The Canary Lovers Guide
To PREVENTING Your Canary’s Overnight Death

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How To Prevent Illness and Successfully Treat Your Canary When He's Sick

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By
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Darren P.D. Walker is the creator and webmaster for CanaryAdvisor.com. CanaryAdvisor.com is one of the most information packed and fastest growing canary related sites online. With valuable information on canary feeding, housing, breeding, and health care this site is widely considered “the canary keepers online Bible” by many canary owners.

"I have read the entire web site and I say Bravo! It is so informative and well written. The site tells it all. Thanks."

Lynn Heiser, lheiser2@access-4-free.com

Darren’s FREE CanaryTips! Ezine is the MOST POPULAR canary care Ezine published and has been helpful to new canary owners and veterans alike.

"Just wanted to let you know how much I enjoyed and benefited from your Ezine tips - I have already read all the back issues you listed and am looking forward to the next release! I am genuinely appreciative of your work and enjoy your writing style as well - very "down to earth."

-Debbie Lewis, debbieloo@jam.rr.com

When he’s not working, Darren is found spending time with his 2 beautiful daughters, Hannah and Savannah, OR working in his garden...and, of course, hanging out with his birds, dogs, and horses🙂
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It is STRONGLY recommended that you print this out, put it in a binder or report cover, grab your favorite beverage, and find a comfortable place to sit and enjoy discovering these secrets of quality canary care.

READY?  LET’S GO...

Introduction

Over the next 100+ pages something remarkable is going to take place in your life and your canary’s life: you’re going to get inside the mind and body of your canary like never before.

You’ll learn and put to use the time-tested methods of preventing and treating canary illness that successful breeders have been using for centuries.

I’m really excited to be able to present this information in this easy to use ebook format. I hope you’re excited too because virtually every question about sick canaries I’ve received over the years is answered here.

Initially, this writing was just going to be a short and simple basic guide to treating a sick canary. But I kept adding content, and adding content, and adding content, until it turned into a full-blown SYSTEM that covers a multitude of prevention and treatment topics. It is quite complete.

SIDE NOTE: The last thing I want to do is offend anyone. But since the most popular canary is a male that sings I’ll be referring to canaries in general as “he”. No offence meant. It’s just easier than sometimes using “he” and sometimes using “she”. To help balance it out though, I’ll be referring to
vets as “she”. Fair enough? OK. Let’s move on...

And I put the thing together because of something that’s been bothering me...

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**It just makes me sick.** Not sick with anger or disgust, but sick with empathy.

One of the **biggest mistakes** canary owners make is to not be prepared when a canary illness comes along. Or, even worse, to ignore it completely.

It seems that it’s human nature to wait until something goes wrong before we think much about it. You’ve heard it before, “If it aint broke, don’t fix it.” Maybe that’s a good motto to live by in many respects but if you’re not prepared for things to break, you may find yourself in an uncomfortable situation.

Make sure you have extra light bulbs handy or you’ll find yourself sitting in the dark.

And what REALLY MAKES ME SICK...

**I’m as guilty as anyone.**

I’ll admit it...I tend to ignore things until they become a problem. And then when something bad happens I scramble around trying to fix it as quickly as possible. You too?

There are a lot of areas of life where you need to do routine maintenance to keep things running smooth...your car, your house, even something as simple as grocery shopping--*I hate being hungry at home with nothing in the fridge that I want.* What adds to that problem is that I live 10 miles from the nearest grocery store.

The point I’m trying to make is this...

**You and I can save ourselves a lot of heartache and stress if we just take a few minutes to plan ahead.**

Just like the Boy Scouts say...
“Be prepared.”

When it comes to the health of your canary make sure he’s in good shape. Don’t wait until he’s sick before taking action. Act now. MAKE SURE he’s healthy to the best of your ability and IF and WHEN he does get sick BE PREPARED to treat accordingly.

You have the option of being proactive and keeping your canary healthy and alive.

The other option is not pleasant.

Just by having and using this ebook you’re way ahead of most canary owners. You’re ready.

I Hate It When A Bird Gets Sick

It’s a terrible feeling when one of our birds gets sick isn’t it?

And an even worse feeling is knowing when your canary is sick but NOT knowing what to do.

