

GEAR FIRST LOOK

A handful of medications we're excited about this month...

ESHA GDEX, ALX AND NDX

First look: Nathan Hill

Prices: gdex £8.99 for 20ml; ndx £10.99 for 20ml; alx £10.99 for 20ml

More info: eshalabs.eu

Three for the medicine cupboard right here. eSHA gdex is a praziquantel-based treatment against flukes and tapeworms. The active ingredient is outstanding at controlling the likes of *Gyrodactylus*, but at the same time it is tolerated by a range of plants, shrimp and filter bacteria. Combine it with some eSHA Hexamita and you've got an all-round disease control for wild-import cichlids like Discus.

eSHA ndx is levamisole-based (for many years we weren't allowed this) and it's pretty much the best thing there is for treating

roundworm – in our fishes' case the usual problem worm is *Camallanus*, especially in wild-caught cichlids, though this'll also be one to consider for emaciated Clown loach.

eSHA alx is one for the goldfish fanciers. With the active ingredient lufenuron (actually intended as a flea treatment for dogs), this stuff obliterates the likes of *Argulus* and anchor worm. Just remove ANY shrimps or crayfish before you use this, as it'll show no mercy. It's temperature sensitive with a longer treatment duration at below 17°C.



VERDICT

True, £30 is a big spend just for a medicine cupboard filler, but if you're keeping wild-import fish, or susceptible cichlids, then you'll want this lot on hand.

EASE OF USE: ★★☆☆☆
 FEATURES: ★★★★★
 VALUE: ★★★★★
 OVERALL: ★★★★★

VIRKON AQUATIC TABLETS

First look: Nathan Hill

Price: £19.99 for 50 tablets

More info: virkon.com

Here's one to handle with extreme care. It's also one to hope you'll never have to use. Virkon Aquatic tablets are designed to disinfect – to really disinfect. Used correctly, they're effective against Rhabdoviruses, Herpesviruses, Togaviruses, *Aeromonas* bacteria, *Pseudomonas* bacteria, *Vibrio* and many more.

The packaging comes with a lot of warnings, because this stuff is harsh. To use it – which you'd do if you had to clean up after a complete disease disaster before starting over again – you dissolve one tablet in 500ml of water, then wet all contaminated surfaces with it before leaving for 10 minutes and then rinsing off. When using it, gloves, goggles and protective clothing (including face protection) are all advised.

This is a product very much for the hardcore aquarist, especially one with a fish house subject to high hygiene protocols. But if you're ever unfortunate enough to get such a virulent disease that you need to start over, then this will reset everything beforehand.



VERDICT

Don't get this stuff on a whim. Ensure you know what you're doing and that you've had experience with harsh disinfectants before, because if you get this one wrong it will hospitalise you.

EASE OF USE: ★★☆☆☆
 FEATURES: ★★★★★
 VALUE: ★★★★★
 OVERALL: ★★★★★

CLOVERLEAF ABSOLUTE PARASITE+

First look: Nathan Hill

Prices: From £14.99 for 250g

More info: cloverleaf.uk.net

I'd call this stuff the disease nuke. Rather than targeting individual diseases, Absolute Parasite+ does what its name suggests and pretty much goes after the lot, all at once. Active ingredients are levamisole, flubendazole, cyromazine and diflubenzuron, so there are a LOT of bases covered here.

Among the diseases it claims to be effective against are skin and gill flukes, costia, chilodonella, *Trichodina*, white spot and even *Hexamita*, as well as bigger things like anchor worms, *Argulus* and leeches. It kind of goes without saying that any shrimps and snails in your tank will be obliterated by it too.

It's a powder, and is dosed by weight at a rate of 1g per 50 l. It comes in three sizes – 250g, 500g and 1kg bags.

Best thing about it? Used correctly, it won't hurt filters.



VERDICT

Whoever decided to stick all these things together in one bag deserves a hug. It's just a shame we had to wait so long to leave behind the 'abrasive' medications we used to use to treat these conditions.

EASE OF USE: ★★★★★
 FEATURES: ★★★★★
 VALUE: ★★★★★
 OVERALL: ★★★★★