

[Common Cockatiel Diseases](#)

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Cockatiels, like all birds, are very adapt at concealing their illness. This is a self-preservation mechanism, as the sick and the weak are the ones predators will focus on. By the time your cockatiel looks ill, you can assume that your pet is seriously sick and is likely to deteriorate quickly unless appropriate treatment is provided.

By observing your cockatiel daily you will learn its normal behavior and you will be able to notice anything out of the ordinary. Below is a list of things to look out for as possible indicators of disease / illness; and a vet may need to be consulted.

Signs of illness to watch out for:

Could be serious - consult with vet:

- loss of appetite
- fluffed up and/or untidy appearance
- abnormal [droppings](#)
- excessive [feather picking or plucking](#)
- abnormal sleep pattern (continuous, both feet on the perch when normally one foot is tucked up, head tucked under the wing, head turned towards the wing with eyes only partly closed)
- any change in normal activities (talking or whistling, playing with toys, preening, interaction with other birds or humans, energy levels, different perching area)
- disorientation
- drinking a lot more water than usual
- soiled vent
- drooping head, tail or wings

Critical / Serious - bird needs to be taken to vet:

- [respiratory problems / abnormal breathing](#)
- tail constantly moving up and down
- discharge from the beak, eyes or nostrils
- face and head feathers coated with mucus and semi-digested seed- [abnormal droppings](#)
- abnormal feathers, feather growth, bleeding feathers, or abnormal molt
 - [French Molt](#)
 - [Pbfd](#)
 - [Polyoma](#)
- [bleeding](#)
- drooping head, tail or wings
- dull or swollen eyes
- falling off the perch
- hunched over posture
- lumps or swellings on the body
- [Xanthomas](#) (Fatty tumors)
- sitting on the bottom of the cage
- vomiting
- [weight loss](#)
- **Lutino cockatiel syndrome:**
 - Baldness, on crown
 - Hemophilia: uncontrolled bleeding
 - More prone to disease, appear mentally retarded or undeveloped
 - Lack of coordination, appears drunk
 - Falls off perch at night
 - Bruising/bleeding wing tips, abdomen, pectoral muscles, prone to trauma and falling, many genetic problems
(mainly due to overbreeding particularly when this mutation was still new and rare. In general, lutino cockatiels are stronger nowadays)

Diseases / Health Problems Cockatiels Commonly Come Down With:

- **Malnutrition:**
 - **Vitamin A** and **calcium deficiency** are the most common deficiencies seen in seed junkies. Since seeds are higher in fat than many other foods, many seed eaters are often obese as well. Please also refer to "[Calcium Metabolism in Birds](#)".
 - **Vitamin A Deficiency:** Vitamin A promotes appetite, digestion, and also increases resistance to infection and to some parasites.

Please refer to "[Bird Nutrition](#)" for food items rich in Vitamin A.

- **Information about Calcium / Vitamin D Deficiency**

- Overweight birds are more susceptible to [arthritis](#) and [fatty liver disease](#).

What you can do:

Introducing healthy foods - such as green leafy vegetables; red or orange fruits and veggies (which contain beta-carotene) - is a natural way to provide this nutrient safely. Calcium blocks should be provided also, to prevent calcium deficiency.

For seed addicted birds offer [sprouted seeds](#) instead. [Sprouted or germinated seeds](#) are usually more easily accepted by "seed addicts" than fresh fruits and vegetables.

- **Sprouted seeds are healthier** as the sprouting changes and enhances the nutritional quality and value of seeds and grains. Sprouted seeds are lower in fat, as the process of sprouting utilizes the fat in the seed to start the growing process - thus reducing the fat stored in the seeds.
 - **[Sprouted seeds](#) will help balance your bird's diet** by adding a nutritious supply of high in vegetable proteins, vitamins, minerals, enzymes, and chlorophyll.
 - Soaked and germinated "oil" seeds, like niger and rape seeds, are rich in protein and carbohydrates; while "starch" seeds, such as canary and millets, are rich in carbohydrates, but lower in protein.
 - **It is an invaluable food at all times; however, it is especially important for breeding or molting birds.** Sprouted seeds also serve as a great rearing and weaning food as the softened shell is easier to break by chicks and gets them used to the texture of seeds.
- **Respiratory Signs, Chronic Depression, [Weightloss](#): [Aspergillosis](#)** (fungal disease), bacterial infections / pneumonia, nutritional deficiencies (Hypovitaminosis A), [Psittacosis](#) (Parrot Fever), mycoplasma infections, [inhaled toxins](#).... [Sarcocystosis](#)
 - **[Wheezing and Difficulty Breathing caused by inhaled seeds. Millet seeds are often associated with this problem- due to their small size.](#)**
 - **Foreign Body Ingestion / [Lead Poisoning](#)**, exemplifying itself in any combination of symptoms, including [seizures](#), excessive urination, vomiting and depression.
 - **Reproductive Problems**, such as [excessive egg-laying](#), [egg-binding](#), egg-peritonitis.
 - **Wing Tumors / [Xanthomas](#)** may require wing amputation.
 - Please refer to [this article](#) about Marcie whose owner was able to reduce these tumors drastically by massaging them with Gentamicin cream and removing the cholesterol layers as they flake off.

Cockatiels are susceptible to:

[Polyoma](#) ... [Candida / Candidiasis](#) ... [Chlamydiosis](#): This disease should always be ruled out in sick cockatiels. [Conjunctivitis](#) and sinusitis are frequently the only symptoms seen ...

[chronic egg laying](#), [egg binding](#). These frequent problems can cause death. Treatments include environmental manipulation, [hormonal therapy](#) and hysterectomy ... [Sarcocystosis](#)

NEED A VET?

USA: [Find Your Local Avian Veterinarian](#)

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