

Stomach Blockages due to Foreign Matter Ingestion

Carlingford Animal Hospital

Stomach problems associated with the ingestion of a foreign material are commonly seen in Cockatiels, Conures, Quaker and Eclectus parrots. The underlying cause of these problems is usually ingestion of fabric material (towelling, nylon, rope toys etc.) or paper (newspaper, tissue paper, cardboard etc.). Foreign material may accumulate in the stomach over time causing digestion abnormalities. Finally the digestion disorder leads to impaction problems and blockages.

Signs and Symptoms

Symptoms of foreign matter ingestion may be subtle. Postural changes, quietness, irritability and fussy eating are abnormal behaviours associated with stomach problems caused by the ingestion of a foreign material. Increased thirst and watery droppings are advanced signs of stomach impaction requiring immediate treatment.

Diagnosis & Testing Procedure

Barium meal x-rays are required to diagnose stomach problems associated with the ingestion of foreign matter. This procedure involves administering a barium "meal" by crop needle. X-rays are taken 20-30 minutes later. The barium contrast x-ray clearly outlines the stomach and helps differentiate the type of foreign material eaten (e.g. paper, rope, nylon, towelling material, plastic etc.).

Blood tests are recommended in birds with stomach distension and impaction to determine the degree of stomach damage, the effect on other organs and the presence of nutritional deficiencies caused by the indigestion which has usually been present for a prolonged period of time. The blood results allow us to fine tune an immediate treatment plan and develop a long term strategy to reverse any nutritional deficiencies.

Nutritional imbalances and immune suppression are often associated with the ingestion of foreign bodies. This predisposes your bird to environmental infections that they would otherwise repel naturally.

Cultures of the droppings and throat are taken to test for any secondary infections and identify the best antibiotics to use as treatment. Secondary infections are commonly seen with this condition as the ingested item is usually contaminated with bacteria. Stomach dysfunction also causes decreased movement down the gastro-intestinal tract (GIT). This is referred to as GIT stasis, which predisposes the bowel to infection as the food becomes fermented in the stomach region. Stomach bloat associated with foreign material is the result of fermentation caused by GIT stasis and usually involves a toxic bacteria. This type of bacteria is serious as it may cause muscle, joint and heart problems.

Immediate Treatment

Surgery is necessary for crop impaction but rarely when foreign matter is discovered in the stomach. Immediate treatment involves crop feeding a lubricating nutritional formula 3 times daily for several days. This purges the foreign material out of the stomach and helps to re-establish normal stomach function. Appropriate antibiotics may also be administered via crop needle at this time. Repeat barium meal x-rays are required to ensure all foreign matter in the stomach is purged through. Up to 10 days of lubrication via a crop needle may be required in the most severe cases.

Dietary Recommendations and Follow-Up care

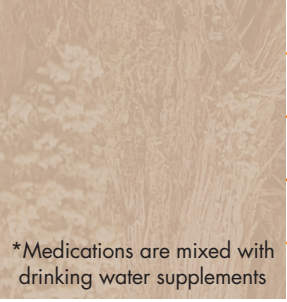
Dietary modifications and the Inca Honey Purging Treatment Programme (see over page) may be recommended to help purge the foreign material completely from the digestive tract when complete flushing of the foreign material has not been possible. This programme continues for 2 weeks and incorporates the use of Inca Honey (see accompanying Inca Honey brochure). Dietary modifications of cooked meals are recommended.

Follow up Barium x-rays are taken at the completion of the crop flushing process and recheck cultures are taken after the antibiotic course. Depending upon the severity of the problem, follow up blood tests may be taken to check the function of the stomach and other organs to ensure the nutritional status of your bird has returned to normal before reverting to the normal ongoing health programme. In some cases, the Vitamin D Maintenance Programme will be recommended to help prevent recurrent stomach problems and manage this problem over the long term.

Inca Honey Purging Treatment

Inca Honey is incorporated into the programme following the diagnosis of a stomach (proventriculus) and/or gizzard problem. It acts to first relieve the painful symptoms of indigestion by purging the stomach and gizzard of foreign materials or food remnants that have accumulated as a result of impaired digestive function. Aided by moist bulky foods, the soluble fibre within Inca Honey helps restore healthy digestive function as quickly as possible. The time taken for a complete recovery varies according to the severity and duration of the stomach and/or gizzard problem. When the flushing treatments have not completely cleared the stomach (proventriculus) of foreign matter, it may be necessary to repeat this 5 day purging plan as directed by Dr Marshall.

