Basic Health Check List

This is a basic listing of things your parrot(s) want you to know.

Let your avian vet know immediately if you see any changes that show signs of illness or injury.

Remember in the wild parrots will hide illness or injury.

Change in Behavior

Pay attention to and make mental notes about your parrot’s normal activity, personality and behavior.

- Abrupt Personality changes
- Decrease in normal activity level
- Sudden hyperactivity
- Unusual irritability / moodiness
- Biting from a normally tame bird
- Unusual Fear of phobic reaction
- Talkers stop talking
- Sudden “wimpyness”

Eyes

Notice the normal brightness and sparkle of a healthy bird’s eyes

- Dull, lifeless eyes
- “Half-mast” eyes when a bird is not sleeping or napping
- Puffiness, swelling, redness
- Excessive tearing and/or discharge
- Opaque, milky appearance
- Twitching, excessive blinking
- Frequent, prolonged kicking at the eyes with foot.
Feather Changes

Notice a healthy bird’s normally smooth, bright and clean feathers

- Drab feathers, loss of sheen
- Decrease in preening activity
- Ratty feathers not as a result of play
- Bird “bothering” feathers in a specific area can mean injury or illness
- Dark blotches or lines in feathers
- Abnormal feather coloring
- Feather destructive behavior
- Deformed mis-happen feathers
- Continual broken blood feathers

Food and Water Consumption

Pay attention to your parrot’s appetite and drinking habits

- Noticeable decrease or increase in amount of food or water consumed
- May not even eat favorite treats
- Sudden hyperactivity
- Non-behavioral regurgitation
- Biting from a normally tame bird
- Sick birds do not always loose their appetite. Some very sick birds will die with a full crop.

Posture and Movement

Notice your parrot’s normal activity level and postures.

- Sitting low on the perch
- Sitting with further apart
- Head drooping
- Continual “Klutziness”
- Frequent loss of balance, falling to the bottom of the cage
- Non-behavioral head weaving
- Inability to perch
• Staying at bottom of cage
• Seizure symptoms
• Change in normal sleeping posture

Breathing
Normal breathing should be relaxed and barely noticeable

• Labored breathing
• Prolonged rapid breathing
• Decreased exercise tolerance
• Wheezing whistling breathing
• Increased tail “pumping” with respiratory effort
• “Thunking” sound with stress
• Blocked nostrils and airways
• Feather picking over air sac areas

Droppings
Notice your parrot’s normal droppings and the way different foods change their color and consistency.

• Parrot droppings have 3 parts that all come together when the bird defecates; feces, urine, and urates. The balance of these parts can change with diet.

• Change in consistency of droppings not related to diet
• Consistently watery droppings not caused by food (grapes, apples, etc)
• Decrease in number of volume
• Color changes not related to food
• Undigested seed or food matter
• Matted feather around vent
• “Smelly” Droppings
• Straining, labored breathing or difficulty in passing droppings
**Cere, Nares, Beak & Mouth**

Nostrils (nares) should be clear and unobstructed

- Nasal Discharge
- Frequent productive (wet) sneezes
- Blocked nostrils/labored breathing
- Swelling or redness or cere
- Sore in soft tissues around beak
- Mattered, soiled feathers around cere, mouth, eyes
- Whitish bumps on roof of mouth
- Unusual roughness and cranking of the beak

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**Lumps, Bumps, Sores & Swelling**

When you handle your bird get into the habit of checking his wings, body, head and legs for changes

- Swelling on face, around eyes, cere
- Swelling or Lumps in chest or belly
- Lumps or swelling on wings
- Swelling or lumps on legs and feet
- Biting from a normally tame bird

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**Accidents and Injuries**

Parrots may “hide” their illness and injuries. Keep an eye out for evidence of injury.

- Dazed, Shaky, loss of balance
- Bleeding from anywhere
- Even minor cuts, scratches and abrasions should be carefully watched for infection
- Wing drooping or misalignment
- Refusal to stand on one leg/foot
- Bone protruding or bent wrong
- Constant “bothering” of an area
- Open sores or wounds
Keep Track of Weight

A parrot’s weight naturally changes during the day depending on mealtime and if they have gone potty recently

- Check with your veterinarian about your parrot’s healthy weight
- Seasonal weight gain or loss may be normal for your parrot as long as it is not excessive
- Weigh your parrot weekly. Keep a chart so you know his normal fluctuations
- Run your fingers along your parrots keel bone to keep track of his weight

A few causes for health problems

Use common sense and protect your parrot from danger

- Nutritional abuse, deficient diet
- Poor Hygiene, dirty cages
- Contaminated food and water including our dirty hands
- Exposure to unknown sick birds
- Accidents, injuries, stress
- Foreign body ingestion – led, zinc, etc. digestion impaction
- Vapors, fumes, toxic substances – overheated Teflon, solvents, cleaners
- Poorly developed immune system