Fish Antibiotics for Human Use (no prescription required!)

Firstly a disclaimer. I am not a medical professional. I have simply done my own research online to a level which satisfies my own needs. Please do your own research and cross check everything you read here. Also please use antibiotics responsibly and only when absolutely required. Overuse of antibiotics can cause its own problems, due to bugs becoming resistant to them. See the links at the bottom of the page for more details on this.

Stockpiling medication for a future disaster or a collapse of society is straightforward when it comes to non-prescription medications such as ibuprofen and acetaminophen etc. They are cheap to buy and readily available. However, it is not so simple to acquire and stockpile prescription medications such as common antibiotics which are required to treat infections.

To have a stockpile of antibiotics in a long-term survival situation or a collapse of society would be
useful if not vital. Infection will be a big problem in these kinds of situation; for example - take away our power, water/sanitation and groceries; replace with – fires/camp stoves, survival food and untreated water. On top of this, give us knives, axes and guns (which we are largely unaccustomed to using) to chop wood, hunt and defend ourselves and it is easy to see the need to have access to antibiotics. Lot of cuts and stomach bugs...

The question is – how do you acquire/stockpile prescription antibiotics in case of emergency? Well you could rob a pharmacy, or try and convince your doctor it is a good idea to give you a large amount of common antibiotics to stockpile (good luck with that one!), OR you could just go down to your local pet store...

Believe it or not, many of the common antibiotics we are prescribed are also used to keep fish healthy in aquariums. Sceptical? I bet you are, but it is true! Most of the antibiotic medicines used to treat bacteria in aquariums contain just the one ingredient – the active antibiotic, and in many cases this is exactly the same antibiotic used for humans, nothing more, nothing less. The other strange thing is these aquarium antibiotics come in the same common dosages which are used on humans. To me that seems very strange.

I have checked several sources, some of which were created by medical doctors and below is a list of aquarium branded medicines which contain commonly prescribed human antibiotics:

FISH-MOX which is Amoxicillin 250mg (http://www.drugs.com/amoxicillin.html)

FISH-MOX FORTE which is Amoxicillin 500mg (http://www.drugs.com/amoxicillin.html)

FISH-FLEX which is Keflex 250mg (http://www.drugs.com/keflex.html)

FISH-FLEX FORTE which is Keflex 500mg (http://www.drugs.com/keflex.html)

FISH-ZOLE which is Metronidazole 250mg (http://www.drugs.com/metronidazole.html)

FISH-PEN which is Penicillin 250mg (http://www.drugs.com/penicillin.html)

FISH-PEN FORTE which is Penicillin 500mg (http://www.drugs.com/penicillin.html)

I am not going to provide any information on correct dosages or advice on allergies/precautions or what each antibiotic treats etc. It is entirely 100% your responsibility to do your own research here. It is vital you can identify any tablets you purchase and know what treats what and the dosage/precautions for the people you are treating.

All of the antibiotics above require a prescription from a doctor and usually a doctor will only
prescribe a single course of treatment to cure your illness. However, they can all be brought in large quantities from pet stores without prescription. This means you can stockpile these common antibiotics, something which would normally be impossible to achieve.

The bottom line is – we should probably not start going to the pet store when we have a sore throat as it is clearly more sensible to get a diagnosis and treatment from a doctor. I think the thing to bear in mind is that in the future, if things go wrong, we will have to improvise many things and many things may be less than ideal. We may be reluctant to take aquarium branded antibiotics today, but having access to the in the future could save our lives.

You are the best judge of what is right for you and your family, so I'll leave it to you to decide on this one. Knowledge weighs nothing, but you decide what to do with it!

Before you decide anything, check out these two articles from the BBC. They make scary reading...

Antibiotic 'apocalypse' warning

Antibiotic resistance 'big threat to health'