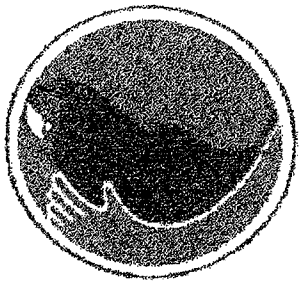
Association of Avian Veterinarians

Advancing and Promoting Avian Medicine and Stewardship



The Avian Health Exam

AAV Homepage

Find information about:

- Quarantine
- The New Bird Exam
- Testing Procedures
- Annual Check-Ups

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AAV Policy Statement for the Humane Care and Use of Birds

Pet owners are accustomed to taking the family dog or cat to the veterinarian for an annual check-up. It is even more important for a pet bird to have regular examinations, because birds tend to have very subtle symptoms of disease.

Quarantine

Isolation and quarantine of a new bird is the first and most important thing an owner should do. In order to protect other birds on the premises, it is advised that all newly acquired birds be maintained separately for a period of at least six weeks following purchase.

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Because many air-borne viruses may be spread from room to room by central air conditioning or heating systems, an off-premise location is preferred. Quarantine is essential for all new birds, even those that are believed to be "healthy".

New Bird Examination

The second most valuable step for a new bird owner is to establish a relationship with an avian veterinarian, preferably one who is a member of the Association Avian Veterinarians.

An examination of a newly acquired bird within the first three days after purchase is recommended in order to protect the investment of the owner, to uncover and prevent possible diseases conditions, and to educate the owner about appropriate bird care.

Even if the new bird checks out "normal", results of diagnostic tests in the initial patient record provide valuable references for subsequent examinations.

Components of the Exam

History

Your veterinarian is very interested in what you know about the background of your bird; its age, sex, origin, length of time in the household, diet, and caging. Even if the bird has been a household pet for a long time, the veterinarian should be advised of any contact, direct or indirect, with other birds. Examples of indirect contact would be the owner's buying of bulk seed from open bins in a pet shop that houses birds, or visiting other aviaries, bird shows, or bird markets.

Physical Evaluation

From an initial, critical observation of the bird in the cage, the veterinarian can determine general body conformation (obesity, tumors), posture, attitude, and character of respiration. Although many internal problems may not be evident from a step-by-step, hands-on examination, an experienced avian veterinarian will be able to note abnormalities in the feathers, skin, beak, eyes, ears, cere, nares, oral cavity, bones, muscles, abdomen and vent.

Weight

Once a bird has become an adult, the weight should remain relatively constant. Checking the weight occasionally, especially at the annual examination, will give valuable information about your bird's health. A bird's weight should be measured in grams, not ounces, in order to detect small increments of change.

Testing Procedures

Depending on the bird's history, results of physical examination, species, age, and general condition, your veterinarian may suggest some of the following diagnostic techniques that will assist in evaluating your bird's health.

Appraisal of Droppings

The appearance of the droppings, volume, color, and composition, may help the veterinarian generally assess the bird's health and consider certain disease conditions. Most birds are nervous in the clinic, so their droppings may be abnormally loose there. A fecal sample may be examined microscopically to determine the presence of internal parasites.

Chlamydiosis Test

Several screening tests are available for the detection of psittacosis or parrot fever. This is important as part of the new bird exam or annual check-up because the causative agent, *Chlamydia psittaci,* may be transmitted from birds to humans.

Blood Tests

A blood sample might be taken to determine the amount and distribution of blood cells. This information may suggest the possibility of certain diseases, and further tests may be indicated for confirmation. A series of chemistry tests performed on the blood sample may point to imbalances in biochemical functions and suggest the possibility of organ dysfunction. Blood parasites may also be detected.

Microbiology

Your avian veterinarian may recommend a culture of the choana (throat), cloaca (vent), crop, or some other tissue/fluid sample to determine abnormal growth of bacteria or yeast. At the same time, antibiotic sensitivity discs may be used to determine an appropriate antibiotic to be used if the bacterial growth requires therapy.

Radiographs

X-rays may be used to assess the internal condition of your bird. The presence of old or new fractures, the size and relative relationship of internal organs, the presence of foreign bodies or soft tissue masses such as tumors, and the condition of lungs and air sacs are often evaluated with radiographs. The use of anesthesia may be necessary to produce quality X-rays.

Cytology

With the use of special stains, a veterinarian skilled in this procedure can evaluate smears of tissues or fluids to assist in making a diagnosis.

Virus Screening

Some new tests are currently becoming available to screen birds for certain viruses. The detection of viruses is especially important for aviary birds. Some viral agents do not express themselves as clinical disease until the bird is under stress, such as laying eggs, feeding young, or at weaning.