So, what’s the best, #1 most important thing you should do when your canary is sick? Answer: See a good avian veterinarian. That’s not what you wanted to hear? You say you want to learn to treat your sick bird on your own? That’s a smart attitude because seeing a vet on short notice is not always an easy thing to do. However...

An Avian Vet Is Your Best Bet

Listen, no one can give your bird better treatment than a qualified avian vet. Not you and not me. She will have all the latest medicines, tools, education, and experience to get the job done right.

For instance, your vet can perform a fecal test or gram stain to check for bacteria and fungal infections. You and I can’t do this at home.

For help in finding a good avian veterinarian visit... http://www.aav.org/

Now that I’ve said that, you may be asking...
“But What If I CAN’T See A Vet?”

I understand that seeing a vet is not always easy to do. Seeing a GOOD vet is harder. And seeing a GOOD AVIAN vet is virtually impossible in some areas. And that’s why I’ve created this ebook.

To help you help your bird when seeing a good vet is difficult to do.

And even if you have a good avian vet nearby, there are other problems that arise.

For example, you can always RUSH your sick canary to the vet’s office but even if you are able to pay for large vet bills, you certainly don’t want to RELY on this method of canary treatment. In other words...don’t make a visit to the vet your ONLY option.

Why?

Sometimes a vet will just be too busy to see you right away, or she’s seeing no patients over the weekend, or she’s on vacation, or it’s a Holiday weekend, or it’s 6 PM and she won’t see you until the next morning, or, or, or...

Don’t let these “ORs” prevent you from giving your sick canary some much needed attention.

Besides, there are several things you can do at home that will help your canary feel better and maybe even cure him.

At Home Treatment Can Be Very Beneficial.

In the words of one of my mentors, who himself is a veterinarian...

“If your pet is sick, there are several reasons why you should care for him at home. Your home is comfortable for your pet, free of the stress and anxiety of being in a veterinary clinic. Barking dogs [or squawking birds], strange people, and unusual smells [and sounds] are not conducive to healing.
You can provide superior nursing care to what is offered in most veterinary clinics. They are busy places, and your veterinarian can only spend so much time with your pet. You can offer a range of treatments not usually available at a veterinarian. You can give natural and alternate forms of treatment...

You will often save money - in most cases this can mean hundreds or even thousands of dollars. And perhaps most importantly, you can avoid the serious side effects of many of the traditional medications.

You and your pet both win. You will heal your pet at home, and in doing so you will greatly increase the bond you have with your pet. This deeper emotional connection will make your life more enjoyable and keep your pet healthy.”

**Veterinarian, Dr. Andrew Jones, DVM**

For more about Dr. Jones visit [Veterinary_Secrets_Revealed](http://www.PreventCanaryDeath.com)

This isn’t what you’d expect to hear from a veterinarian right? He’s basically telling us to avoid visiting a vet if possible and that there are many benefits to treating our pets at home.

There are some simple and easy things you can do at home that can drastically increase the likelihood of your bird recovering from whatever illness is attacking him. These simple techniques may provide the necessary triggers to actually cure your sick canary or at the very least buy you some time until you get to the avian vet.

You may be wondering...

**Why is “Prevent Overnight Death” in the title? Isn’t that a little dramatic?**

Well, maybe. It’s my way of getting straight to the point and getting your attention. This is an important subject after all.
Besides, canaries DO often show symptoms one day and die the next. Or at least their owners DON’T NOTICE THE SYMPTOMS UNTIL THE DAY BEFORE A DEATH OCCURS.

Your canary will hide his illness. If your canary is sick, he does not want a predator to know he’s sick. So he hides the fact that he feels terrible until he just can’t hide it anymore. So, by the time you notice symptoms, your canary may have been sick for several days...or even weeks. But if you’re watching closely, you may see small changes in behavior way ahead of time that will let you know if you’re canary needs help.

**Canaries especially are at risk of succumbing to a fatal illness literally within hours of the first visible symptom.**

Your canary’s fast metabolism is perfect breeding ground for viruses and bacteria. Diseases multiply rapidly within his body.

And that’s why this special report has the name it has, how to “PREVENT Overnight Death”. You and I have to act fast. Treat now, the best way you can, and then see a vet if you are able.

**Common Causes of Canary Illness**

Just like humans, your canary can get sick from a number of different pathogens and environmental factors. The most common pathogens are...

