

PET BIRD EMERGENCY CARE AND PROBLEM PREVENTION

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Hypocalcemic syndrome of African Greys

- This problem is most often seen in greys two to five years of age both Congos and Timnehs.
- The signs are usually altered mental status. The bird may appear to be in a drunken state, it may not be able to stand or even sit up, or it may be having seizures.
- The best thing to do is get to the vet ASAP this problem is caused by a drop in the blood calcium and the bird usually needs calcium injections and other supportive care to solve the problem.
- In the meantime remove the pet from it's cage and place in a padded carrier to prevent further self injury as these neurologic birds easily injure themselves when they fall off of the perches, etc.
- To help prevent this problem be sure your grey is on a good pelleted diet, and if it has this problem that there is a plan in place to keep the bird's calcium normalized.

Difficulty breathing

- This problem is seen in many types of situations. Some examples are: cockatiels inhaling seeds, Amazons with aspergillus problems, egg bound females, air sac mites in finches or canaries, over heating, and exposure to toxic fumes.
- The signs are very obvious, such as gasping, tail bobbing, voice change, and open mouth breathing.
- This is very serious. Get to the vet ASAP. These birds are very unstable and too much stress will kill them. Avoid excessive handling and stress. Often times it is best, especially with small birds, to bring the whole cage along rather than stress the inmate by moving him to a carrier.
- Do not try to treat these guys at home. They usually need care in a veterinary hospital setting.
- To help prevent these problems avoid toxic fumes such as paint, solvents, and cooking pans with nonstick surfaces. Also provide your pet with good quality air and humidity especially for South American species.

Head trauma

- This can occur in many situations: such as falls and collisions with doors and windows.
- The bird may be unconscious after the episode, it may have altered mental status, or it may show few signs initially, in any case all head traumas need veterinary attention ASAP.
- See the vet soon even if the bird appears to be fine.
- In the meantime place the bird in a quiet dark carrier, and for those with mentation deficits keep off of perches and playpens. Keep the carrier at room temperature.
- To prevent these accidents bird proof your home: cover windows, close doors, ect. Also KEEP ALL PET BIRD WINGS PROBERLY CLIPPED many traumatic incidents can be avoided by following this simple rule.

Burns

- Burns are often associated with baby crop burns and hot liquid accidents.
- The signs depend on the type of burn. From holes in the crops from crop burns to loss of large areas of skin or limbs.
- Most burns involve some tissue damage and many are life threatening if left untreated. They all warrant veterinary attention.
- In the meantime place the bird in a hospital cage (to be described later) and give supportive care especially fluids in the form of Gatorade.
- To prevent burns all hand feeding should be done by experienced feeders only. Breeders should not sell unweaned babies to new owners. Wings should be kept clipped, and no birds in the kitchen during cooking times.

Fractures

- These usually occur in conjunction with trauma.
- The signs depend on the type of fracture.

- See vet ASAP often X-rays are needed to fully evaluate the problem.
- Keep the bird calm in a padded carrier do not handle the pet excessively as this can cause more damage at the fracture site.
- To prevent these problems try to prevent trauma., provide safe café furnishings, and restrain birds properly.

Bleeding

- Often associated with trauma and or aggressive encounters.
- The signs depend on the circumstances ie a few drops of blood from a close clipped nail to a major bleed from a severe wound.
- If severe see vet ASAP.
- If it is a simple nail clip bleed treat with Quickstop or a wet tea bag if more severe see vet. In any case give Gatorade for a day or so after the bleed to replace losses.
- Prevent trauma, and learn how to trim nails properly. With babies the first nail trim often leads to bleeding.

Animal bite and scratch wounds

- Occur when other pets such as cats and dogs have close contact with birds, and also in big bird little bird mixes.
- Signs depend on the situation.
- VERY SERIOUS see vet ASAP delay often kills the pet!!!
- DO NOT TREAT AT HOME. Put in a padded carrier and get to vet. These animals need intensive care if they are to survive.
- Do not allow close contact between birds and cats and dogs. Even if they get along they sometimes-rough play that these animals engage in can spell disaster for a bird. Also be careful about mixing different birds of different species and sizes together.

The home first aid kit and hospital cage

- Some things to have on hand: Quickstop, small tweezers, plenty of Gatorade, various sizes of syringes for feeding, some hand feeding formula, gauze and medical tape to apply pressure to bleeding wounds, and some triple antibiotic ointment for minor scrapes and abrasions.
- The Padded Carrier: this is nothing more then a cat carrier or closed box with ventilation holes that is kept dark and padded with terrycloth towels or other soft material that provides a soft low stress environment for the pet.
- A hospital cage can be made by placing an aquarium on top of a heating pad, and by fitting the heating pad up one wall of the tank so as to provide a heated wall and floor. Put a towel in the tank for the bird to rest on. Next put a 30-60 watt light on top of the aquarium cover to heat one area of the cage. Finally, a damp cloth should be put in the tank where it will not wet the patient for humidity. Lastly, some things to remember about the Hospital cage. Be sure there is a place for the tank surface, do not run the heating pad above medium setting, and if possible substitute a heating pad with a recirculation water blanket of hot water bottles. For the breeders neonate brooders make great hospital cages.

Rules for safe happy healthy birds

- Good formulated diet and proper husbandry.
- Clip those wings properly (except breeder and aviary birds)
- Get your pets from a reputable source.
- Have regular vet visits for preventive care and to do the appropriate screening on new arrivals.
- Do not delay with health problems.
- Network with other bird lovers. We can all learn from each other.