Annual Check-Ups

Because owners are often unaware of obvious symptoms in the beginning stages of disease in birds, annual check-ups are advised for early identification and management of potential disorders. Also, new information of interest to the bird owner is continually becoming available.

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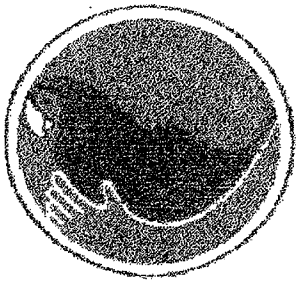

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Common diseases of pet birds
Michael P. Jones, DVM, University of Tennessee, Knoxville
Infectious diseases
Aspergillosis in a mycotic disease more commonly affecting raptors, however, in pet birds species, the blue-fronted Amazon, African grey parrot, and mynahs are frequently affected. Aspergillosis may result when there are large numbers of spores in the environment. Infections are usually secondary to another event which might compromise the bird's immune system. Treatment is usually long-term and serologic testing is needed to monitor progress.
Candidiasis, another common fungal disease of pet birds, is caused by an opportunistic yeast, Candida albicans, commonly infecting the gastrointestinal tract. Like aspergillosis, candidiasis may be a primary or secondary pathogen. Neonatal cockatiels are often affected.
Chlamydiosis affects nearly all species of pet birds, usually young birds. South American species appear to be affected more commonly than Asian, Australian, or African species. Because of the potential of passing the disease to humans, appropriate testing and control is recommended.
Pacheco's disease is a herpesvirus affecting a wide range of psittacines. Conures and Amazon parrots are often incriminated as asymptomatic carriers. If exposure is known, treatment may be initiated prior to the onset of clinical signs. Birds that survive the disease may become carriers.
Papillomavirus is a papovavirus suspected to be associated with benign epithelial (skin) tumors on un-feathered skin and gastrointestinal tract (cloaca). Treatment consists of surgical or cryotherapy, cauterization, or radiocautery.
Nutritional diseases
Hypovitaminosis A plays an important part on the overall health of birds. Diagnosis is based on dietary history, physical exam, and cytology.
Reproductive disorders

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Egg binding is a common problem in female companion species on a poor diet, first-time layers, or chronic egg-layers. Treatment should be initiated early. A wide range of treatments are effective. Cloacal or oviduct prolapse can result from egg-binding.

Egg-yolk peritonitis may occur as a result of failure of the ovum to enter the oviduct, or of trauma. The result is the presence of yolk within the coelomic (abdominal) cavity, which may cause an intense inflammatory reaction or infection. Therapy consists of appropriate antibiotics and fluids. In severe cases, abdominal lavage has been suggested.

What is Chlamydiosis?

Chlamydiosis, also known as psittacosis, is a disease that affects a wide variety of bird species. It is also transmissible from birds to humans. Since the human disease is usually associated with parrots (including parakeets or budgerigars), physicians often call the infection "parrot fever" or psittacosis. Nationwide, between 100-200 human cases are reported annually, although the actual number of cases is probably much higher. Chlamydiosis associated with birds is a different disease from the human venereal disease known by the same name.

What Causes Chlamydiosis?

Chlamydiosis is caused by a tiny organism, *Chlamydophila psittaci* (formerly known as *Chlamydia psittaci*), and is usually spread by inhaling the organism from dried feces. The infectious agent is often transmitted from "carrier" birds. Carriers show no signs of illness, but actively excrete the chlamydia organism in their droppings. Because the carrier state is so common, all birds legally imported into the U.S. are quarantined and must be treated with an antibiotic (chlortetracycline) in their food for 30 days. Despite quarantine and treatment for the disease, chlamydiosis continues to be a problem in pet birds and their owners, because birds can be infected after quarantine, treatment compliance may be inadequate, and, unfortunately, many pet birds are smuggled illegally into the U.S., completely bypassing treatment.

What are the Symptoms in Birds?

Symptoms of chlamydiosis in pet birds can include one or a combination of two or more of the following: ruffled feathers, depression, diarrhea, discharge from the nares and eyes, poor appetite, rapid weight loss, and death. Many other bird diseases have similar signs, making definitive diagnosis difficult and sometimes impossible.

What are the Symptoms in Humans?

Chlamydiosis in people can range from a mild flu-like infection to serious pneumonia. Fever, headache, and loss of appetite are common signs. Many people report painful and difficult breathing. Since physicians rarely suspect chlamydiosis, it is important for people who have been exposed to pet birds to request appropriate blood tests. Blood test results require time, so physicians may prescribe an antibiotic during the waiting period. If you have chlamydiosis, chances are you will begin to feel better very quickly after beginning antibiotic treatment.

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How are Infected Birds Treated?

Infected birds require treatment under veterinary supervision. A form of the antibiotic tetracycline is usually prescribed. One of the best methods for successful treatment is to feed special chlortetracycline-impregnated pellets. These pellets must be fed exclusively for 45 days.