- Viruses
- Bacteria
- Fungi
- Protozoa

The most common environmental factors are...

- Inhalable Toxins
- Ingestible Toxins
- Poor Lighting
- Injuries

**Avoid These Problems By Keeping Your Canary’s Immune System Strong**
A healthy canary in a healthy environment will be able to fight off the diseases above most of the time. A few things that can prevent your canary’s immune system from working at its full potential are...

- **Cool Drafts**—They’ll sap energy and lower your bird’s immune system.
- **Cooking Utensils**—When heated some utensils emit fumes that are harmful to your canary, especially Teflon coated items.
- **Edible Toxins**—Fresh fruit and vegetables that have been treated with pesticides and herbicides. Buy organic when possible.
- **Old Foods**—It only takes a few hours for bacteria and fungi to multiply to dangerous levels on moist foods in a warm environment.
- **Bad Water**—Even treated tap water may be harmful to your sensitive canary. Use bottled spring water as much as possible.
- **Old and Stale Seed Mixture**—Seed sold in bulk and kept in large bins often goes stale and may even contain dangerous fungi. Try to buy seed that is prepackaged, fresh, and as dust-free as possible.
- **Molting**—Which, of course, is not an illness at all but if you’re not aware of this normal annual occurrence, you may mistake it for an illness. Lack of energy, lack of singing, and loss of feathers are all normal during the molt which occurs in late summer/early fall.
- **An Off-Season or Soft Molt**—Can cause serious reduction in the abilities of your canary’s immune system.
- **Poor nutrition**—Seed and water only won’t cut it. Your bird also needs fresh produce and other supplements to keep his immune system humming along at full power.
- **A Wet Environment**—Your bird’s droppings plus moisture provides a great breeding ground for bacterial and fungal growth. Either keep the cage bottom completely dry at all times or, if that’s not possible, clean the bottom of the cage 2 or 3 times per week.
We’re going to cover all of these items--and more--throughout the rest of this info-packed ebook.

**This Ebook Is Divided Into Three Sections**

**Section 1: PREVENTION**

In Part 1 you’ll discover the 7 ways to PREVENT a canary illness in the first place.

**Section II: TREATMENT**

Section II covers 5 quick steps to treating a bird even when you have no idea what the illness is. *Plus, I’ll throw in an optional--and controversial--6th step.*

**Section III: SPECIFIC ILLNESSES AND PROBLEMS**

And in Section III will get down to specifics and find out how to treat dozens of common canary illnesses and other problems. There are some things you can handle yourself and others you’ll have to see a vet for. Of course, with a canary that is VERY sick, seeing a good avian vet is always your best option.

**NOTE:** You’ll come across recommendations for supplements, medications, and other resources as you go along. In the bonus CANARY LOVERS RESOURCE LIST included separately with this ebook, you’ll find links to websites where you can find most of these products. These are just suggestions. I don’t vouch for the quality of the product or the level of customer service you’ll receive. You may want to do your own Google search to find specific information or a specific product.

I hope you’ll read through the entire book and the bonus supplements at least once. This will give you a great knowledge of what kinds of
illnesses are out there and what treatments are available. Plus, it will help you become familiar with the way the ebook is laid out. Then when your canary gets sick, you can come back and skim through the materials to find the specific problem and treatment.

For that reason you may find that I repeat myself here and there. For instance, if you turn to the info on runny droppings, you’ll find that I recommend probiotics. I also talk about probiotics in SECTION II under STEP 6 of _Canary Lovers Basic Treatment For A Sick Canary._

It’s important to repeat myself to insure that the canary owner looking for specific information doesn’t leave anything out of his treatment process.

In other words, probiotics are important for any sick canary and so they’re mentioned in _Canary Lovers Basic Treatment For A Sick Canary._ Probiotics are also important for treating a canary with runny droppings so they’re mentioned there too.

OK, enough of that. Let’s move on...

**COMMON SYMPTOMS IN SICK CANARIES**

Usually, the first symptoms seen are...

- Listlessness
- Huddling (sitting still with fluffed up feathers)
- Sitting on the bottom of the cage
- Lack of singing in males
- Runny Droppings

When a canary has some sort of bacterial, viral, fungal, or other major infection you’ll likely see one of these 5 things first.

