

The Gabriel Foundation

Beyond the Birdie Basics

Avian Illness, Diseases, and Treatment



Recognizing Illness

- Birds are prey animals who will hide their illnesses as long as possible!
- Birds that appear suddenly ill have been ill for a long time.
- Understand the early warning signs.
- Learn to recognize disease in its earliest phase.
- The sooner diseases are recognized and treated, the better the odds are for a speedy recovery!
- Maintaining weight records critical to good bird health and base-lining.

Recognizing Illness - Signs

- Most illnesses cause decreased food and water consumption.
- Diabetes causes increased food and water consumption.
- Changes in droppings
 - Changes in number
 - Changes in consistency
 - Changes in color
- Digestive problems
 - Vomiting
 - Diarrhea
 - Undigested food
- Changes in activity
 - Not singing or talking
 - Not responsive
 - Sleeping a lot
- Change in appearance
 - Ruffled feathers
 - Weakness
 - Distended abdomen

Recognizing Illness - Signs

- Musculoskeletal problems
 - Lameness
 - Droopy wing
 - Change in posture
- Breathing problems
 - Noisy breathing
 - Heavy breathing
 - Nasal discharge
- Eye problems
 - Eyelids swollen
 - Pasted closed
 - Increased blinking
 - Cloudiness of eyeball
 - Squinting

Recognizing Illness - Signs

- Skin problems
 - Lumps or bumps
 - Excessive flaking
- Overgrown beak or nails
- Feather problems
 - Prolonged molt
 - Picking or chewing feathers
 - Broken or deformed feathers

Recognizing Illness - Signs

Appetite Loss

- A bird that doesn't eat is usually sick.
- Can happen abruptly or over time.
- Weigh your bird regularly and write it down to see if it is losing weight.
- Weigh it when it has an empty crop.
- If your bird loses 10% of its normal weight, this is a problem.
- A bird's weight is measured in grams.
- If a small bird goes without food for 12 hours, it could starve.
- If a large bird goes without food for 24 hours, it could die.
- Tempt your bird with favorite foods.
- Warm up the food.
- Try hand feeding foods.
- If bird does not start eating in 12-24 hours, call your vet.
- Vet needs to determine underlying cause of the appetite loss.

Recognizing Illness - Signs

Regurgitation & Vomiting

- Regurgitation - Bringing up food from the crop.
- Can be normal behavior of feeding chicks or a mate, shows the bird wanting to have a significant relationship with a toy or person.
- Vomiting – Bringing up food from the digestive system.
- Facial area may have food on it in young birds, this can be life threatening, call your vet.
- In older birds, you can give a small amount of Kaopectate or Pepto Pepto-bismol to sooth their digestive systems.
- If your bird doesn't stop vomiting in 24 hours, take it to the vet.

Droppings

- Avian droppings consist of:
 - Feces - the solid part
 - Urine – the liquid part
 - Urates – the white pasty part
- Should be in approximately equal amounts
- Increase in urine can be a sign of increased water intake or diabetes.
- Decrease in urine means bird may be dehydrated.

Abnormal Droppings

- Red, reddish black or tar-like means blood is in the stool
- Undigested food
- Increased or decreased volume of feces
- Increased or decreased urine output
- Yellow or green discoloration
- Red or reddish brown discoloration
- Color changes can be food related if they are intermittent (raspberries cause red poop, blueberries cause blue poop).

Diseases - Infectious

- Disease caused by microorganisms such as bacteria, yeasts, viruses and fungi.
- A healthy bird should be able to fight off infection.
- Spread of disease
 - Contaminated food and water
 - Through the air
 - Contact with other animals
 - Contamination of objects within the environment
 - Contamination of the owner's clothing or hands
- Treated with antibiotics and antifungal medications
- Viral infections are difficult if not impossible to treat.
- Vaccines are used to prevent viral infection.