Chlortetracycline may be given orally instead of in the bird's feed, but the medication will not successfully eliminate the disease if placed in the bird's water. Since the treatment period is so long, feeding medicated food pellets is the preferred treatment method.

Treatment Precautions

Once successful medication of your bird is underway, shedding of the chlamydiae will eventually stop. However, precautions must be taken to avoid infecting humans.

Your bird must be isolated during the treatment period, and one person should do all the cleaning, handling, and treatment, to minimize exposure. Protective clothing should be worn, including rubber boots, which can be disinfected after use, and all protective clothing should be left in the bird room. A protective mask will help decrease chances of inhaling the organism.

Because dried feces is more likely to be inhaled, frequent cage paper

changes are very important. The cage papers should be moistened with disinfectant before changing to minimize dispersal of dried material. Feather and dust circulation should be kept to a minimum, and, since they may contain the infective organism, feces, sweepings, and other wastes should be incinerated or disinfected.

Recommended disinfectants for cages, mops, floors, dishes, etc., include Lysol, Roccal, or Zephiran solutions. Following disinfection, hot soapy water should be used, followed by clear water rinses.

Re-Exposure to Chlamydiosis

One month after the full 45-day treatment period is completed, your bird's droppings should be tested for chlamydiae. Although this test is not completely accurate, it can provide some assurance that treatment has been successful. Repeated cultures over several months is also an effective monitoring tool. Despite having had chlamydiosis, birds and humans do not develop immunity to the disease. Boarding your bird or exposing it to other birds (e.g., pigeons housed outdoors) can reintroduce the infection. Although this disease is of great concern to veterinarians and their bird-owning clients, it can usually be successfully treated. Even critically ill birds can sometimes be restored to normal health, as long as treatment is appropriate and given over a sufficient period of time.

Recommendations for Prevention

To prevent chlamidiosis infection, the following steps are recommended:

- Maintain accurate records of all bird purchases, sales and other transactions. This will aid in identifying sources of infected birds and potentially exposed humans.
- Avoid purchasing or selling birds with diarrhea, low body weight or discharge from the eyes or nares.
- Isolate newly acquired birds for at least 30 days, and have your veterinarian test your new bird for chlamydiosis.
- Facilities boarding birds or selling birds on consignment are advised to require testing for chlamydiosis before birds enter the facility.
- Practice good biosecurity -- keep cages, dishes, toys and the bird area clean; position cages so bird waste will not transfer from one cage to another; thoroughly disinfect cages between bird occupants.

For a copy of the NASPHV Compendium of Measures to Control *Chlamydophila psittaci* infection among humans and pet birds, contact your veterinarian.

For More Information

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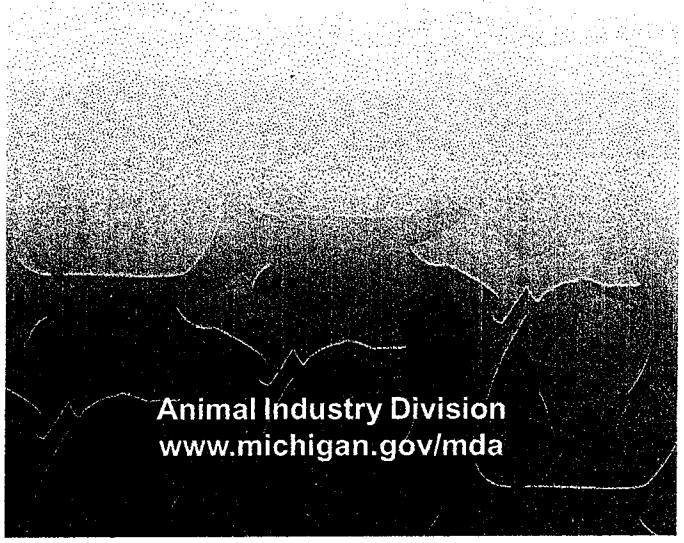
Michigan Department of Agriculture

Chlamydiosis (Psittacosis) in Pet Birds

Facts, Prevention and Treatment



Animal Industry Division
www.michigan.gov/mda

Nutrition Builds Avian Health

Educating clients can extend patients' lives.

By Margaret A. Wissman, DVM, Dipl. ABVP (Avian Practice)

ALGONQUIN ANIMAL CLINIC
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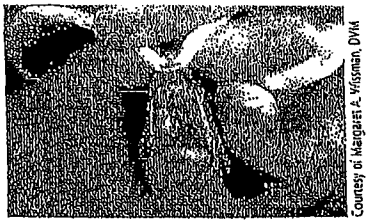
Despite myriad avian nutrition information, many bird owners still feed their pets a completely inappropriate diet. I still am surprised at the number of cases of hypovitaminosis A I see. Malnutrition and other diet-related diseases are far too common in my practice, and I'll bet they are in yours, as well. Every patient that comes into a veterinary clinic should have a thorough history taken, even those that come in for grooming. Birds on a poor plane of nutrition are at risk for pathologic fractures during routine wing clipping and nail trimming. Every owner who brings in a bird should receive some nutritional counseling.