Plus, symptoms don’t usually show up solo. That is, often there are 2 or more symptoms. So, when you see one symptom you should immediately check for others. For more on how to give your canary an easy 3-step at-home health exam and check for 27+ important symptoms visit [http://www.canarybirdlistening.com](http://www.canarybirdlistening.com)
4 STEPS TO SUCCESSFULLY TREATING A SICK CANARY

There is basically a 4 step process I use when treating a sick bird.

**STEP 1:** First, I treat with the *Canary Lovers Basic Treatment For A Sick Canary* which will be revealed to you in SECTION II.

**STEP 2:** Secondly, I check for specific symptoms and make the best diagnosis I can, treat with natural foods and remedies noted in SECTION III, then I give the bird 3 days to show improvement.

**STEP 3:** If there is little to no improvement, I treat with antibiotic for 5 to 7 days.

If there is no improvement after using the antibiotic, it’s safe for me to assume my bird is suffering from some other form of pathogen such as virus, fungus, protozoa or some other problem. Also, remember that although a canary may live to be as aged as 20 years, it seems that most canary owners see death from natural causes starting at around 7 or 8 years of age. In other words...your 8+ year old canary may not have a disease but is simply at the end of his natural life.

**STEP 4:** See a vet if a stubborn illness continues.

**This is the way I do it. You may want to move “see a vet” to the number one position.** And seeing a vet really is the best thing for your canary...IF you can get into the vets office immediately. If you end up having to wait to see the vet, then, of course, give as much home treatment as possible until the vet can see your bird.

But if a canary breeder were to see a vet every time one of his birds became ill he would quickly use up his savings and max out his credit cards on vet bills. For that reason, I often do as much as I can myself. And if everything I try fails, I’ll go see a vet.
If you’re an owner of just one or two canaries, you may decide that it’s better for you, and for your canary, to see a vet immediately.

NOTE: You’ll find in SECTION 3 that I recommend seeing a vet often. This is primarily because it is difficult to know what illness is affecting your bird.

If you’ve treated with the basic treatment and even tried antibiotics, then you really need to see a vet.

You can’t just provide medicine after medicine until you find one that works. It’s too damaging to your canaries system and very expensive.

You’ll probably end up saving money by seeing a vet right away, getting a specific diagnosis, and providing the correct medicine right off the bat.

Now, that you have a good idea of what you’ll be discovering on these pages, let’s get started...
The Canary Lovers Guide
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---SECTION I:---

-PREVENTION-

PREVENTION OF INFECTIONS AND ILLNESSES
7 Ways to Keep Your Canary’s Immune System Strong and Prevent Illness

1. Nutrition

“What your pet eats is more important to preventing disease and maintaining a strong immune system than anything else.”
Dr. Andrew Jones, Veterinary Secrets Revealed

This is as true with our canaries as it is with cats and dogs (Dr. Jones’ specialty)...not to mention you and me. We are what we eat. Your canary is what he eats. Feed him a variety of fresh whole foods and his immune system will hum like a fine tuned machine.

Here is a list of great foods that you can provide beyond his 24 hour diet of canary seed mix, cuttlebone, and fresh water.

Greens--Broccoli, romaine lettuce, collards, kale, dandelion leaves, spinach

Fruit--Apple, citrus, banana, strawberry, melon, other berries

Grains--Corn, dry oatmeal, whole wheat bread, cooked or soaked couscous, cooked brown rice

Specialties--soak seed, boiled egg with shell, grated carrot, nuts, bee pollen, spirulina

While your bird may live many years with just fresh seed mixture, cuttlebone, and water, he certainly won’t be as healthy as he could be. Throw in small amounts of greens, fruit, and grains regularly and your canary will be healthier and live longer.

NOTE: The mistake most new canary owners make is to feed too much of one particular treat. You can usually get away with this when it comes to greens like broccoli or romaine lettuce.
But fruit or oatmeal or millet or egg everyday WILL create problems.

--Too much fruit can cause digestive problems that result in diarrhea.

--Too many grains (like oatmeal and corn) or too much special conditioning foods (like egg food, song food, or molting food) can create gout like symptoms (painful, red, or swollen legs and feet).

The CanaryAdvisor.com feeding schedule looks like this...

