

VIRUS DISEASES OF TURTLES

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Classically, SCID (Severe combined immunodeficiency) is a shell disease of aquatic turtles caused by *Citrobacter* shell. *Serratiaspp* may act synergistically by facilitating entry of *C freundii*. The scutes are pitted and may slough with an underlying purulent discharge. Anorexia, lethargy, and petechial hemorrhages on the shell and skin are seen; liver necrosis is also common. Systemic antibiotics are recommended. Good sanitation is paramount for prevention.

Another shell disease of turtles is caused by *Beneckea chitinovora*, a common infectious agent of crustaceans. Erythema and pitting of the shell with ulceration is seen. Septicemia is uncommon.

Topical iodine is recommended in addition to antibiotics. The practice of feeding crayfish is often implicated in this condition and should be discouraged. Vitamin A deficiency (hypovitaminosis A) occurs as a result of feeding turtles an inappropriate diet. Turtles that are fed iceberg lettuce, an all meat diet, or a poor quality commercial diet are most likely to develop hypovitaminosis A.

Lack of Vitamin A produces changes in the epidermis (outer layer of the skin) and in the mucous membranes and mucus-producing glands of the mouth, eyes and upper respiratory tract. Symptoms include a lack of appetite, lethargy, swelling of the eyelids (often with a pus-like discharge), swelling of the ear (actually an ear abscess) and respiratory infections. Vitamin A deficiency is treated with either oral or injectable Vitamin A.

Treatment should only be done under veterinary supervision as hypervitaminosis A, a condition resulting from the incorrect usage and over-dosage of Vitamin A, can occur. Vitamin A deficiency indicates that your turtle's diet has to be corrected or improved. Respiratory infections are most often caused by bacteria. Many of these turtles also have Vitamin A deficiency that requires treatment.

Your veterinarian recommends radiographs (X-rays), blood tests and cultures to determine the cause of the infection. Treatment for respiratory infections usually involves antibiotics, which may be given orally, as injections or possibly as nose drops. Sick turtles may require intensive care, including fluid therapy and force feeding in the hospital.

Conclusion

Vitamins in the organism of turtles play a very important role as in many animals, but there is not as many diseases as in different animals so if you have a pet turtle feed them the right vitamins and your pet turtle will live a happy and healthy life.