Diseases - Metabolic

- Kidney, liver, pancreas and thyroid malfunction
- Affect the ability of the bird to utilize and produce energy
- Fatty liver disease, iron storage disease, gout
- Nutritional disease – excess or deficiency of nutrients
- Parasitic disease – infestation with parasites
- Toxic disease – continually exposure to poisons
- Cancer – an overgrowth of cells
- Developmental disease – problems caused during the growth phase
- Degenerative disease – the degradation of tissues

Diseases - Eye

- **Conjunctivitis “Pink Eye”**
 - An inflammation of the membrane surrounding the eye.
 - If only one eye is affected, it could be due to an irritant.
- **Cataracts**
 - Lens becomes white
 - Not painful
 - Hereditary
 - Will result in blindness

Disease - Respiratory

Rhinitis

- Inflammation of the nose or sinuses.
- Plugged nares, runny nose, sneezing, head shaking, puffy cheeks, swelling around the eyes.
- Veterinarian will treat with antibiotics.

Air Sac Disease

- Very difficult to diagnose and treat .
- Air sacs hang on to contaminated air.
- Birds do not appear sick until the disease is very advanced.
- Respiratory symptoms occur.
- Aspergillosis, a fungal disease, is the most common cause.
- Caused by overcrowded conditions, poor hygiene, poor ventilation, exposure to fungal spores.
- This is often a quick, deadly and untreatable disease.

Disease - Hypervitaminosis A

Vitamin A deficiency

- Essential for the maintenance of healthy skin, good vision, bone development, and reproduction.
- Skin infections are common
- Poor diet is the common cause.
- Decreased appetite, poor vision, frequent yeast infections, mouth infections.
- Vitamin A injections are given, infections are treated.
- A good diet is essential.

Disease - Allergies

- Virtually anything can trigger an allergic response.
- Sneezing, runny eyes and nose, coughing, digestive tract problems.
- Treated with anti-inflammatories and antihistamines.
- Perfumes, tobacco smoke, molds, pollens, incense and feather dust are common culprits.

Disease - Chlamydophila (Psittacosis)

- Common and highly contagious.
- Can be transmitted to humans
- Spread by contact with sick birds, droppings, feathers, food and water
- Watery yellow or lime green urates, weight loss, conjunctivitis, nasal, discharge, sneezing, poor feathering, neurological signs.
- Treatment should begin immediately and it will continue for at least 45 days.
- Sick birds need to be isolated.
- All things that the sick bird has been in contact with must be disinfected thoroughly.
- Human contact with the sick bird needs to be minimal.
- There is no vaccine.
- This is one of the diseases that you should screen for when getting a new bird.

Disease - Tuberculosis

- In birds, it primarily involves the digestive system.
- In humans, it primarily involves the lungs.
- Avian TB can infect humans.
- Chronic diarrhea, masses beneath the skin, joint problems.
- Some vets feel that since this is a potentially fatal disease in humans, all birds with TB should be euthanized.
- No drugs are effective against TB.

Disease - Proventricular Dilatation Disease

- A viral disease that destroys the nerve supply to the digestive tract.
- Food does not digest properly and the bird starts to lose weight.
- Birds will eat a lot.
- Birds will die from starvation.
- Undigested food in droppings is the primary sign.
- There is no cure.

Disease - Psittacine Beak and Feather Disease

- Caused by a virus.
- Most common in young birds.
- Highly contagious and spread by preening, inhalation of feather dust or aerosolized feces, feeding behaviors, environmental contamination.
- Acute form causes depression, diarrhea, crop problems, weight loss, death.
- Chronic form causes feather lesions and then beak lesions.
- There is no treatment, but there is a test to confirm if a bird has the disease.

Disease – Pacheco's disease

- Viral hepatitis only found in psittacines.
- Associated with facilities that house a lot of birds.
- Stress plays a major role in the development of the disease.
- This disease causes rapid death in all the birds.
- Some birds can be resistant to the disease and still be carriers.
- Individual birds rarely get Pacheco's.

Disease – Polynoma Virus

- Primarily affects young birds in breeding facilities.
- Adult birds are carriers and transmit this disease to the chicks through the air.
- Sudden death occurs.
- Weakness, abdominal enlargement, bleeding underneath the skin, tremors, paralysis.
- Vaccine is available.

