The large carpets--Gig, Mag, Haddoni, and Merts-- are notoriously difficult to keep. Specific requirements are paramount for longterm success but the first hurdle is getting a healthy animal. The are absolutely horrible shippers and the overwhelming majority will die from bacterial infections within the first month if proactive measures are not taken.

Ciproflaxin is a broad spectrum antibiotic that can be successfully used to treat the infection if administered at the early onset. Signs of infection:

1. Not sticky-- healthy carpets are insanely sticky.-- They will stick to everything- shipping bag, gloves, sand... If your new arrival is not sticky something is amiss.

2. Lack of feeding response.-- Carpets eat everything from fish to hermits. If your carpet will catch food but not bring it to the mouth something is amiss.

3.Odd looking waste-- This one is really tough to describe. "Bad waste" resembles small black pellets which is actually zoax being expelled.

4. Gaping mouth-- as with all nems this is a horrible sign

5. DEFLATION-- this one is huge and the nem needs treatment ASAP. A healthy carpet may shrink in size at night but they will never shrink down to nothing unless something is seriously wrong. They are essentially trying to flush out the infection. This is how the infection can spread to conspecifics in the tank and wipe out established thriving carpets.

QT tanks are pretty simple. I recommend a 20 gallon tank but anything over 10 works. Need a heater, powerhead, airstone, eggcrate to seperate the nem from equip, light, turkey baster to remove waste, and the ability to make your own water. I like to put the nem in a bowl so it is easy to remove. No sand, rock, or filtration. DO NOT FEED WHILE IN QT.

Cipro is to be dosed at 25mgs/gallon. I use 10 gallons and one 250 mg pill to keep the numbers idiotproof. Add the Cipro at lights out as light breaks it down. Monitor for waste and suck it out as you see it. Do a 50% water change on day 2,3,4... right before lights out and add another 250mg pill (daily).--- The pills dissolve but I like to rub them in front of the powerhead to make sure they dissolve completely--.

Reaction to Cipro is generally pretty quick depending on severity of the infection. Waste should be expelled within the first few hours. The nem should also perk back up. In most cases the infection will clear up in 5-7 days. The key is to catch it early on.

***ETA*----- Dont' use Cipro in the display tank. Hospital Tank only!!!!!!!**

Use a ten gallon as instructed. As for the water changes, change as much as you can, a full 10 every day to start, if possible, but at least 5 gallons per day after the nem has stopped releasing stuff into the water. I also dosed 250 mg. every twelve hours instead of every 24, even knowing that the light breaks it down. My Ritteri now looks amazing, is huge and is even getting glowing tentacle tips at night.

Amoo's Sick Nem Treatment Protocol:
Let me start by saying most of my research wouldn't exist without what OrionN (Mihn) started on rc years ago. Most all of my treatments have been done on H. Mag and BTAs so my experience applies in different areas. For the sake of this treatment I am only going to go over how ***I*** treat H. Mags from the time they arrive until they hopefully go into a DT. I've had good luck with not bleaching my nems and getting most of them to survive.

Medications:
While I am experimenting with other medications, the only drugs I am comfortable recommending at this point are the same basic ones Mihn uses. I get 500mg Ciprofloxacin (Cipro) tablets and 400mg/80mg Sulfamethoxazole and Trimethoprim (SMZ & TP) tablets. Individual dosing will be explained below.

Arrival:
Upon arrival of the Nem I immediately float the Nem bag, to acclimate it to tank temperature. This is done for 30 minutes. A clean 5 gallon bucket is then used and the contents of the bag are placed in the bucket. At this point I visually inspect the Nem for signs of damage and immediately give it a condition score. (I will explain the scoring system at the end of this article.) 9 times out of 10 I will drip acclimate the Nem for about 30-45 minutes before placing it in quarantine tank (QT). There have been times I have had a Nem arrive in such bad shape and water that I have immediately moved it to QT without drip acclimation. Note: This is not the preferred method, but as I buy almost all of my specimen from the same vendor I know what water params to setup my QT for (I still double check to ensure).

