

How To Tell if Your Bird Is Sick

Birds in the wild instinctively hide illness in an attempt to avoid predators who prey on sick or injured birds. Pet birds are also just as effective in hiding illness as their wild counterparts, and it is up to bird owners to recognize subtle behavioral and physical signs that may indicate their birds are sick.

Behavioral signs may include:

- ▶ Sleeping later in the morning than usual
- ▶ Sleeping more during the day
- ▶ Irritability
- ▶ Unusually compliant or passive
- ▶ Sitting on the bottom of the cage
- ▶ Picking at food and/or not eating at usual times
- ▶ Eating less overall
- ▶ Vocalizing less
- ▶ A change in the voice or hoarseness
- ▶ Different breathing pattern
- ▶ Making unusual sounds when breathing

Physical signs may include:

- ▶ Coughing or sneezing
- ▶ Discharge from nostrils (nares)
- ▶ Matted eyes
- ▶ Eyes are dull and closing excessively
- ▶ Matted feathers on the face and head
- ▶ Diarrhea
- ▶ Black stools
- ▶ A change in the white part of the droppings to another color such as red, yellow or green
- ▶ Weight loss—can you feel or see the breastbone?
- ▶ Unusual swellings, especially around the eyes
- ▶ Irregular discoloration of the feathers
- ▶ Feathers are “fluffed up”
- ▶ Random or generalized loss of feathers
- ▶ Scaling or crusting of skin
- ▶ Increased temperature of feet or beak

Any of the signs listed above, or any other unusual signs, may indicate your bird is sick. You should take immediate action by making an appointment with your avian veterinarian. Waiting even one day to resolve the problem can jeopardize the long-term outcome of your bird's health.

By Don J. Harris, DVM

Why Your Bird Needs Regular Check-ups

Birds are very adept at hiding illness, and even the healthiest looking birds can harbor an illness or condition that is detrimental to his good health.

Taking your bird to an avian veterinarian for an annual check-up can help identify the beginning stages of a disorder and is the best way to determine if your bird is healthy.

The Importance of Good Nutrition

Avian professionals estimate that more than 50% of bird illnesses can be avoided by feeding a nutritionally balanced diet. Poor nutrition can cause reduced immune response, poor beak condition, obesity, and overall poor body condition that can lead to serious health problems.

Your veterinarian is recommending this ZuPreem® diet because it provides the essential nutrients your bird needs every day to maintain excellent health.

Visit www.ZuPreem.com for more information on avian health, nutrition, behavior and training topics, as well as the benefits of feeding ZuPreem® Diets.



Congratulations on taking your bird for a veterinary exam. This is the first and most important step in assuring your bird will have a long and healthy life.

Please use this journal to record your bird's veterinary visits, and make sure you schedule an exam every year with your veterinarian.

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