Courtesy of Margaret A. Wissman, DVM

Young male Eclectus with *Candida albicans* lesion near choana due to hypovitaminosis A.

Common Ailments

Hypovitaminosis A is the most common problem seen in birds that consume primarily a seed diet. In birds experiencing hypovitaminosis A, usually, the choanal papillae will be blunted or absent. Often, white plaques may be visible in the oropharynx (these are usually *Candida* lesions). On a Gram's stain of the choanal slit, there may be excessive numbers of epithelial cells, as well as yeast (often budding).

Treatment should include parenteral administration of vitamins A and D_3. Remember vitamin A can be toxic, so injectable vitamin A must be carefully dosed. As a supplement, beta-carotene is nontoxic; the body will convert what it needs to vitamin A and the rest will be excreted unchanged. Beta-carotene (in the form of a liquid gel capsule) may be supplemented orally (by snipping off the tip of a capsule and administering a drop or two directly into the oral cavity or onto a piece of food) or a powdered vitamin containing vitamin A for birds can be sprinkled on soft food. I don't recommend putting vitamins in drinking water because they tend to make it less palatable and allow bacteria to proliferate.

If there are any secondary infections (with yeast or bacteria), those should be treated appropriately. I have found exclusively using nystatin orally, which isn't absorbed systematically, and thus, will treat only the yeast it comes in direct contact with, is effective in only about 40 percent of candidiasis cases. I use a combination of diflucan (Fluconizole) 100 mg crushed and mixed with 20 cc of nystatin oral suspension, dosed at 0.5 mL per 1,000 grams body weight PO BID five to 10 days.

Once a bird has been diagnosed with hypovitaminosis A, based on the history, diet, appearance of the choanal papillae and Gram's stain results, treatment will result in a rapid resolution of clinical signs. I recommend regularly examining the choanal slit with a bright light source and magnification in order to accurately evaluate the appearance of the oropharynx. By using a strong light and magnification, you can examine the choanal slit of even budgerigars. While any psittacine can develop hypovitaminosis A, I see it most often in Amazons fed an all-seed diet.

Dietary Choices

Although peanuts are often given to parrots as a treat, and they are commonly found in seed mixes, I don't recommend feeding peanuts to psittacines. There is a risk of aflatoxicosis from peanuts, as well as from corn and other grains. The mycotoxins cannot be seen, tasted or smelled, and they can be present in raw and roasted peanuts. Although commercial peanut butter is safe, peanuts are probably best avoided or given sparingly. Almonds are higher in calcium and they are not grown in the ground, so they are safer to feed.

In their natural habitats, budgerigars and cockatiels are primarily seed-eaters. In my experience, and that of many of my colleagues, these birds are more prone to renal disease if fed a 100 percent pelleted diet long-term. We are seeing more budgies and cockatiels that are 6 to 10 years old and suffering from kidney problems. Many avian veterinarians believe it is better to offer a pellets, seed (especially millet and sprouted seed) and a variety of fresh foods (bread, cooked pasta, brown rice, legumes, vegetables, fruits and other table foods). Although a pelleted diet is far superior to a diet comprised of seed, many of the formulated diets haven't been proven for the life expectancy of many species. Other factors also may contribute to renal disease, such as chronic, subclinical chlamydiosis.

Many seed mixes are vitamin-fortified; however, the vitamins are usually in the shell, so when the seed is hulled, the fortification is lost. Seed mixes with some added pellets are better; however, the birds often throw out the pellets and selectively eat the seeds. Sprouting seed can make a diet healthier. Sprouting uses some of the fat stored in the seed, and the sprouted seed may accustom the bird to eating vegetables.

Species-Specific Trends

The newest trend in formulated diets is tailoring a diet to specific species or groups of birds. Lories consume high quantities of nectar, and lory diets have been developed that can be mixed with water; others have been designed to be offered dry.

Manufacturers also have designed diets targeted for overweight, sedentary birds. However, one manufacturer recommends feeding its high-potency diet to overweight Amazons, on the assumption that because the nutrients are more concentrated, the bird will become satiated more quickly and, thus, will eat less.

Low-iron diets have been developed for birds diagnosed with iron storage disease, hemochromatosis or for species of birds that are known to have problems with iron storage disease. Dr. Gwen Flinchum has diagnosed several cases of iron storage disease in older Amazon parrots with abnormal black feathers; these parrots can benefit from a low-iron diet.