QT Setup:
My QT setup is slightly different then Mihn's so I will go into detail about it here. I choose to use a two tank approach. I believe in using two tanks because it allows me to fully clean EVERYTHING in the tank. As I am working with a smaller species I can afford to get away with two 10g tanks. Both tanks are equipped with a divider, heater (79F), power-head, fresh salt water, a coffee mug AND a cycled bio-wheel HOB filter. There is a full spectrum light (Par 38 14000K Full Spectrum Dimmable Reef Light (Coral Compulsion))with a manual dimmer hanging 12" above one tank at a time (I manually move it when I move the nem). Remember this is still a QT tank until we begin treatment.

My first order of business is to slowly begin light acclimating (12 hours with 10 hours of full light) the Nem and observe it. I will not start treatment for a minimum of 6-8 hours on a freshly shipped Nem. I first allow it time to adjust to the new tank conditions and lighting. If it has not shown any signs of improvement (scoring system) I will then begin treatment. Usually there is some improvement and I will give the Nem until the first lights out period to see if it continues to improve. Typically anything above a 5 and I start treatment after 6-8 hours. Anything below I let it ride until "sundown". Once I make the decision to start treatment (Tx), it immediately becomes lights out, I remove the Bio-wheel HOB and dose 250mg/10Gal of Cipro. I then give a strict 12 hours until further action is taken.

Treatment:
IMPORTANT: At the same time I dose the occupied tank with 250mg/10gal of Cipro I dose the second "empty" tank with Cipro as well.

After the first 12 hour, medicated lights out treatment, I immediately move the Nem to the second tank which already had it's HOB removed before dosing. I move the clamp light and begin it's light therapy for the day. At this point I tear down the first tank, take all components outside to clean and dry. Once dry, I bring everything back in and fill the tank with fresh SW and all of it's gadgets. Once it's time for complete lights out, I move the Nem again to this fresh tank and dose 250mg/10gal of Cipro, only to this tank this time.

Note: I feel the 12 hour water changes are important for the first day and a half, beyond that I allow a nem to remain in the same tank for 24 hours unless the tank becomes extremely cloudy.

Once through that first day, I have my second tank setup and ready to go by lights out and move the Nem over for his nightly Cipro dose. Prior to moving him is when I score him for the day. I maintain a 250mg/10gal dose of Cipro for the first 3 lights out periods regardless of score.

Increasing Dosage or Changing Medications:
After 3 lights out periods I check my pictures and scores and determine if my current treatment appears to be

working. If he has come down 2-3 points from where he started, I continue on the same path. If he has not shown improvement or his score has increased I change my dosage. My first line of action is to increase the daily Cipro dosage to 500mg/10gal. This is again done for 3 lights out periods.

After three lights out periods I assess my pictures and notes and determine where to go from there. If things are improving I back off on my Cipro dose, back down to 250mg. If things are not improving, I still back down on my Cipro dose to 250mg but also add 400mg/80mg of SMZ & TP. Things are again maintained for 3 lights out periods.

If you're still reading, things aren't going well and it's probably decision time. Hopefully by this point your nem is close to a 2-3 at worst, but if it's still above 5 and hasn't shown significant improvement it's time to start really hitting it hard. If things are still bad I will double my dose of both Cipro to 500mg/10gal and SMZ & TP to 800mg/160mg. I do this for 3 lights out periods. Anything beyond this point with the Nem not improving significantly is still experimental and not something I'm ready to recommend yet.

Amoo's Severity Scoring System:

0 - Healthy Nem
1 - Tentacles shortened, still fully inflated, mouth tight, responsive to touch
2 - Tentacles shortened, still fully inflated, mouth slightly droopy, responsive to touch
3 - Tentacles shortened, still fully inflated, mouth slightly open, responsive to touch
4 - Tentacles shortened, still fully inflated, mouth open, responsive to touch
5 - Tentacles shortened, still fully inflated, mouth gaping open with insides exposed, responsive to touch
6 - Tentacles shortened, partially inflates, mouth gaping open with insides exposed, responsive to touch
7 - Tentacles shortened, inflates and deflates multiple times daily, mouth gaping open with insides exposed, responsive to touch
8 - Tentacles shortened, most always deflated, mouth gaping open with insides exposed, responsive to touch
9 - Tentacles shortened, always deflated, mouth gaping open with insides exposed, barely responsive to touch
10 - Tentacles shortened, always deflated, mouth gaping open with insides exposed, non-responsive to touch
11 - Mush (Sorry)