimal, normal course of daylight is also possible. Avoid unnecessary water movement and other disturbances if possible.

Water Chemistry:

no chlorine

carbon under 9 dHg (German degree of hardness)

PH < 7

Ammonium < 0,5mg/l

Nitrate < 25mg/l

Nitride < 0,4 mg/l

O2 5 –8 mg/l

To bypass this problem you may use deionized or distilled water, then however you must add minerals. Simply add approximately 0,3 – 0,5 gram sea salt (aquarium shop) per liter to the demineralized water. A careful change of water at least every second day is necessary to reduce the germ count (especially of aeromonas sp.) ; for a long term keep prior to use it is sufficient to change the water once a week. During the week prior to use you should change the water daily. The container must be disinfected regularly. Please note when using disinfectants that even minimal residues may be deadly for the leeches. It is advisable to add some sharp edged stones for shedding. Immediately prior to use the animals need some hours of rest.

Please avoid extreme temperature variations during the change of the water.

Seal the holding container well (e.g. linen and rubber seal). - - Danger of escape!!

Leeches are living beings and react very delicately to insufficient conditions.