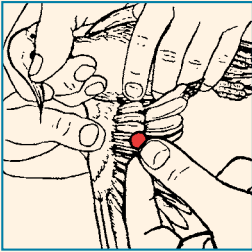




First Aid for a Bleeding Feather

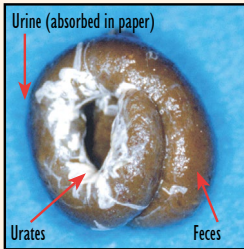
When feathers are growing in, the shaft is filled with blood (“blood feather”). The feather becomes hollow when it finishes growing. But if a long flight or tail blood feather breaks, a bird can lose a lot of blood very quickly. It is best to take your bird to your avian veterinarian to have the feather evaluated and treated. If you cannot get your bird to your veterinarian in time, you may be faced with treating the bleeding yourself. Safe restraint is easiest with two people. Identify the bleeding feather by cleaning the area and wetting the feathers with water or rubbing alcohol. Most bleeding can be stopped with 2-3 minutes of direct pressure. Styptic powder, corn starch, or flour may be used as well, but may not be as effective as direct pressure. The bird should be discouraged from flapping or other vigorous activity, as this may restart the bleeding. If bleeding persists, apply direct pressure again and contact your avian veterinarian immediately.



How to Evaluate Your Bird's Droppings

Collect droppings on clean white paper or wax paper for easiest evaluation. Droppings contain three portions: feces, urine (variable), and urates (solid urine). The normal appearance of feces is usually formed, soft, and brown or green in color. Some pelleted diets or pigmented foods may cause color changes to the feces. For example, red pellets may cause the fecal part to appear red or orange and blueberries may turn feces blue to grey. Amounts of urine may vary; for example, cockatiels usually produce very little urine. Parrots that eat a lot of fruit or vegetables, young hand-fed birds, reproductively active female birds, and birds that are nervous may produce more urine than normal. This is common when birds visit the veterinarian.

Normal Droppings



Normal urates are cream-to-white in color, but may take on some pigment from the feces. In this case, pigment may “leak” onto the edges of the urates that contact the feces. Persistent, even color changes in urate color may be a sign of illness. While the appearance of droppings in normal birds may vary with diet, marked changes in volume, color, consistency, or frequency of droppings may indicate a medical problem. A bird that is not eating enough will produce droppings in which the fecal portion becomes smaller and darker in color, and then may disappear so that all that is produced is urine and urates.



Short-term Home Care of Sick or Injured Birds

Sick or injured birds usually benefit from a warm environment (85-90°F [29-32°C]). This is especially true for juvenile or geriatric birds, which are more vulnerable to illness. Birds that are sick and trying to conserve body heat will appear fluffed. Provide heat by placing the bird in an enclosure on a heating pad set on low with a layer of towel between the enclosure and the pad, or by placing a heat or light bulb near one side of the cage. Use a thermometer to monitor the temperature and watch carefully for signs the bird is too hot (rapid breathing, holding the wings away from the body). Sick birds that are too weak to perch or those with leg fractures or paralysis may be placed on soft towels on the bottom of an enclosure. Very weak birds may be placed in the middle of a circle created with a rolled-up towel.

Sick birds are often not eating enough and may become hypoglycemic. Food and water containers should be within easy reach. Birds that are weak or are not eating may be given a few drops of water with pancake syrup by eyedropper or syringe. Be extremely careful and allow the bird to swallow between drops. Sick birds can aspirate liquids into the lungs, which may be fatal. Any bird too weak to swallow must see an avian veterinarian immediately.

Do not give medications, creams, or ointments for humans or other animals unless directed by an experienced avian veterinarian.

“An Ounce of Prevention...”

Sudden illness may be the result of toxin exposure or trauma. Common household toxins include odors from overheated nonstick cookware, heavy metals and cleaners or air fresheners. While accidents happen, many emergencies are actually the result of hidden underlying chronic conditions. Birds are skilled at hiding signs of illness, and many birds that appear suddenly ill have been hiding symptoms for some time. A number of illnesses are caused or worsened by poor diet and improper housing. As in other species, proper diet is linked with a lower incidence of illness in birds.

Any new birds should be carefully evaluated before purchase, examined by an experienced veterinarian and appropriately quarantined in the home for at least 45 days before contact with existing birds.

For help in finding an avian veterinarian in your area, contact the Association of Avian Veterinarians (AAV) by visiting www.AAV.org and click on “Find a Vet near you” or the American Board of Veterinary Practitioners by visiting www.abvp.com/diplomate.

FIRST AID

FOR COMPANION BIRDS



A Quick Reference Guide for Emergency Care

Before an emergency occurs, it is important to establish a relationship with an avian veterinarian so you will have medical attention available to you when needed. Many veterinarians do not see emergencies without a prior client relationship. Alternatively, you might seek an emergency clinic that is willing to see birds.

EMERGENCY FIRST AID



- 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.

Conditions requiring veterinary attention: Contact a veterinarian if your bird shows any signs of unusual behavior, including loss of appetite, weight loss, lethargy, weakness, unusual droppings, difficulty breathing, abdominal swelling, signs of trauma, seizures, or loss of balance.

