

# Bird Emergencies: When to Take Immediate Action

*Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff*



Pay close attention to your bird's health and cues that can indicate a real emergency. If your bird exhibits any of the following signs, contact your veterinarian immediately.

- No heartbeat
- No breathing or difficulty breathing
- Wheezing or clicking sounds when breathing
- A broken bone, or a cut that exposes the bone
- Injured, bulging, or enlarged eyes
- Puncture wounds or injuries from animal bites or scratches
- Head trauma
- A severe laceration or bleeding that cannot be stopped
- Burns
- Panting while holding wings out away from the body
- Straining or inability to produce feces or urates
- Choking
- Difficulty eating or manipulating food
- Difficulty producing an egg
- Extreme weakness, lethargy, or depression
- Unconsciousness, collapse, or coma
- Seizures
- A head tilt, eyes moving rapidly from side to side, staggering, walking in circles, difficulty sitting on a perch, other problems moving
- Sudden inability to stand on a leg or use a wing
- Swollen or injured foot

Your bird won't tell you when something is really wrong. In fact, she'll do her best to hide it from you. Her instinct is to appear 100 healthy and therefore less appealing to predators.

**This instinct**, when combined with her extreme intelligence and natural curiosity, can create real danger if she chews on electrical cords, flies into a window or other object, or swallows an item she shouldn't. Accidental mishandling, prolonged exposure to excessive heat or cold, and exposure to irritants like Teflon, aerosol sprays, and candles can also trigger emergencies.

**Call your veterinarian** if you suspect any sort of injury or illness. And be sure to keep an avian first aid kit on hand to better address

problems at home prior to your veterinarian visit.

