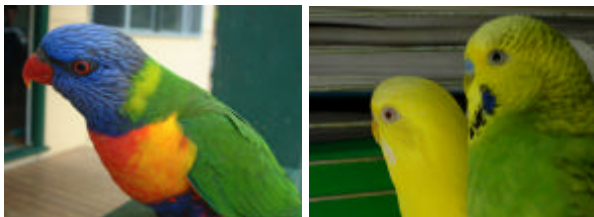


Bird Health Briefs:



CHRONIC EGG LAYING

General information

Chronic egg laying occurs when a female bird lays more than the normal number of eggs or more commonly has repeated clutches of eggs, especially in the absence of a mate. While not usually harmful to the bird, chronic egg laying can be a drain on the bird's body and causes the owners quite a bit of concern.

Are certain birds prone to becoming chronic layers?

Cockatiels, lovebirds, and budgerigars (budgies) are most likely to become chronic egg laying birds; however, any species of bird can develop the problem. Hand-raised birds who use their owners as mate substitutes develop the problem more than wild caught birds.

What causes chronic egg laying?

We do not really know the answer to that. However, something stimulates these birds to lay more eggs than normal or more frequently than normal. A lack of hormonal balance that tells most birds to stop laying eggs obviously exists in chronic egg laying birds. Removing eggs that are already laid also seems to induce birds to lay even more eggs.

Are there any health problems associated with chronic egg laying?

Since most of the birds with chronic egg-laying are eating a poor diet consisting mainly of seeds, they are usually already malnourished. Egg laying deprives a bird of calcium. For normal birds this is not a problem as the body can compensate; however, for birds eating a calcium deficient diet (all seeds), hypocalcaemia may

result. This can cause seizures, death, or egg binding.

How is chronic egg laying treated?

First, make sure your bird is eating a proper diet so as not to become malnourished. A calcium supplement may be appropriate at these times. If you are removing eggs as they are laid, this practice should be stopped. The environment can be changed to try to reduce egg laying by decreasing the number of hours the bird is exposed to light and changing the location of the pet's cage. Owners may need to decrease the amount of time spent with the bird until egg laying ceases or is reduced.

Medical therapy may be needed. Hormone injections can stop egg laying, although they are not without side effects.