



ROUTINE VETERINARY AVIAN (BIRD) HEALTH EXAMINATIONS

Does my bird really need a check up?

It is common for people to have personal annual physical examinations or to take the dog and cat in once or twice yearly so why not the bird in your family? It is most important to have any new bird examined within the first couple of days after purchase. A routine veterinary examination is recommended at least twice annually. Your veterinarian may have very important reasons to see your bird on a different schedule so discuss it. The most important job a veterinarian has is to help ensure your pet stays as healthy as possible and hopefully never gets sick. This is called preventive medicine.

In the wild, a bird will endeavor to display a strong appearance even when sick. This is called "survival of the fittest". By the time a bird actually shows an owner that it is unwell, it has likely been sick for some time. During the examination the veterinarian may pick up subtle signs of disease.

What will the veterinarian do?

If possible, bring the bird in its cage so the veterinarian may assess the bird's environment, food, feeding arrangement and some of the droppings on the bottom of the cage. If this is the bird's first visit to the veterinarian then a lot of information will be gathered initially pertaining to you and more importantly, your bird. The age, sex, species, previous background the bird may have had, diet and length of current ownership will be recorded in the bird's permanent medical record.

Your veterinarian may discuss or give you information regarding *proper* diet and care of your particular species of bird.

From the time you walked into the exam room, your veterinarian has been observing the bird in the cage. Attitude, posture, feathering, vocalizing and physical condition are all noted before the bird is out of the cage. The bird will then be securely restrained to prevent injury to person or pet and examined in depth physically. Any abnormal changes in the eyes, ears, nose, mouth, skin, feathers, beak, wings, legs, nails, vent, chest or abdomen will be noted.

The beak and nails may be trimmed, ground down or groomed as necessary. Wings are clipped at this time if requested by the owner.

Finally, before the bird is released an accurate weight in grams is recorded. With all these observations documented, a complete and current data base is available to reference any time in the future to monitor changes in your pet.

Will any tests be done?

Your veterinarian will discuss the need for testing with you depending on what has been found on the examination. Wellness testing will provide further information important in assessing your pet's condition. Some tests are performed routinely on apparently healthy birds to monitor the current state of health of the bird and keep the database up to date. Your veterinarian will discuss wellness testing with you.