



Quick Reference: Understanding Water Parameters

Parameters and Their Roles		Proper Levels	When to Test	
 CaCO₃ ALKALINITY	ALKALINITY Stabilizes pH; Essential for coral health and growth	7-10 dkh	1-2x per week	
 NH₃ AMMONIA	AMMONIA Toxic to coral, fish and other tank inhabitants	0 parts per million	daily during cycling	1x per month
 Ca CALCIUM	CALCIUM Essential for coral health and growth	400 - 450 parts per million	1x per week	
 Mg MAGNESIUM	MAGNESIUM Proper levels help keep calcium carbonate in solution to stabilize alkalinity; Helps build the skeleton of hard corals	1250 - 1500 parts per million	every other week	
 NO₃ NITRATE	NITRATE Small amounts are needed for tank health; High levels are damaging to corals and can contribute to algae growth	0.025 - 5.0 parts per million	1x per week	
 NO₂⁻ NITRITE	NITRITE High levels are toxic to coral and can lead to coral death	<0.02 parts per million	daily during cycling	1x per month
 pH ACIDITY	PH Stabilizes pH; Essential for coral health and growth	8.0 - 8.4	1x per week	
 PO₄³⁻ PHOSPHATE	PHOSPHATE Small amounts needed for tank health; High levels can lead to the nuisance algae growth, loss of coral color or even coral death	0.02-0.05 parts per million	1x per week	
 NaCl SALINITY	SALINITY Corals need a certain water to salt ratio to survive	1.024-1.026 sg (32-35 parts per thousand)	every water change	1x per week
 TEMPERATURE	TEMPERATURE Outside proper range can stagnate coral growth; lead to coral bleaching or even coral death	75-78° fahrenheit	every water change	daily 7x per week

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