• A good seed mixture, cuttlebone, and fresh water everyday, all day.

• Monday... 1/2 teaspoon mashed boiled egg with shell, 1 teaspoon greens

• Tuesday... 1/2 tsp soak seed, 1/2 tsp cooked brown rice

• Wednesday... a small pinch uncooked oatmeal, 1/2 tsp fruit

• Thursday... 1/2 tsp mashed boiled egg with shell, 1 tsp greens

• Friday... 1/2 tsp soak seed, 1/2 tsp grated carrot

• Saturday... a small pinch uncooked oatmeal, 1/2 tsp fruit

• Sunday... 1 tsp soak seed or greens

You may want to print this out and attach it to your fridge.

My canaries do really well on this diet. I don’t use probiotics or vitamins on a daily basis. More like weekly--sometimes monthly...unless one gets sick.

**Soak Seed**
For more on soak seed see...
http://www.canaryadvisor.com/soak-seed.html

You may be able to use your existing seed for soak seed. Just make sure it has no bits of dried fruit, veggies, or pellets. Pure seed only.

Notice I don’t feed any commercial products at all. Just very basic healthy whole foods.

But you can also add to this diet a commercial molting food, song food, or honey stick. These foods are very rich in protein and other nutrients. They are especially useful during the molt and during breeding season. They’re so rich though that you should offer these in small amounts...about ½ teaspoon once or twice per week.

Your canary is small and he’ll tend to overeat. Make his servings of these extras small as well.

2. Cleanliness

How often you need to clean your canary’s cage will depend greatly on the moisture level in and around the cage. Bacteria and other pathogens thrive in moist climates.

In areas of high humidity or in the case of a dripping waterer where the bottom of the cage is constantly wet, I would remove droppings and wash cage with warm soapy water 2 or 3 times per week. In addition to that I would disinfect the cage and dishes about every two weeks.

In dry areas cleaning can be done less often. Droppings can be removed as seldom as once per month. This is assuming of course that nothing is making the floor of the cage wet like a dripping waterer or a canary bath tub.

NOTE: Obviously, even if you live in a dry area like Arizona, but provide a daily bath for your canary in his cage, things will get and stay wet.

So, either keep things dry, or clean often.
Glass or stainless steel dishes are best but plastic food dishes are OK too. Just make sure they are cleaned once every couple of weeks with hot soapy water. Also, disinfecting them with bleach once a month will help keep bacteria to a minimum.

For wet foods (egg food, nestling food, veggies, fruit, etc) I prefer glass or stainless steel. Bacteria has a more difficult time surviving on these materials. Or you can do what I do and use small paper plates. No washing! Just throw them away.

For your water tube, glass is best. Again, glass helps keep bacteria to a minimum.

3. Exercise and Entertainment

Allowing your bird to exercise in a large flight cage or free flight in your home will do wonders for your bird’s attitude and health & fitness.

Some dangers of free flight are

- Uncovered windows and mirrors. He’ll try to fly right through these.

  TIP: Once your canary knows that mirrors and windows are impassable he’ll stay away from them. If covering mirrors and windows every time you let your bird out of his cage is a hassle, you can safely introduce him to these obstacles. Take him in your hand and gently hold him up to each item in the room so that his beak lightly touches it. Hopefully, he’s a fast learner but it’s still best to cover these dangers.

  Also be cautious of...

- hot stoves
- kids
- other pets
• twirling ceiling fans

• Poisonous plants such as...
  o Amaryllis
  o Autumn Crocus
  o Azalea
  o Balsam pear
  o Bird of Paradise (*Ironic isn’t it?*)
  o Boxwood
  o Caladium
  o Castor Bean
  o Chalice Vine
  o Coral Plant
  o Daffodil
  o Datura
  o Dieffenbachia (*Bless you!*).
  o Elephant’s Ear
  o Hyacinth
  o Hydrangea
  o Japanese Yew
  o Java Beans
  o Lantana
  o Lilly-of-the-Valley
  o Narcissus
  o Nightshade
  o Oleander
  o Philodendron
  o Rhododendron
  o Yam Bean

Another benefit of exercise is the reduction of emotional stress. Number 4 denotes other causes of stress in our canaries...

4. STRESS

Emotional stress is a main cause of a depressed immune system. Some of the things that cause stress are...

