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 cusiousity, 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.

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