

Beak Problems

The normal beak is hard, smooth and symmetrical. Its proper length, width and shape will vary with each species. Beak problems, regardless of the cause, frequently results in a permanently misshapen beak. The beak grows continuously, thus when the upper and lower beak are not in perfect alignment, overgrowth will occur. With regular beak trimming, good diet and an ample supply of branches and other objects to chew on, birds should do well with respect to the beak.

Signs To Watch For:

- Misshapen - examples such as overgrown or twisted.
- Flaky, soft, or roughened surface
- Chipped or cracked
- Change in color

Trauma: Injuries, such as puncture wounds and fractures, are the most common problems. Infections can be a threat. Bleeding is also common at the injury site. *Veterinary Care:* If only the tip is broken or chipped, then a simple filing and rounding off can correct the problem. However, if there are any fractures, cracks or discolorations, more extensive care may be required, and a avian veterinarian should be consulted.

Infections: They most often occur as a result to an injury, but can also be associated to diseases. Fungal infections are the most common. *Veterinary Care:* The area would need to be opened, cleaned and flushed with an antiseptic solution, followed by the application of a topical antibiotic and/or antifungal medication. Other treatments may be required.

Liver Disease: Has been known to cause beak problems for reasons still unknown. Watch for beak and nail overgrowth. Beaks and nails are also softer than normal. *Veterinary Care:* Treatment depends on the underlying causes, but regular beak and nail trims and shaping of the beak

will be required.

Tumors: Occasionally tumors involving the beak may be found. Looks for any lump or bump around the outside of the beak or along the roof of the mouth. *Veterinary Care:* Surgical removal of the tumor, if possible.

Poor Nutrition: The beak and nails can become overgrown, with a flaky and rough surface. Poor nutrition is a very common cause of beak and nail problems. Ensuring your bird is on a proper and healthy diet can eliminate many potential problems.