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Secure Handling Of Your Parrot

There are times when you will need to hold your bird securely, for example, when you are trimming its flight feathers and nails. The thing to remember is to hold your bird's neck between your first and second finger (not thumb and first finger). This holds the bird's head securely and stops your tendency to squeeze your hand around the bird's chest. We find that a towel rather than a glove works best.

With hand-raised parrots that have no reason to detest being held in your hands, you don't want to train your bird inadvertently to fear your hands, so it is best to avoid using gloves, because gloves resemble hands. When the bird is held in the towel, cover its head with the towel so your parrot will not relate its discomfort to you but rather to the towel. This way, your parrot will be upset with the towel and not with you!

Training Your Parrot

A hand-raised parrot is a joy to train. Not only is it gentle, but it is intelligent and will learn quickly, especially as it soon realizes that it will be rewarded for good behavior. We always keep safflower and sunflower seeds as well as dried corn around to reward any desired behavior.

You must exert caring/loving dominance over your bird at all times. The first step in caring dominance is to teach your pet to obey the "Up" and the "Down" commands whenever you pick your bird up or put it down, and especially when removing it or returning it to its cage.

We know that it is very tempting to carry your parrot around with you on your shoulder, but this will cause problems. If your parrot's eye-level is higher than yours, you may find it difficult to control your parrot if it chooses to bite your ear, cheek or neck.

Never punish your parrot by hitting it. Beware that you do not accidentally start to reward your bird for incorrect behavior. For example, if your bird cries to be let out of the cage and you finally give in because you can't stand the noise anymore, the bird will believe that it has been rewarded for the crying sound and will do this every time it wants to come out of its cage.

When a parrot is overly rambunctious but wants to be with you, you can discourage mischief by putting the bird back into its cage while you leave the room for a few minutes. On your return, your parrot will have calmed down.

Entertaining Your Parrot

The more intelligent a bird, the more it needs to be entertained. There are stores full of bird toys to excite your bird. Beware of any toy that has shower-curtain type clips or any other parts that your bird can accidentally hang itself on. Gather a large variety of toys, because boredom can lead to psychological problems in parrots, which is a cause of feather-picking, among other things. We like to rotate our parrot toys so that when a parrot becomes bored with one toy, we change it for another and then bring back the "old" toy at a later time. We have found that it is not how much you spend on a toy but how long it will keep your parrot occupied that counts. For example, a paper bag or a breakfast cereal box can provide your parrot with hours of cheap thrills.

Untreated cotton and natural rawhide "bird rope" make wonderful chewing toys for your parrot, too. Just remember to disinfect them (at least with boiling water) from time to time when they become soiled. Pay particular attention to how they attach to the cage.

Be careful of toys with "jingle bells" on them, because parrots can get their toes stuck in the bell holes or can remove and swallow clappers before you know it. You can understand why it's best to supervise your parrot while it plays with its toys.

Parrot ownership gives countless rewards not only through companionship but also by giving you the opportunity to observe a parrot being a parrot. Now go ahead and enjoy your parrot!

Ray Dorge and Gail Sibley authored A Guide To Pet & Companion Birds *and* Popular Conures *(ABK Publications) and have a third title in production. Ray is a columnist for* Australian Birdkeeper *magazine and* Parrots *magazine (UK). He is also a freelance writer for the top aviculture magazines worldwide. He will be a keynote speaker at the Gabriel Foundation's "Symposium 2001" in January 2000 in Tampa, Florida.*

Algonquin Animal Clinic
10412 Route 31
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Avian Diet Conversion

Food types and recommended amount in diet for pet birds:

Food type	*Percentage in diet*
Seeds	10% - 15%
Pellets	40% - 45%
Fresh Foods	40% - 45%

When converting from a seed diet to a pellet & fresh food diet:

⌘Have **3** separate food bowls in cage. **Do not mix foods** in order to monitor your bird's food intake.

•Bowl #1 - **Seeds**-Have in cage only 2 times a day for 1 hour at a time.

•Bowl #2 - **Pellets**-Always have in cage

•Bowl#3 - **Fresh Foods**-Can always have in cage, but keep fresh.

⌘Offer only pellets and fresh foods during "Family Meals."

⌘Try juices in separate bowl (not a substitute for water). Stay away from sour or tart juices.

⌘Can sprinkle juice in pellet bowl to entice bird to eat pellets.

⌘Recommend Bean Cuisine: cooked or raw

Raw- many picky seed eating birds prefer Bean Cuisine uncooked.

Cooked- Boil water, then add Bean Cuisine and immediately remove from heat. Let cool completely and drain. Store in ice cube trays in freezer and thaw as needed.