Veterinary Care

- To find an Avian Veterinarian - check the www.aav.org website.
- All avian vets should be a member of AAV.
- Every large town and city has at least one decent avian vet.
- Don't believe advertising - find out who has the largest bird clientele and who has been practicing on birds the longest (successfully!!).
- Find a vet BEFORE you need one!
- Emergency vets are harder to find, ask your avian vet if they will do emergencies.
- An avian vet will typically be more expensive than a regular small animal vet due to the additional training and resources needed to treat birds.

Veterinary Care

- Have any new bird thoroughly examined by a veterinarian.
- A veterinarian is often a good source for advice on nutrition and behavior.
- The veterinary staff should also be very knowledgeable and can answer your questions.
- The veterinarian and veterinary technicians are required to go to a number of continuing education classes every year, so they should have up to date info.

Veterinary Care

Assessing your veterinary clinic

- Is the hospital clean and inviting?
- Is it a member of American Animal Hospital Association?
- Do they use certified veterinary technicians as their assistant assistants?
- Are they competent? Do they communicate well? Are they compassionate?
- Are fees discussed openly? Are you given an estimate for a procedure? Good hospitals will let you know when they will be going over estimate.
- Do they have payment plans? CareCredit is a common one.
- It is not fair to ask for discounted services. Most veterinarians do not NOT make very much money and they have discounted their services as much as they can.
- Your vet should be available to answer questions that you have about your pet at any time by special arrangement if you are a client.

Veterinary Care

All birds should have annual well-bird exams.

- Prevents or identifies disease.
- Minimize the seriousness of a disease.
- Allows vet to communicate new thoughts about bird husbandry.
- Blood-work
- Detects early signs of poor husbandry and diet.
- Detects avian diseases.

Veterinary Care

When your bird is sick or injured, the sooner you can get to the vet, the better!

- It is better to already have a relationship established with the vet.
- Emergency veterinary care is not easy to find for birds - plan ahead!
- Don't ever try home remedies.

Veterinary Care

What a vet expects from you:

- Follow the directions they give you specifically with any at home care.
- If you don't understand instructions, ask questions.
- Don't expect a vet to make a diagnosis over the phone.
- You should have confidence in the vet's abilities – if you don't, find another vet!
- Understand the vet will make the best effort he can to help your pet, but recovery is never a guarantee.
- Realize that if you are made to wait longer than expected, it is probably for a good reason.
- Clients should arrive a little early to their appointments. Nothing throws a vet's day off like having late appointments.
- Clients should listen to the vet as they describe options for their pet.
- When the client decides which option to pursue, they need to take responsibility for that decision.

Veterinary Care

- A vet visit can be a frightening and stressful experience for a bird; however, it is possible to handle nearly all pet birds in such a way to reduce stress and result in an experience that ranges from pleasant to only mildly annoying.
- This does not happen without work on the part of the owner and the veterinary staff.
- Training the bird to accept handling must be practiced regularly for the entire lifetime of the pet.
- Gentle handling on the part of the veterinary staff is often doomed to failure without regular effort on the part of the owner.
- Using positive reinforcement and practice you should be able to train your bird to:
 - Willingly enter the carrier to come to the veterinarian.
 - Willingly step onto the scale to be weighed.
 - Willingly to leave you to step onto the hand of veterinary staff.
 - Accept towel restraint without fear.

Veterinary Care

Visiting the Vet

- Call ahead, even for emergencies.
- Arrive early, especially the first time.
- Bring your bird in a carrier or cage.
- If using a cage, remove toys that will hit the bird during travel.
- Bring any medications or supplements or things the bird may have ingested recently.
- Write down a list of questions for the vet.

Veterinary Care

Visiting the Vet:

- Vet (or tech) will take an oral history of the bird.
- Age, sex, species
- Length of ownership, where purchased
- What are the signs the bird is showing?
- When did they occur?
- Has the bird been exposed to other birds?
- Have you been treating the bird with anything?
- Has the bird had previous medical problems?
- Has the bird laid eggs or reproduced?
- What is the bird's diet?
- How is the bird's activity level?
- Has he been vomiting? Coughing? Sneezing?
- Is his poop normal?
- Vet will do a physical exam.