! PROBLEM/SIGNS		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, poorly responsive	Head trauma; toxin ingestion; overheating; central nervous system infection; stroke; tumor; severe metabolic disease.		For head trauma, keep cool (not hot or cold). See “Short-term Home Care” in this document until a veterinarian can be seen.	
A	Limb – loss of use, paralysis	Legs: Paralysis; soft tissue trauma; fractures; tumors; egg-binding; gout; metal toxicities. Wings: Soft tissue trauma; bony trauma; heavy metal toxicosis.		Remove perches; provide quiet, warm environment (85-90°F [29-32°C]). For a 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, leaded glass, galvanized wire); some plants; cigarettes; chocolate; alcohol; avocado; salt; drugs. Inhaled: Paint fumes; solvents; resins; overheated non-stick coatings; barbecue smoke; cigarette smoke; hair spray; exterminator spray.		Ingested: Provide warm environment (see “Short-term Home Care” in this document). Inhaled: Remove immediately from source and provide fresh air.	
A	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. Chemical: Carefully flush mouth with cool water while holding the bird’s head down to allow water to flow out and avoid aspiration. CAUTION!	
A	Egg-binding (lethargy, abdominal enlargement, nesting activity)	General malnutrition, especially imbalances in protein, vitamin A, D ₃ , or calcium; first, soft-shelled, or hybrid eggs; over-production of eggs; hereditary factors; cold environment; lack of exercise. Common in small birds.		Provide warm, humid environment (85-90°F [29-32°C]). Place bird on a warm, moist towel to provide humidity. Attempts to manually remove an egg may result in severe injury or death.	
A	Vomiting/Regurgitation	Normal regurgitation to mate/owners; GI obstruction by foreign bodies; gastrointestinal irritation or infection; poisoning (pesticide, heavy metal).		Provide warm environment (85-90°F [29-32°C]). Remove food and water. If poisoning is suspected, see “Poisoning” above.	
B	Wet or loose droppings (Diarrhea or excess urine)	Loose, unformed feces (diarrhea): Viruses, bacteria such as chlamydia, fungi, parasites; poisonings; GI foreign bodies; malnutrition. Increase in urine (polyuria): Stress, excitement; overconsumption of watery foods; kidney or other diseases.		Diarrhea: Provide warm environment (85-90°F [29-32°C]). Place wax paper on bottom of enclosure to collect fresh feces for evaluation by a veterinarian. Polyuria: Be sure there is always water available. Contact your veterinarian to determine if there is a health concern.	
B	Eye abnormalities or discharge	Injury; infection (viral infections; bacterial infections such as chlamydia, mycoplasmosis); eyelid abnormalities; malnutrition; sinusitis.		Carefully apply an unmedicated artificial tear replacement drop, gel, or ointment to the affected eye(s). Consider warm compress.	
B	Lacerations and cuts	Injury such as fighting, flying into ceiling fans, bite wounds from other animals.		To control bleeding, apply direct pressure; may use temporary bandage to control bleeding of a limb. If injury is from an animal bite, particularly a cat bite, contact veterinarian immediately. May gently cleanse injuries with a small amount of anti-bacterial soap and water.	
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.	
B	Passing whole seeds	Gastrointestinal irritation or disturbance; grit obstruction; viral diseases; parasites; malnutrition; pancreatic disease.		Provide warm environment (85-90°F [29-32°C]). Offer soft food.	
B	Respiratory signs (coughing, sneezing, wheezing, tail bob, wing flaring with breathing, runny nose, clicking, change of voice, other breathing difficulties)	All species: Air sac or other respiratory infections from viruses, chlamydia and other bacteria, fungi, parasites; malnutrition; tumors; obesity; foreign body in nares or trachea; egg-binding; aggravation from cigarette smoke, plastic, rug cleaners or other air-borne irritants. Budgies, specifically: Iodine deficiency. Macaws, specifically: Pulmonary hypersensitivity syndrome.		Provide warm environment (85-90°F [29-32°C]) except for obesity. Offer fresh air. If respiratory signs are due to poison, refer to “Poisoning” above. Macaws with possible hypersensitivity should be removed from the presence of other birds immediately.	
C	Bleeding from feather, nail, beak	Trauma; injury to growing feathers (growing out on trimmed wings with no mature feathers for support); malnutrition; nail or beak cut too short; injury (bite, unsafe toys, nail too long, improper diet, liver disease).		Bleeding from feather: See “First Aid for a Bleeding Feather” elsewhere in this document. Bleeding from toenail: Apply direct pressure; may try styptic powder or flour or corn starch. If bleeding will not stop, may apply a temporary “duct tape sandwich” to the affected toe.	
C	Oil contamination	Contact with household or cooking oil; application of greasy over-the-counter ointment or other medication; contact with other oily substances.		Provide warm environment (85-90°F [29-32°C]). Remove oil with Dawn® dish washing detergent solution, rinse, dry with a towel and place bird in a warm environment.	

The information provided within this brochure is meant to be a guide for care until a veterinarian may be seen; it is not to mean to replace the help or advice of a veterinarian. AAV assumes no liability or responsibility for injuries, accidents, or death arising from using the information contained in this brochure.