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☐ Do not feed:

- Avocado
- Cabbage
- Caffeine
- Chocolate
- Dairy (Except for African Greys & Conures)
  - *Note:* Dairy can be given to birds in small amounts.
- Fried Foods
- Parsley
- Peanuts
- Sunflower Seeds in excess

☐ Seeds should be only 10% to 15% of diet.

☐ Pellets should be 40% to 45% of diet.

Recommended pellet brands: ZuPreem, LaFeber, Kaytee, and Pretty Bird.

☐ Fresh food (table food) should be 40% to 45% of diet.

☐ Keep birds off shoulder and heads:

1. Makes birds think they are dominant to you
2. Birds can cause significant harm to your face if ever spooked by something.

☐ Play the step-up game with perch or fingers with different people, in different areas of your house.

☐ Shower birds a couple times weekly: water spray bottle or in the shower.

☐ A separate sleeping cage is recommended for all birds. It just needs to be big enough for 1 perch and water bowl. No food or toys in sleeping cage. Sleeping cage should be in quiet, dark area of house with no disturbances. Birds should have an average of 12 - 14 hours of darkness every night.

☐ Set-up cage with several different size perches. *Rope perches are **not** recommended. Manzanita perches **are** recommended.*

☐ Do ***not*** put vitamins in the water-*it causes bacterial growth.*

PET BIRDS Health Tip

"Teflon Toxicity"

by Gary Gallerstein D.V.M.
(Adapted From The Complete Bird Owner's Handbook)

Polytetrafluoroethylene (PTFE) is a synthetic polymer used as a non-stick surface in cookware. The brand names Teflon, Silverstone, and T-Fal are the best known, but PTFE-coated products are also manufactured under other trade names.

As Dr. Peter Sakas states: Under normal cooking conditions, PTFE-coated cookware is stable and safe. When PTFE is heated above 530 degrees Farenheit, however, it undergoes breakdown and emits caustic (acid) fumes. Most foods cook at lower temperatures: water boils at 212 degrees, eggs fry at 350 degrees, and deep frying occurs at 410 degrees. But when empty PTFE-coated cookware is left on a burner set on the high setting, it can reach temperatures of 750 degrees or greater. Thus, if a pan is being pre-heated on a burner and forgotten, or if water boils out of a pot, breakdown of the PTFE can occur. In other words, PTFE cookware has to be "abused" to emit toxic fumes, but this is not as rare as it might seem; many people fall asleep after they put pots or pans on the stove to heat.

Birds kept in areas close to the kitchen will usually die very shortly after breathing the fumes. Even birds kept in another room are at great risk. Severe breathing difficulties, such as gasping for breath, may be seen just prior to death. Humans, dogs, cats, and other mammals are somewhat less sensitive to the very serious effects of these fumes. First Aid For Teflon Toxicity:

1. Remove the affected bird immediately from the home and supply lots of fresh air. Unfortunately, other than this, no first aid exists. 2. Call your avian veterinarian immediately.

Table 35–5

PLANT TOXICOSES IN BUDGERIGARS (B) AND CANARIES (C)

Plant	Bird
Avocado (*Persea americana*)	B
Black locust (*Robina pseudoacacia*)	B
Clematis (*Montana rubens*)	B
Diffenbachia (*Diffenbachia* spp)	C
Foxglove (*Digitalis pupurea*)	C
Lilly of the valley (*Convallaria majalis*)	B
Lupinus spp	C
Oleander (*Nerium oleander*)	B, C
Philodendron (*Philodendron scandens*)	B
Poinsettia (*Euphorbia pulcherrima*)	B
Rhododendron (*Rhododendron simsii*)	B
Virginia creeper (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*)	B
Yew (*Taxus media*)	B, C

Data from LaBonde, Vet Clin North Am, 1991[18]; Kenny et al, Proc Am Assn Zoological Parks and Aquariums, 1987[29]; Lawerence et al, J Wildl Dis, 1985[30]; Aral et al, J Am Vet Med Assoc, 1992[31]; Hargis et al, J Am Vet Med Assoc, 1989[32].

Table 35–4

PLANTS CLINICALLY REPORTED TO CAUSE TOXIC REACTIONS IN PET BIRDS, WATERFOWL, GAMEFOWL, AND RATITES

Avocado (*Persea americana*)
Bishops weed (*Acgopodium podograria*)
Black locust (*Robina pseudoacacia*)
Blue-green algae (*Microcystis aeruginosa*)
Burdock (*Arctium minus*)
Camel bush (*Trichodesma incanum*)
Castor bean (*Ricinus communis*)
Clematis (*Montana rubens*)
Coffee bean (*Sesbania drumundii*)
Diffenbachia (*Diffenbachia* spp)
Elephants ear (*Colocasia* or *Alocasia* spp)
Ergot (*Claviceps purpurea*)
Lily of the valley (*Convallaria majalis*)
Locoweed (*Astragalus emoryanus*)
Maternity plant (*Kalanchoe* spp)
Milkweed (*Asclepias* spp)
Nightshade (*Solanum* spp)
Oak (*Quercus* spp)
Oleander (*Nerium oleander*)
Parsley (*Petroselinum sativum*)
Philodendron (*Philodendron scandens*)
Poinsettia (*Euphorbia pulcherrima*)
Pokeweed (*Phytolacca americana*)
Precatory bean (*Arbus precatoius*)
Rhododendron (*Rhododendron simsii*)
Tobacco (*Nicotiana* spp)
Virginia creeper (*Parthenocissus* spp)
Yew (*Taxus media*)