Veterinary Care

Blood Work

- Blood samples are collected from the jugular vein in most cases (in the neck).
- Can detect disease before outward symptoms are apparent.
- Complete Blood Count and Differential (CBC and diff)
 - Screens for infection, anemia, cancer, parasites, inflammation, some poisonings
- Should ideally be done once a year.
- Knowing your bird's normal blood values will help determine if disease is present.

Veterinary Care

Blood Work – Chemistry Panel

- Measures levels of hormones and other chemicals in the blood.
- Can measure liver and kidney function, pancreatic function, hydration status.
- Can test for specific disease such as PBFD, chlamydiosis, polyomavirus, etc.
- Can indicate lead and zinc poisoning.
- Normally done in conjunction with a CBC.

Veterinary Care

X-rays

- Anesthesia is usually required for birds to restrain them.
- Veterinarians can diagnose bone abnormalities and get a good indication of the health of internal organs.
- Respiratory and digestive diseases often show up radiographically in birds.

Veterinary Care

Bacteriologic Exams

- Samples are collected from different areas of the body with a sterile swab, which is then smeared on a slide and examined microscopically – Gram stain.
- This tests for infection and identifies the organisms present, suggesting treatment options.
- If an infection is present, the vet may do a culture and sensitivity test. This is where the bacteria grows on a plate that has tiny disks of antibiotic placed on it.
- The size of the clear area around each disk indicates which antibiotics are best for the bird's infection.

Veterinary Care

Other Exams

- Fecal
 - Droppings are examined microscopically to determine the presence of parasites and yeasts.
- Urinalysis
 - Chemical test used to measure the components and pH of urine.
 - Microscopic examination of the urine to detect crystals.
 - Not often done in birds unless diabetes or kidney disease is suspected.

Veterinary Care - Procedures

Endoscopy

- The bird should be anesthetized for this procedure.
- A long flexible scope with a camera on the end is inserted into the bird through a very small opening.
- The veterinarian watches the procedure on the television screen as he performs it.
- The veterinarian can see all of the internal organs without having to open the bird up.
- Small biopsies can be taken during this procedure.

Veterinary Care - Procedures

Surgery

- The bird will be breathing in anesthetic gas throughout the procedure.
- The bird's heart rate, breathing, and possibly blood pressure, temperature, heart rhythm and anesthetic depth should be monitored constantly throughout the procedure.
- The surgery should be performed in a sterile environment with sterile instruments.
- The surgical instruments are tiny!
- Recovery from anesthesia takes only a few minutes.
- The veterinarian should call you when the procedure is finished and your bird is awake.

Veterinary Care - Procedures

Surgery

- Anesthetic drugs today are very safe and have little or no lasting side effects.
- Isoflorane and sevoflorane are gas anesthetics.
- They are completely metabolized in 5-15 minutes.
- Veterinarians should use good pain control methods.
- Vets should use intravenous fluids during the procedure to maintain the patient's blood pressure.
- Blood work and radiographs may be recommended before a surgical procedure.
- The feathers will be removed from around the surgical site.

Veterinary Care - Procedures

Necropsy

- Birds should always be necropsied to determine the cause of death.
– especially if you have other birds at home.
- The body should be refrigerated, never frozen.
- The necropsy should be done as soon after death as possible.
- The vet will open the bird up, do a visual exam of all the organs to look for a cause of death.
- Any suspicious tissue will be excised and sent to a pathologist for further study.
- This process can take a few weeks.
- You can gain knowledge from this procedure to help you with your care of other birds.

Veterinary Care - Procedures

DNA sexing

- Uses blood or tissue to analyze the chromosomes of a bird.
- Easy, efficient, reasonably reliable, cheap.
- Results come in a few weeks.

Surgical sexing

- Determining the sex through endoscopic surgery.
- Bird has to be put under anesthesia.
- Benefit is that the vet can look at the internal organs to see if they are healthy at the same time.
- More expensive, more dangerous, more reliable.