Inca Honey Loading Treatment (5 Days)

	Optional Medication	In Drinking Water	On Sterile Seed	Dietary Recommendations
Day 1	 *Medications are mixed with drinking water supplements	Inca Honey & Hi-Cal ¹	Turbobooster, E-Powder & F-Vite ³	<input type="checkbox"/> Cooked beans
Day 2		Inca Honey & Hi-Cal ¹	Turbobooster, E-Powder & F-Vite ³	<input type="checkbox"/> Cooked rice
Day 3		Inca Honey ²	Turbobooster, E-Powder & F-Vite ³	<input type="checkbox"/> Apple puree
Day 4		Inca Honey ²	Turbobooster, E-Powder & F-Vite ³	Disinfect the cage and feeding utensils with KD Powder ⁴
Day 5		Fresh Water	Turbobooster, E-Powder & F-Vite ³	

Mixing Instructions

¹ Mix 1 drop of Inca Honey & 1ml Hi-Cal thoroughly into 100ml drinking water. May also be given with fruit, vegetables or nectar.

² Mix 3 drops of Inca Honey thoroughly into 100ml drinking water.

³ To 100gm of sterile millet mix (no sunflower for birds diagnosed with concurrent Fatty Liver Disease) add 6 drops of Turbobooster and mix thoroughly. Then, add 1gm (white spoon) each of E-Powder and F-Vite and mix again so that these powders stick to the Turbobooster oil impregnated seed.

⁴ Mix 1mg KD Powder into 1 litre of water and use this to disinfect the cage and feeding utensils.

Inca Honey Purging Plan (2 Weeks)

Day	In Drinking Water	On Sterile Seed	Ongoing Dietary Recommendations
Saturday	Inca Honey & Hi-Cal ¹	Turbobooster, E-Powder & F-Vite ⁵	Continue to provide beans, rice and/or fruit as directed by Dr Marshall as daily shared meals in the morning and evening. <input type="checkbox"/> Cooked beans <input type="checkbox"/> Cooked rice <input type="checkbox"/> Apple/Orange <input type="checkbox"/> Apple puree <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
Sunday	Inca Honey & Hi-Cal ¹	Turbobooster, E-Powder & F-Vite ⁵	
Monday	KD Powder ²	Turbobooster, E-Powder & F-Vite ⁵	
Tuesday	Dufoplus & Ioford ³	Fresh seed	
Wednesday	Inca Honey & Hi-Cal ¹	Fresh seed	
Thursday	Quik Gel ⁴	Fresh seed	
Friday	Fresh Water	Fresh seed	

Mixing Instructions

¹ Mix 1ml of Inca Honey & 1ml Hi-Cal thoroughly into 100ml of drinking water. Dose may also be given in fruit, vegetables or nectar.

² Mix 1gm KD Powder (white spoon) into 1 litre of drinking water. Fill the water vessel and use the remainder to clean the cage.

³ Mix 10 drops Ioford & 5 drops Dufoplus thoroughly into 100ml of drinking water.

⁴ Mix 1 drop Quik Gel into 100ml of drinking water.

⁵ To 100gm of sterile millet mix (no sunflower for birds diagnosed with concurrent Fatty Liver Disease) add 6 drops of Turbobooster and mix thoroughly. Then, add 1gm (white spoon) each of E-Powder and F-Vite and mix again so that these powders stick to the Turbobooster oil impregnated seed.

The exact length of Inca Honey treatment is determined by closely monitoring the appearance of the droppings the day after Inca Honey is given. When Inca Honey is needed your bird will be active, happy, and noisy, producing well-formed droppings. However, when no longer needed Inca Honey will cause irritation and watery droppings. The presence of bubbles in the first morning dropping is an indication of a reaction to the Inca Honey which means healthy digestive function has been restored and there is no further need for Inca Honey. Please alert Dr Marshall when these symptoms are noticed.

The Inca Honey Purging Treatment Programme immediately follows the 5 day loading treatment. This weekly programme is continued for two weeks after which time a repeat x-ray is taken to ensure stomach function has been completely restored.

After 2 weeks of being on this programme a recheck visit is recommended. At this time a repeat x-ray is recommended to ensure the stomach is functioning correctly and any foreign material or bloat is no longer present. Recheck cultures are taken to ensure any secondary infections have been successfully treated and a repeat blood test may also be recommended.