Adapted from LaBonde, Vet Clin North Am 1991[18].

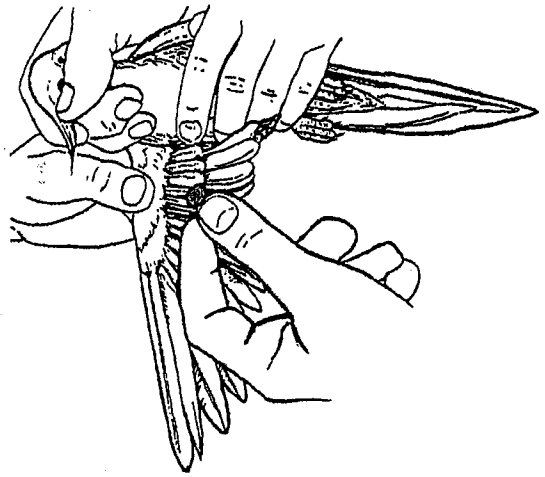
A Contact a veterinarian immediately! Use first aid only until bird can be seen.
B Conditions may briefly respond to first aid, but a veterinarian should be contacted immediately.
C Try these first aid suggestions. If results are not immediately seen, contact a veterinarian.

!	PROBLEM/SYMPTOMS	POSSIBLE CAUSES	FIRST AID MEASURES
A	**Cloacal (rectal) prolapse**	Mass in cloaca; egg-binding; tumor; papillomatosis; malnutrition; excessive sexual stimulation.	Call veterinarian immediately.
A	**Laying on cage floor, weak**	Head trauma; toxin ingestion; overheating; central nervous system infection; tumor; severe metabolic disease.	For head trauma, keep cool (not hot or cold). See "Short-term Home Care" on reverse side until veterinarian can be seen.
A	**Limb – loss of use, paralysis**	**Leg:** paralysis; soft tissue trauma; fractures; tumors; egg-binding; gout; metal toxicities. **Wing:** soft tissue trauma; bony trauma; heavy metal toxicity.	Remove perches; provide quiet, warm environment (85-90°F). For broken wing, can slip a snug (not tight) stocking over the body (with the toe cut out for the bird's head).
A	**Poisoning**	**Ingested:** pesticides; disinfectants; heavy metals (tire balances, curtain weights, solder, wine bottle foil, leaded glass, galvanized wire); some plants; cigarettes; some foods like chocolate, alcohol, avocado, salt. **Inhaled:** Paint fumes; overheated non-stick coatings; barbecue smoke; cigarette smoke; hair spray.	**Ingested:** Provide warm environment (85-90°F). Ingestion of inappropriate items (called pica) may be a result of malnutrition. **Inhaled:** Provide fresh air, ventilation.
B	**Burns**	**Heat:** Contact with hot cooking oil, hot water or hot surface; chick fed formula that is too hot. **Electrical:** Biting electrical cord. **Chemical:** Ingesting caustic chemical.	Place bird in quiet environment. **Heat:** Immediately apply cold compress. May apply water-soluble cream. **Chemical:** Immediately flush mouth with large amounts of cool water.
B	**Diarrhea/ Excess urine/ Wet droppings**	**If true unformed feces (pathologic):** virus, bacteria, fungi, parasites, poisons, chlamydiosis, foreign body or malnutrition. **If increase in fluid (polyuria):** stress, excitement and over-consumption of watery foods; kidney disease.	**Pathologic:** Provide warm environment (85-90°F). Place wax paper on bottom of enclosure to collect fresh feces for evaluation by veterinarian. **Polyuria:** Start on baby cereal mixed with 1 tsp. psyllium and 2 cups Gatorade®. Administer Pepto Bismol® (1 drop per cockatiel-sized bird).
B	**Egg-binding** (female: lethargy, abdominal enlargement or straining, previous nesting activity; common in small birds)	General malnutrition, especially protein, vitamin A, D_3 or calcium; first, soft-shelled or hybrid egg; over-production; hereditary factors; cold environment; lack of exercise.	Provide warm environment (85-90°F). Do not give oil orally or via vent.
B	**Eye abnormalities or discharge**	Injury; infection (virus, psittacosis, mycoplasma, coliforms); lid abnormalities; malnutrition; sinusitis.	Apply natural or hypo-tears to affected eye. Do not use Murine®, Visine® or antibiotic drops/ointments.
B	**Lacerations and cuts**	Injury; hazardous environment; fighting; flying into ceiling fans; bite wounds from other animals.	Pressure bandage to control bleeding. If injury is from animal bite wound, contact veterinarian immediately.
B	**Overheating** (panting, holds wings away from body)	No shade or retreat away from sun; left in car; improper supplemental heat; obesity.	Place feet and legs in cool water; mist feathers down to the skin with water (with a few drops of detergent).
B	**Passing whole seeds**	Gastrointestinal (GI) irritation or disturbance; grit obstruction; viral diseases; parasites; malnutrition.	Provide warm environment (85-90°F). Offer soft food.
B	**Respiratory symptoms** (coughing, sneezing, wheezing, runny nose, clicking, change of voice, breathing difficulties)	**Amazons, macaws:** Air sac or other respiratory infections from viruses, chlamydia, bacteria, fungi, parasites; malnutrition. **Budgies:** Iodine deficiency; tumors; obesity. **All species:** Foreign body in nares or trachea; egg-binding; irritation from cigarette smoke, plastic, rug cleaners.	Provide warm environment (85-90°F) except for obesity. Offer fresh air.
B	**Vomiting/ Regurgitation**	Normal regurgitation to mate; obstruction by foreign bodies; GI irritation or infection; poisoning (pesticide, heavy metal).	Provide warm environment (85-90°F). Remove food and water.
C	**Bleeding from feather**	Trauma; injury to pin feathers (growing out on trimmed wings with no mature feathers for support); malnutrition.	Prevent flapping. Clean affected feather and apply flour. If bleeding persists, apply a drop of SuperGlue®. See "First Aid for a Bleeding Feather" on reverse side.
C	**Bleeding from nail**	Cut too short; injury (caught, bite, unsafe toys, nail too long, improper diet, liver problems).	Minor bleeding stops with application of cornstarch, flour or bar soap. If fleshly quick is exposed, cut back flush with nail bed. Grind in Monsel's Solution®, styptic pencil or Quick stop®.
C	**Oil contamination**	Contact with household oil; application of greasy, over-the-counter ointment or other medication; contact with oily substances.	Provide warm environment (85-90°F). Remove oil immediately. If heavy oil, dissolve first with light oil. Remove with dishwashing detergent (eg, Dawn®) solution, rinse, dry immediately (blot with towel and blow dry). Wrap bird in towel or blanket.

