



VCA Wakefield
Animal Hospital



Avian Wellness

Annual veterinary exams are extremely important for your pet bird's health and longevity. Even if you feel that he or she is healthy at home, birds are very good at hiding signs of illness. Avian veterinarians have specialized training and knowledge of tests to best detect diseases in these animals. At annual appointments, the veterinarian will perform a comprehensive physical examination, obtain a body weight, and perform a fecal examination and blood work.

During the physical examination, we look for signs of illness that may not be obvious to pet owners. We palpate the muscles and body (coelomic) cavity to feel for body condition, swellings, or masses. We look for plaques or growths in the mouth, nasal discharge or blockages, ear swelling or debris, and cataracts. We examine the skin and feathers to look for signs of over-grooming, tumors, wounds, or feather cysts. We examine the joints and bones to look for pain or swelling and the feet to ensure that there are no lesions or ulcers. Monitoring body weight from year to year can give us a better understanding of your pet's health over time. Weight loss or weight gain can be an early indication of disease, and oftentimes early detection can make a huge difference in the prognosis for different conditions.

Annual fecal examinations help to evaluate for parasite infections or overgrowth of abnormal bacterial populations that can indicate poor health or the need for medications. Drawing a very small amount of blood from avian patients can reveal a lot of information about their overall health as well as the health of specific body systems. Red blood cell counts can indicate anemia; white blood cell counts can show signs of inflammation or infection. Routine organ function testing evaluates liver and kidney values and can detect abnormalities not visible on a physical exam. Running these tests yearly also provides a baseline for your bird in case they do become ill, enabling us to treat them more effectively at that time. We are able to detect subtle changes that may otherwise be missed if your bird is only examined when they are not feeling well.

The annual exam is also an opportunity to discuss best practices for avian diet and husbandry to make sure that your bird's home environment is the best it can be. This may include discussions on caging, exercise, behavioral issues, bathing, special diets, vitamin supplements, or any aspect of care that you are concerned about. Our goal is to work with you make sure that your bird lives a long, happy and healthy life and annual exams are the first step towards success!

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