Veterinary Care - Therapeutics

- “First, do no harm”
- Many options are usually available for any given case.
- You should trust your vet’s experience when he is recommending options to you.
- Things to consider:
 - \$\$\$
 - Your ability to maintain any treatments.
 - Combined effects of all drugs and therapies given.
 - General health of the bird.
 - Invasiveness of the procedure.

Veterinary Care - Medications

- Analgesics – reduce pain
 - Fentanyl, morphine, opioids
- Antibiotics – kill bacteria
 - Baytril, Cephalexin, Penicillin
 - Make sure you finish the entire prescription.
- Anti-yeast/Antifungal – kills yeasts or fungal infections
- Anti-inflammatory – reduce inflammation and pain
 - Meloxicam, Celebrex, Ketoprofen NSAIDS
- Anti-helminthic – eliminates parasites
 - Ivermectin

Caring for Your Sick Bird

Bandaging

- Support and protect an injured area.
- A poor bandage can do more harm than good.
- Only vets and vet techs should bandage a bird (unless the bird is bleeding heavily).
- Birds will often pick relentlessly at their bandage, requiring frequent bandage changes.
- Watch to see if your bird's bandage looks like it is loosening or tightening, or if parts of his body around the bandage are swelling up.
- If the bandage gets wet, slips or looks bad, get it changed.
- Wet or dirty bandages can cause difficult skin infections and wounds.

Other Treatments

- Never use OTC medication for your bird, only use medication prescribed by a vet.

Complementary and alternative avian medicine

- Make sure you are still getting a veterinary exam and treatment.
- Ideally, you should go to a vet skilled in avian medicine and alternative medicine.
- Just because a treatment is safe for people does not mean that it is safe for birds.
- There is plenty of misinformation, hearsay and untested treatments on the internet and within bird groups. Ask your vet!
- A good vet will be open to alternative medicine as long as what you are proposing is not harmful to the bird.

Caring for a Sick Bird

Hospital

- Knowledgeable staff
- Right equipment
- Emergency preparedness
- Ability to handle and treat large birds
- Experience handling drugs
- \$\$\$\$\$\$

Home

- Bird is in a familiar environment with people he knows.
- Less expensive
- Will be labor intensive
- May negatively impact your relationship with your bird.
- Requires dedication and continuity of care from the owner.

Caring for Your Sick Bird

Medication Administration

- Orally
 - Must restrain bird and give the medication by mouth.
 - Helps to train the bird to accept a syringe in his mouth before he is medicated.
 - Make SURE you know how to read a syringe.
- In the water
 - Least effective method.
 - Sick birds often drink less.
 - Medications don't dissolve evenly.
 - Medication gives the water an unpleasant taste.
 - Useful for treating large groups of birds.
- Medicating the food
 - Commercially formulated diets that contain antibiotics.
 - Medications can be added to mash.
 - Impossible to determine a dose.
 - Bird must eat the all the food.

Caring for Your Sick Bird

Injectable drugs

- Best and most accurate way to deliver meds.
- Restraining the bird is harder than giving the medicine.
- Make sure you know how to read a syringe.
- Sites
 - Intravenous – into a vein
 - Intramuscular – into a muscle – easiest for birds
 - Subcutaneous – into the skin
 - Intraosseous – into the bones

Caring for Your Sick Bird

Topical Medication

- **Dermatological**
 - Applied to skin or feathers
 - Avoid oily or greasy compounds unless directed by your vet
- **Intraocular**
 - Applied to the eye
 - Only use vet prescribed eye medication
- **Intranasal**
 - Applied into the nares
 - For sinus infections
- **Intranasus**
 - Applied into the sinus cavity
 - For sinus infections

Signs of a Nervous System Problem

- Changes in behavior
- Changes in coordination
- Abnormal head positions
- Postural changes
- Unusual eye movements
- Blindness
- Paralysis
- Seizures
- Lameness

Signs of an Endocrine System Problem

- Variable signs depending on which hormones are imbalanced
- Increased appetite or thirst
- Abnormal growth
- Bone and reproductive problems
- Obesity
- Feather problems

Signs of an Eye or Ear Problem

- Crusty eyelids
- Red and swollen membranes
- Cloudy corneas
- Pupils are a different size or shape.
- White spots in the pupil
- Head is tilted and bird has trouble balancing.
- Discharge from the ear resulting in wet feathers.
- Rubbing or scratching the ears.

