

The Complete Examination for Birds

Information for the Pet Bird Owner

Many times, the veterinarian is asked to examine a pet bird to make sure it is healthy and free from diseases. Unfortunately most birds are an expert at hiding illness. A thorough physical examination can reveal many important clues to your pet's health, but we recommend a full diagnostic work-up of even the most healthy looking bird.

For this complete examination we recommend the following:

□ Complete Blood Count. With this blood sample, one can closely examine the number and types of red blood cells and white blood cells in your pet. Many avian veterinarians feel this is the most sensitive indicator of possible illness in your pet. High white blood cell numbers could indicate an infection anywhere in the body including chlamydia infections and pneumonias.

□ Biochemical Profile. This is a series of tests on your bird's blood to check on blood sugar (glucose), kidney and liver function. Today's modern diagnostic laboratory machines require only the smallest amount of blood to run a host of tests. Even parakeets can safely give adequate blood to run these tests.

□ Fecal Parasitic Examination. A microscopic examination of your pet's stool can reveal a host of intestinal parasites. Certain species of birds are prone to such worms as tapeworms that may cause an unthrifty appearance. Most intestinal parasites are easily treated. If there is a stool problem, we can also do a special staining technique called a Gram Stain that shows the relative numbers of 'good' and 'bad' bacteria.

□ Chlamydia Testing. Chlamydia is a bacteria-like organism that may infect up to 50% of all pet birds. Its symptoms include: diarrhea, respiratory disease, liver disease and failure and sudden death. In the early stages it is treatable with antibiotics. Chlamydia is not only contagious to other birds, it is also contagious to people.

Only by evaluating both the outside and inside of your bird can we truly determine whether a 'healthy looking' bird is really healthy throughout.

□ Whole body x-rays. In some cases, whole body x-rays (taken under sedation) might be recommended.



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