

that number, egg laying will have serious consequences sooner or later, no matter how healthy the bird looks. For a bird that eats a seed-based diet or has an underlying health problem, any egg laying at all is dangerous.

An avian veterinarian should examine every egg-laying bird. The doctor can screen for and treat any underlying disease, establish a sound nutritional program, and offer prevention advice. Excessive egg laying is a time-bomb situation.

HOW TO FIND AN AVIAN VET:

To locate an avian vet near you, visit the Association of Avian Veterinarians Web site at www.aav.org or contact Mickaboo Cockatiel Rescue. Please remember that having your bird seen by a dog and cat vet can do more harm than good, so it is really important that you establish a relationship with a qualified avian vet today!

WHAT TO INCLUDE IN YOUR FIRST AID KIT:

- Avian vet's phone number
- Critter-keeper / tank
- Heating pad
- Clean towel
- Cornstarch
- Styptic powder for use on beak and nails only
- Cotton swabs
- Scissors
- Shallow food and water dishes
- Your bird's favorite food

Mickaboo Cockatiel Rescue is a non-profit bird rescue organization, located in the San Francisco Bay Area. We are dedicated to the rescue, rehabilitation and placement of parrot type birds that have been sick, injured abused or neglected.



Mickaboo Cockatiel Rescue

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Mickaboo Cockatiel Rescue

VETERINARY
CARE FOR PET
BIRDS
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Just as annual visits to the doctor are important for people, regular veterinary care is critical to the long-term health of your pet bird. It can be hard to tell if a bird is ill. Being prey animals, rather than predators like most of our familiar pets, they hide their illness so a predator doesn't target them as easy game.

Your best chance of catching a disease in the early, treatable stage is to know your bird well and to stay alert for significant changes.



VETERINARY CARE:

If you own a bird, we strongly recommend that you establish a relationship with an avian vet before you have an emergency. Many vets will attend to emergencies for their own clients only, so establishing a relationship between your bird and a vet is a wise idea. It is also a good idea to you bring your bird in for a well-bird exam once per year to record weight and perform lab tests so your avian vet will have a basis of comparison with test results when your bird does become ill. Also, an avian vet may uncover subclinical illness or disease that is not yet making the bird ill enough that it is noticeable. By uncovering and treating subclinical illness, it is possible to avert many disasters and emergencies that could make a bird “crash,” which usually occurs on weekends, evenings, and holidays!

SYMPTOMS OF ILLNESS:

- Listlessness, lack of energy, and lack of interest in normal activities.
- Dull, rough, unpreened feathers or a general ungroomed look.
- Fluffed up feathers despite moderate room temperature.
- Abnormal feather growth.
- Not perching/sleeping on the bottom of the cage.
- Discharge from the eyes or nose.
- Wheezing, clicking or raspy sounds when breathing (normal breathing is silent).
- A “pasted” vent — dropping stuck to the feathers around the vent.

- Tail-assisted breathing. That is, the tail moves up and down pumping to aid air through distressed lungs.
- Vomiting.
- Bleeding.
- Any kind of growth, sore, blemish, wart, skin abnormality, etc.
- A vague feeling that something about your bird isn’t quite right.

If you observe your bird carefully and know it well you can probably trust your instincts when you think that something may be out of the ordinary, even if you can’t put your finger on a specific symptom.

A sick bird should always be considered an emergency and should be brought to an avian vet as soon as possible!

AVIAN “COLD”:

There is no such thing as an avian “cold”! What may appear to the owner to be a “cold” in a bird, could actually be one of the various forms of upper respiratory tract problems. Birds does not contract colds like their human owners.

PLUCKING:

There can be many reasons why a bird plucks his/her feathers. Some common causes are:

- Vitamin A and other dietary deficiencies.
- Chronic exposure to tobacco smoke or cleaning products.
- Chronic liver, kidney, GI, or respiratory disease.
- Feather cysts or tumors.
- Bacterial or fungal infections.
- Viruses and parasites.

If your bird is plucking, it must be seen by an

avian vet immediately.

FIRST AID:

You should never treat your bird’s illness with over-the-counter remedies. By the time you know a bird is ill, the sickness is usually well advanced. Delaying a visit with an avian vet and masking the condition with over-the-counter medicines is very likely to cost your bird’s life.

Until you can get the bird to the vet, keep the bird warm (85-90F degrees), quiet, and in strict quarantine. Provide fresh water and offer his favorite foods. If you have a “critter keeper,” you can use it as a hospital cage. Take a heating pad, set it on *low only* and place the tank on top. If you don’t have a “critter keeper,” you can clip a heating pad on the outside of the cage near the bird’s favorite perch, set in on *low only* and cover the cage with a sheet or towel on 3 sides to keep the heat in. Heat helps boost a bird’s immune system, so he might start feeling better after spending some time on heat. This is only a temporary fix, so make sure you get the bird to an avian vet as soon as possible. If the bird is bleeding, apply pressure to try and stop the bleeding and get the bird to an avian vet immediately.

EGG LAYING:

Egg laying is very common in cockatiels, lovebirds, budgies, canaries, and finches and can start anytime from 5 months to over 10 years of age. A bird in the peak of health on an ideal diet may be able to sustain egg production of up to 10-20 eggs per year without serious harm. Beyond