Signs of Skin or Feather Problem

- Wounds, cuts or bruises
- Matted feathers
- Swellings, lumps and bumps
- Thickening of the skin with fat indicates obesity
- Whitish honeycomb crusting around beak and legs could indicate mites.
- Overgrown toenails and beak
- Feather picking
- Broken blood feathers

Signs of a Musculoskeletal Problem

- Flesh around keel should have a rounded U shape.
 - V shape may mean the bird is underweight.
 - W shape usually means the bird is overweight.
- Joints should flex easily.
- Wings should be at equal height and adjacent to the body.
- Both legs should bear weight easily.

Signs of Respiratory Problems

- Breathing should be easy and smooth.
- Nares should be free of debris.
- Nares should not be swollen or red or have discharge.
- Listen for unusual sounds when the bird breathes – they can sneeze and cough.
- A change in the tone of voice.
- Swelling beneath or around eyes can indicate sinusitis.

Signs of Digestive System Problems

- Beak should look normal, not overgrown.
- Swallowing of food should be effortless.
- Mucous membranes should appear pink.
- Vomiting or constant regurgitation is not normal.
- A change in droppings can indicate a problem.
- Area around the vent should be clean and dry.
- The vent sphincter should be closed tightly.
- There should not be tissue or growths protruding from the vent.

Signs of Reproductive System Problems

- Swelling of the abdomen
- Straining, squatting or walking penguin like
- Cloacal prolapse
- Laying many eggs

Emergencies

- A serious or life threatening injury or disease that requires immediate care.
- If your bird is unstable and doing poorly, contact a vet and ask them if you need to bring them in right away!
- If there is any doubt in your mind, take the bird to the vet.
- If the bird is stuck or trapped in something, figure out a way to free it.
- Panicked birds will bite you.

Emergencies

Transporting an injured bird

- Handle the bird as little as possible.
- If you can, bring the bird in its cage – or bring the cage papers.
- Give the bird food and water within reach.
- Remove perches and toys so the bird doesn't get further injured.
- Cover the cage or carrier with a blanket or towel.
- Don't clean the cage.
- Use a towel to pad the floor.
- You can use a hot water bottle in the carrier if it is a cold day.
- If you have any medications or supplements, bring them along.
- If you can bring another person along to help, do so.
- Expect changes in behavior.

Emergencies

Shock - is a symptom, not a disease.

- The cardiovascular system does not supply enough blood to the body's organs.
- Bird will appear weak, depressed and fluffed.
- Take to the vet immediately!
- Keep the bird warm during transport.
- Vet will give the bird fluids, oxygen, warmth, medications.
- The vet will want to diagnose what caused the shock.

Emergencies

At the vet, avian emergencies will sometimes receive:

- Extra warmth
- Fluid administration
- Extra feedings and supplemental nutrition
- A quiet and relaxed environment
- Pain control
- Stabilization of broken bones
- Oxygen administration

Emergencies

Breathing difficulty is always an emergency!

- Bird is wheezing, breathing rapidly, breathing with an open mouth, tail is bobbing, neck stretching, swelling around the eye, loss of voice, or a clicking sound.
- Keep the bird warm, reduce stress as much as possible.
- Turn on a vaporizer near the cage, get to the vet's as soon as possible.
- The vet will put the bird in an oxygen cage with possible nebulization (aerosolized medications).
- The vet will stabilize the bird before performing a physical exam.

Emergencies

- Determine the source of blood.
- Try to stop the bleeding using direct pressure.
- If the bird is bleeding internally, then blood can come out the nares, vent, in the droppings, or out of the mouth – take to the vet!
- Bleeding nail or beak
 - If the bleeding is minimal, see if it stops by itself.
 - If it continues, restrain the bird.
 - Apply direct pressure to the wound.
 - If that doesn't work, apply styptic powder, baking powder, or cornstarch to the wound.
 - Observe the bird for at least one hour to see if the bleeding will restart.
 - If blood loss seems excessive, take him to the vet.