• Lack of exercise--We covered that above.
• Overcrowding--Too many birds in a small cage or even one bird in a tiny cage.
• Other pets
We’ll talk more about stress in the next section. One thing that most canary owners don’t think about is how our canaries are affected by the television.

**How Your TV Watching Affects Your Canary**

While the pictures and sounds emanating from your TV set make perfect sense for us humans, it can cause confusion and even blindness for your canary.

**TV PICTURES**

A recent study by a German scientist concludes that the pictures you and I see on a TV screen are nonsensical, distracting, and harmful to your canary.

It’s theorized that your canary only sees flashes of extreme bright light and stress producing, rapidly changing dotted patterns on the screen.

In severe cases, birds actually lose their normal ability to see clearly.

---**Stress**---

And at the very least, these blinding light patterns may cause emotional stress for your bird resulting in a depressed immune system and a stress molt.

---**Seizures**---

While I have not read or heard of a seizure being caused by TV pictures, seizures do happen to canaries and sometimes the cause is not clear.

In addition to that, I know that some humans (like those with epilepsy) can sometimes suffer from seizures triggered by flashing lights. I would imagine it’s totally possible for that to happen with your canary as well.

---**Safe Distance**---

The same scientist recommends that cages be kept at least 16 feet from the TV screen. At that point the negative results diminish rapidly.

Even at that distance (or beyond) you may decide it’s better to be safe than sorry. So, what are your options?...
--Options--

Here are some things you can do to protect your canary from the harmful visuals of the TV...

- Move your canary to an area of the room that has no visual access to the TV. The cage can be placed to the left or the right of the TV but several feet away. (The cage should be placed several feet away so that the noise of the TV does not cause unnecessary stress.)

Some folks place their TV away from the wall so, depending on the setup of your home, you may be able to place your canary’s cage BEHIND the TV. (Not directly behind the TV but offset to the left or right.)

This is a neat set up because it allows you to watch your bird while watching TV. The best of both worlds!

This can also be done if your TV is placed up against the wall, as in most households. You can put the cage against the same wall, a few feet away from the TV to reduce the noise level for your bird.

- Move your bird to a different room. A bedroom or bathroom is a nice place to have a fluttering canary--as long as this room gets a little activity throughout the day.

Although canary birds are not considered social animals they also don’t like to be isolated from healthy stimulation. If you’re at home most of the day and frequent this room often your canary will feel comfortable.

One way to make a canary feel better in a lonely room is to play music or yes even a TV (but only for the audio) so he doesn’t feel so alone. Better yet, play some recorded canary songs to make him feel right at home.

Of course, I realize that this somewhat defeats the purpose of having a canary. You want your bird in the same room where you spend most of your time so you can enjoy him more. Am I right?

- The third and probably best choice for you is to leave your canary where he is and cover the TV-side of the cage with
a heavy cloth. This will prevent your bird from seeing the TV and suffering any negative results.

You can use something as simple as a blanket or towel. Or you can buy a piece of fabric, cut it to fit the size and shape of the side of the cage, and clip it on the cage with clothesline clips or small hardware clamps. Problem solved.

**AUDIO**

**--Too Loud?--**
While a loud TV is not necessarily a bad thing, too much noise and activity can make your canary nervous. A loud TV in addition to people talking, dogs barking, and kids running around and screaming is enough to create some stress in your canary.

But on the other hand, as I mentioned above, your canary may also get stressed if things are too quiet.

**--Too Quiet?--**
Silence, in the wild, is usually a sign that a predator is nearby. And your canary still has the genetic response of being “on guard” when things are too quiet.

As mentioned above, a little sound will make your canary more comfortable. You can use a radio, TV, or canary song CD in a quiet home or room.

**--Just Right?--**
But if there is SOME activity in the home, playing something extra is not a necessity.

A small amount of activity like people talking, doing dishes, kids playing quietly, and the like is enough to make your canary feel comfortable. Although, he will definitely appreciate the singing of other canaries.

So, the bottom line on TV and AUDIO is...

Be on the safe side and don’t let your canary watch TV, keep audio and activity to a low to moderate level, and play some recorded canary songs for your canary to help him feel at home...in YOUR home. 😊
Another major mistake a canary owner might make is assuming that her canary is lonely...

