



NURSING A SICK BIRD

General information

Many sick birds can be treated by their owners at home. While some birds are gravely ill and require hospitalization, most birds can recover with proper treatment and care at home. This handout will provide you with some tips to help your bird's recovery.

Give all medications as directed

In order for your bird to have a good chance of recovery, you must administer the medication as directed. Many owners are unable to properly administer medication to their pets. Still, others stop treatment before the medication is finished, thinking the bird has recovered just because he is "doing better". If you do not give the medication as directed, your bird may not recover and may actually relapse, necessitating a more prolonged second round of therapy. If you are uncomfortable administering medication to your bird, please inform clinic staff.

Keep the bird warm and free from drafts

Most pets recover faster when kept at the upper end of their normal environmental temperature, 75 - 80° F (22 - 25° C). Increased body temperature stimulates appetite, improves digestion, and stimulates the body's defenses to fight infections.

Supply normal amounts of light and darkness

Unless otherwise directed, most birds become accustomed to 12 hours of light and 12 hours of darkness each day. Leaving the light on 24 hours a day will probably add to your bird's stress during recovery.

Make sure the bird eats and drinks

Sick pets burn off calories and dehydrate easily. This makes the disease even more serious and protracted. If your bird is not eating and drinking as he should, notify your veterinarian immediately.

Avoid stress

Sick birds are already under excessive stress. While it's tempting to want to play with your bird, minimal handling is best while the bird is recuperating. Avoid sudden diet and environmental changes while your bird is ill.

Separate sick birds

A bird that is ill should be isolated from other pets. This is also not the time to bring a new pet into the household.

Notify your personal physician if you become ill

While not often the case, some bird diseases can be transmitted to owners. Your veterinarian should tell you if your bird has become ill with one of these diseases. If so, notify your physician in case he recommends the need for you to take medication as well.

Notify your veterinarian if the bird's condition worsens

If treatment is not going as expected, your veterinarian needs to know this. No one can guarantee a cure. Your veterinarian may need to change medication or even hospitalize your bird if his condition deteriorates.