Emergencies

Bleeding Feather

- Catch and restrain the bird.
- Try to stop the bleeding with direct pressure.
- If this doesn't work, pull the feather out with a needle nose pliers or a sturdy tweezer. Be gentle!
- Grasp the feather near the skin and pull out with a smooth even pressure. If you are not comfortable with this, call the vet.
- Apply 10 minutes of direct pressure to the follicle if it is bleeding.
- DON'T use styptic powder here, it will damage the skin and follicle.
- Observe the bird for at least an hour to see if the bleeding recurs.
- Keep the bird calm and warm.
- If the blood loss seems excessive, or the bird seems weak, go to the vet.

Emergencies

Skin Wounds

- Catch and restrain the bird.
- Apply direct pressure to the bleeding area.
- Clean the wound with an antiseptic solution.
- Apply a topical antibiotic spray or powder don't use anything greasy.
- Observe the bird for several hours.
- See your vet.

Emergencies

Convulsions

- The bird has a serious medical problem.
- The convulsion can be either the whole body or just a part of the body.
- The bird may lose its balance.
- Seizures last from a few seconds to a minute or two.
- Protect the bird from further injury by taking perches and toys out of his cage, and cover the cage with a towel.
- Take to the vet immediately!
- Vet must determine underlying cause to stop further seizures.

Emergencies

Animal Bite

- Life threatening emergency.
- Can result in puncture wounds, fractures, internal organ damage.
- Serious infection can develop from bites and scratches.
- The first 48 hours after a bite is the most critical phase.
- Contact your vet immediately.
- Watch your bird when other pets are around!

Emergencies

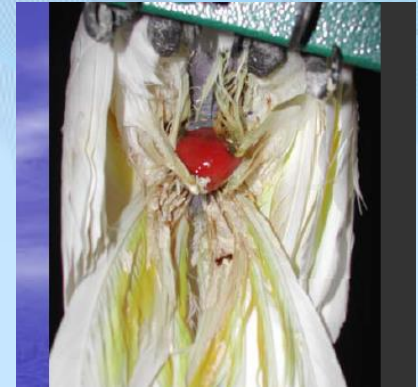
Burns

- Hot water burns
 - Mist the burned area with cool water.
 - Immerse the burned area if it is a foot.
 - Use a non greasy topical antibiotic.
- Hot grease burns
 - Coat the burned area with flour or cornstarch.
- Acid burns (drain cleaner)
 - Flood the area with water to dilute the chemical.
 - Coat the burned area with a paste of baking soda and water.
- Alkali burns (ammonia or lye)
 - Flood the area with water.
 - Coat the area with vinegar.
- Electrical burns
 - Turn off the power and disconnect the cord before touching the bird.
 - Get your bird to the vet.
 - Prevention of burns is better than cure!

Emergencies

Cloacal Prolapse

- Protrusion of tissue from the vent.
- Always an emergency.
- Birds can pick on these tissues and make matters much worse.
- If you see blood, examine the vent.
- Droppings may be pasted around the vent.
- Apply K-Y jelly to the area to keep it moist.
- Get your bird to the vet!



Emergencies

Crop Burn

- Occurs as a result of bad hand feeding techniques in baby birds.
- Formula sits in the crop after feeding - if it is too hot, it will burn right through the crop and sometimes through the skin.
- Formula may be seen leaking out of the crop.
- Minor cases do not require treatment
- Major cases (hole is burned through skin) need to be treated with surgery by your vet.
- One of the many reasons not to buy an unweaned baby bird.

Emergencies

Egg Binding

- An egg stuck inside the bird.
- Bird has a history of difficulty laying.
- Bird is straining, waddling, or sitting on the cage floor, panting.
- May have paralysis of one or both legs.
- Swollen abdomen
- If you see an egg protruding from the vent, and the egg is not laid in 10 minutes - get your bird to the vet!

Emergencies

Eye Injury

- Eye problems are always an emergency.
- Minor eye problems can progress quickly to blindness.
- Eyelids swollen or pasted shut, increased blinking, rubbing of the eye, fluid leaking from the eye.
- Get your bird to the vet!