Conditions requiring veterinary attention: Contact a veterinarian if your bird shows any signs of unusual appearance or behavior, including: loss of appetite, weight loss, depression, weakness, unusual droppings, abdominal swelling, signs of trauma, seizures, loss of balance or favoring one leg or wing.

First Aid for a Bleeding Feather

Identify the bleeding feather by cleaning with hydrogen peroxide or water. Pat a small amount of fine white flour onto the area to absorb the blood and create a "dough ball." The broken section can be trimmed later. If it continues to bleed, apply a drop of SuperGlue® directly to the dried, affected area of the feather. If bleeding persists, contact your veterinarian.



How to Evaluate Your Bird's Droppings

Clean wax paper or other smooth surfaces can be used to collect the droppings. The normal appearance of the feces is usually soft and brown when the bird is eating a formulated diet, but may be abnormally dry and black or green with a seed diet. The normally clear urine may be increased in amount due to excess consumption of fruits and vegetables. Urates are creamy white waste from the kidneys and are often suspended in the liquid urine or are "wrapped around" the feces.

A sick bird may show a change in the volume, color, consistency or frequency of droppings. Feces from egg-laying females, baby birds on hand-feeding formulas and the first void of the morning may be larger than normal, and urine output may increase when the bird is nervous or ill.

"An Ounce of Prevention..."

The single most important factor in reducing the number of home emergencies with companion birds is to provide a balanced diet. Proper nutrition significantly reduces the medical attention required for feathers, skin, behavior, gastrointestinal disorders, bleeding, obesity, respiratory disorders, reproductive problems and some eye conditions.

Any new birds should be carefully evaluated before purchase, examined by a veterinarian and quarantined in the home for at least 45 days before contact with existing birds. Initial preventive treatment may be needed, and periodic health checks by your veterinarian are recommended. Learn enough about your bird to provide a proper, safe environment.

Avoid: unsupervised freedom, sources of lead, zinc, oils and ointments, cigarette smoke, insecticides, contact with other animals and children, hazardous objects in and near cage, flimsily constructed or improper toys, overheated non-stick-coated utensils and overuse of disinfectants.