

Bird Boarding and Re-homing Veterinary Examination

A guide for you and your veterinarian



To protect staff, boarding and resident birds as well as adopting families, all birds to board through *Bird Boarding* or to be relinquished via *Bird Re-homing Services Inc.* must be cleared of infectious zoonotic disease or treated by a suitably qualified veterinarian. The following tests and treatments are the minimum expected workup. This examination is usually performed by staff at West Brunswick Veterinary Clinic, The Lort Smith Animal Hospital, Burwood Bird Hospital or Melbourne Bird Clinic and paid for by the boarding or surrendering party. Birds cannot be welcomed into the parrot care facility without evidence of:

Passerines (Finches)

- Faecal gram stain (to rule out yeast and bacterial overgrowths)
- Topical application of Avimec, Stromectol *Ivomec oral SHEEP drench* (for the empirical treatment of internal and external parasites) or Wormout Gel combined with Avian Insect Liquidator as directed.
- Doxycycline *Psittavet water soluble powder* (an antibiotic used as a preventative treatment of avian chlamydiosis).

Poultry (Chooks and Ducks)

- Baycox or Coccivet (empirical treatment for coccidiosis).
- Pigeon and Bantam Wormer Tablets or Wormout Gel combined with Avian Insect Liquidator as directed.
- PCR via Gribbles Pathology (whole blood test for the antigens of avian chlamydiosis) or Molecular Diagnostic Services Australia with associated certificate.

Psittacines (Parrots)

- Immunocomb (to test for avian chlamydiosis commonly known as psittacosis) or PCR via Gribbles Pathology (whole blood test for the antigens of avian chlamydiosis) or Molecular Diagnostic Services Australia with associated certificate.
- Doxycycline *Psittavet water soluble powder* or a two week course of injectable treatment can be used for Budgerigars as an alternative to the above testing to cover for Mycoplasma.
- Faecal gram stain (to rule out yeast and bacterial overgrowths)
- Topical application of Avimec, Stromectol *Ivomec oral SHEEP drench* (for the empirical treatment of internal and external parasites) or Wormout Gel combined with Avian Insect Liquidator as directed.

Chlamydophila Psittaci Testing

Psittacosis is not the only pathogen that affects parrots however it is by far the most common, approximately one in ten birds routinely examined at West Brunswick Veterinary Clinic test positive. In Australia around half of healthy human adults also show exposure to this disease when tested. We prefer Immunocomb antibody testing to take place over other options as it indicates exposure to the bacterium. When testing for antibodies subsequent cage mates can be cleared or diagnosed for treatment using the one result and because this test is run in-house the diagnosis is determined within two days (PCR testing is carried out in external labs and result turnaround is typically a two week period) leaving the client more time for treatment and booking and surrendering conformation. PCR testing will give a positive result if the parrot's infection is circulating (this usually is coupled with clinical symptoms), in other words it is possible for a bird to test negative through PCR and be a carrier going on to shed during a period of stress. We do not recommend the use of Clearview antigen testing as it is known to give false positives results.

Additional PBFDV Testing

We require species trapped from the wild for the pet trade, wildlife "rescued" by their caregivers as well as all Cockatoos under one year of age to be screened for Beak and Feather Disease in addition to the above. Trapped parrots often, but not always wear an open galvanised leg band with the trapper's licence number on one leg. The Cockatoo family (Sulphur Crested Cockatoos, Galahs and Corellas) are the most susceptible to the virus, particularly juveniles and will display clinical symptoms during their first moult. Lorikeets taken from the wild should also be tested. Unfortunately we are not able to provide either service to a bird that tests positive to this disease due to the nature of cross transmission. To avoid sample contamination and false positive readings we prefer the use of a sterile whole blood taken from the jugular vein for analysis.

- PCR whole blood test for PBFDV via Gribbles Pathology or Molecular Diagnostic Services Australia with associated certificate.

If you wish to board or surrender a bird and prefer to go to your local vet for the health check, we will require the same tests/treatments to be undertaken/dispensed. In addition, we require that the vet perform and document a leading practice physical examination including a weight in grams and thorough check of the plumage particularly around the nares, flank and vent. When making an appointment, you should check with your local veterinarian that they have the experience and facilities (provide the clinic this letter) to perform our avian health examination.

Birds that test positive (even to just to the exposure of) psittacosis require a prescription treatment plan to commence at least two weeks prior to boarding. Unfortunately the bird re-homing service cannot afford the risk of facilitating the adoption of birds possibly carrying psittacosis, even if recently treated.

An avian health examination is valid for 12 months with our services (and in accordance with the codes of practice we operate under). A repeat avian health check will be required if your bird has been in contact with any wild or untested birds after the initial annual health check. Lack of appropriate documentation detailing our measures at check-in will result in the need for a repeat consultation at the clients cost so please ensure to follow our guidelines and ask for a "Boarding Pass" or a copy of the exam history for our reassurance. If you or your veterinarian has any questions, please contact our avian veterinary nurse using the nicole@birdboarding.com.au email address.