Emergencies

Foot Injury

- Toes and foot are swollen or bleeding.
- Lameness
- Stop any bleeding.
- Lower your bird's perches and keep food and water within easy reach.
- Contact your veterinarian for further instructions.
- Birds like to chew on their feet when they are injured, making wounds worse.

Emergencies

Fractures

- Usually caused by accidents, but can be caused by nutritional deficiencies and disease.
- Lameness, wing held in an awkward position.
- Severe bruising or swelling.
- Paralysis
- Confine the bird in a padded carrier or cage.
- Don't handle your pet unnecessarily.
- Go to the vet.
- Fractures can be repaired by pinning or splinting the area under anesthesia.
- Fractures take 4-6 weeks to heal.

Emergencies

Frostbite

- Area is cold, painful and hard.
- After several days, area may turn black.
- Warm the bird.
- Warm the affected tissue in a warm circulating water bath.
- Have food and water easily accessible.
- Take your bird to the vet!

Emergencies

Heat Stroke

- Bird will be weak, panting, holding its wings out, in a hot environment.
- Place the bird in a cool area.
- Spray the bird with a mister.
- Offer the bird water to drink.
- Take your bird to the vet.

Emergencies

Leg Band Problem

- If a banded leg gets injured, the band could cause additional problems.
- Skin around leg band is swollen or puffy.
- Leg bands should be loose around the bird's leg.
- Don't try to remove the band yourself.
- If the leg band is caught on something, try to free it.
- Try to take apart whatever the leg band is caught on.
- Apply pressure if the leg is bleeding.
- Take your bird to the vet.

Emergencies

Night Frights

- “Cockatiel Thrashing Syndrome”
- Birds wake up in the middle of the night, panic, then try to fly away.
- See if the bird is bleeding or injured.
- Prevention
- Use a night light.
- Place an air cleaner in the bird’s room to provide “white noise.”
- Use a sleeping cage free of toys.

Emergencies

Oily Bird

- Bird loses its ability to regulate its body temperature with oily feathers.
- Hot oil causes burns.
- You can fill a pillowcase or other bag with cornstarch and put the bird into it **LEAVING IT'S HEAD OUT!**
- The cornstarch can be shaken so it covers the bird and absorbs some of the oil.
- Go to your vet immediately.

Emergencies

Poisoning

- Sudden regurgitation, diarrhea, bloody droppings, breathing difficulties, convulsions, paralysis, shock.
- Try to determine what poisoned your bird.
- Remove poison from environment.
- For contact with eyes or skin – flush with water.
- For respiratory problems – ventilate room immediately.
- Call the vet immediately and bring the poison along with you.
- You can call animal poison control hotline if you suspect a poisoning – 888-426-4435 – there is a charge for this.

Emergencies

Plant Toxicity

- Birds love to chew on plants.
- Birds tolerate plant poisons better than mammals.
- Irritation to the mouth, depression, digestive tract upset, more serious symptoms can occur.
- Try to identify the type of plant ingested.
- Take your bird to the vet.

Emergencies

Heavy Metal Poisoning

- Lead Sources:
 - Antiques, bases of light bulbs, batteries, bird toys with weights, bullets, fishing weights, mirror backing, lead framed doors and windows, lead paint
- Zinc Sources:
 - Galvanized cages, metal toys, galvanized metal dishes, washers, nuts pennies, paint, varnish, adhesives, twist ties
- Digestive and neurological system signs
- Weakness, appetite loss, feather picking, vomiting, abnormal colored urates, abnormal stool, increased thirst and urination
- Acute poisoning can be diagnosed with a radiograph.
- Take your bird to the vet immediately!

Teflon Toxicity to Birds

- PTFE in nonstick cookware that is overheated PTFE overheated (more than 500 degrees).
- Birds will die very quickly.
- Birds may gasp for breath, lose balance and be depressed.
- Remove the bird immediately from the home.
- Take to the vet immediately!
- Do they survive? Almost never.
- Get rid of anything nonstick in your house if you have birds!