



AMMONIA SPIKE

Fish are gasping, weak, hiding, or clamping fins even though the water looks clear.

CLEAR WATER IS NOT PROOF. TEST AMMONIA.

DBC
AQUATICS
RESCUE. SOLVE. PREVENT.

AT A GLANCE

O₂**ADD OXYGEN**

Air stone or strong surface ripple.

0

STOP FEEDING

Reduce new waste immediately.

NH₃**TEST WATER**

Ammonia, nitrite, pH, temperature.

FILTER

PROTECT BACTERIA

Keep established media wet and running.

FIRST 30 MINUTES - DO THIS IN ORDER

1

ADD OXYGEN NOW

Aim the filter return upward. Add an air stone if available. Confirm water is moving through the filter.

2

STOP FEEDING

Pause food while the aquarium is unstable. Remove obvious uneaten food, decay, or a dead organism.

3

TEST AND RECORD

Test ammonia and nitrite. Check pH and temperature. Read the kit in neutral light and write down the results.

4

PREPARE SAFE WATER

Condition replacement water for the full new-water volume and match the tank temperature closely.

5

MAKE ONE CORRECTION

If ammonia is detected or fish are distressed, make a controlled partial water change. Let the tank mix, then retest.

6

PROTECT AND MONITOR

Leave biological media in place. Watch breathing and swimming. Find what changed and keep testing until ammonia stays at 0 ppm.

DO NOT DO THIS

- ✗ Do not medicate first.
- ✗ Do not feed to see if fish perk up.
- ✗ Do not replace all filter media.
- ✗ Do not deep-clean the tank and filter together.
- ✗ Do not use untreated replacement water.
- ✗ Do not trust clear water without testing.

SIGNS YOU MAY SEE

- Fast breathing
- Red or irritated gills
- Clamped fins
- Weak swimming
- Hiding or bottom-sitting
- Several fish affected

DBC RESCUE METHOD

Stop › Observe › Test › Diagnose › Act › Monitor › Prevent

EMERGENCY TARGETS

Ammonia	0 ppm
Nitrite	0 ppm
Context	Read ammonia with pH and temperature.
Retest	After water mixes, then later today.

SCAN FOR FULL GUIDE

dbcaquatics.com/ammonia-spike

GET EXPERT HELP IF...

- Fish collapse or cannot stay upright.
- Severe breathing distress continues after correction.
- Ammonia returns or multiple fish keep dying.

Contact an aquatic veterinarian when distress is severe or continuing.