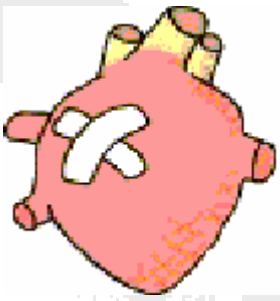
THE BIRD CLINIC VETERINARY CORPORATION



HEART DISEASE

(OVERVIEW)

Diseases of the heart and the general vascular system with their therapeutic protocol are well researched in the human field. This is fairly true for dogs and cats as well, but scientific and clinical literature in pet birds is limited. Because of this, cardiac disease was thought not to exist in pet birds except for unsubstantiated diagnoses of heart attacks in patients with symptoms of sudden death. Rarely were these cases confirmed with proper necropsy and laboratory findings.

Continued interest in Pet Bird Medicine, organizations like the Association of Avian Veterinarians (AAV), and adapted human diagnostics like electrocardiology (ECG), ultrasonography, and CAT scans have revealed NEW information. Although birds have unique challenges compared to typical mammals, they do present an array of cardiac abnormalities both congenital as well as acquired. Some of these are now definable and in many cases TREATABLE! The key is to diagnose the problem EARLY, before it becomes too advanced with a poor prognosis.

Avian species, especially amazons, cockatiels and african greys on high fat (predominately seed/nut) diets are at higher risk.

Recommendations to diagnose avian heart disease begin with a CARDIAC WORK-UP. This includes a thorough physical examination with auscultation of the heart sounds, followed by chest radiographs and ECG, full blood panel, serum protein electrophoresis and serum triglyceride levels. If abnormalities are demonstrated, ultrasound and/or endoscopic evaluation may be indicated. The highest risk patient is 7-10 years of age or older. This is dependent on the species of bird, with cockatiels demonstrating disease at a much younger age.

Similar to humans, birds with early or advanced cardiac disease ***may be completely asymptomatic, or show symptoms that seem unrelated such as lameness, lack of coordination, seizures, difficulty breathing, diminished eyesight, or even sudden death***.

This publication is part of The BIRD C News ™series to help educate bird owners. Produced by The BIRD Clinic Veterinary Corporation 2525 N. Grand Avenue, Suite R, Santa Ana, CA 92705 714-633-2910. www.thebirdclinic.net

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