COMpanionship--“One’S Company, Two’S a Crowd”

Just like most animals, a canary can get lonely. No one wants to be isolated from all contact from other members of the same species.

But your canary, for the most part, is a solitary animal. He is territorial and he likes to have his own space. And canaries over the centuries have done very well in a cage by themselves with no contact with other birds.

If you have one canary, you will become his companion. He doesn’t NEED another bird. In fact, another bird in his cage may cause enough stress to reduce his immune system capabilities.

What About a Mate?
During breeding season things change a bit. Of course, if a canary is in breeding condition, he’s happy to hook up with a mate for an extended period of time. But as soon as breeding season is over, watch out, feathers may fly!

Either the male or the female (or both) can become very territorial and aggressive. Sometimes they’ll fight to the death. One way breeders get around that is to put them in a large flight cage. Each will claim a territory within the cage and as long as no other bird makes a challenge they’ll often get along just fine.

Occasionally, a breeder will obtain a knucklehead that wants to claim all the food for himself. He’ll actually chase other birds away from the food dishes, preventing them from eating.

Another common practice is to keep each bird in his or her own small cage.

Canaries begin to come into breeding condition each year around January. Basically as the days are becoming longer and longer, canaries become more and more ready to breed. Actual breeding will begin around March or maybe the end of February.
Breeding lasts until early to mid-summer. Then the molt begins and lasts into fall as days are shortening. Finally, your canary takes a few late fall/early winter months to rest and get ready for another breeding season.

Three major canary seasons in all are...

1. Breeding
2. Molting
3. Resting

All of which are determined by the length of daylight hours.

We’ll talk more about the three canary seasons and how light controls them in a moment.

**MIRRORS FOR COMPANIONSHIP**
A mirror may cause more problems than they solve. Your canary may see the other bird in the mirror as competition.

You might see him “flapping his wings” and “jumping towards” the mirror. This could be an attempt to fight off the bird in the mirror or may be a male canary’s attempt to mount the other canary and start the breeding process. He may even become emotionally attached to it. He may try to regurgitate food to the bird in the mirror and sit next to it constantly.

Either way, you can be sure that the mirror is causing some stress for your bird.

In my opinion it’s best not to provide a canary with a mirror. Not everyone will agree with me but I think it just causes too much stress in your bird.

That being said, don’t worry about your canary having “company”. The only company he really needs is you. Talk to him and keep him in a room that has some activity and moderate noise levels (people talking, radio playing, TV, etc). It is possible to have TOO MUCH noise and activity which we’ll talk about in the next section.

Without the mirror he’ll pay more attention to you, and he’ll almost certainly sing more.
REMOVING A MIRROR
If your canary currently has a mirror available and seems “emotionally attached” to the “other bird”, I would remove the mirror gradually over a two week period.

--Leave it in today and tomorrow for 7 hours.

--On days 3 and 4 leave it I for only 6 hours.

--On days 4 and 5 leave it in for only 5 hours…and so on.

Removing the mirror suddenly and permanently may cause some unnecessary stress for him.

Your canary won’t be miserable by himself. It’s not necessary to get another bird.

Canaries have been kept in solitary cages literally for centuries. Many of these birds live to be more than 15 years old, sing boisterously, and remain energetic.

I don’t believe it is cruel. I believe that your canary will get used to you as his family and learn to be content.

Of course, as I stated above, your canary will have desires to find a mate during breeding season. This is probably the ONE TIME when your canary may suffer loneliness or depression. But the breeding season is not long and he’ll get over it quickly.

If you still think that another bird would be beneficial, then I recommend putting the second bird in a different cage at the opposite end of the room. This is actually a great way to enjoy more singing. Two male canaries will announce their presence to each other from their own territory.

Another great way to increase singing and to make your lone canary feel a little more comfortable is to play a canary song CD. While your canary tends to get upset when another canary is invading his space, he will get a lot of enjoyment out of hearing the birds on the CD sing. Then he’ll start announcing his territory.
to the other birds... he hears one bird singing and he’ll want to join in.

For more on using a CD to improve your canary’s attitude see...
http://www.canaryadvisor.com/song

The fifth way to prevent a downward swing in your bird’s immune system is by properly using light.

5. LIGHT

Incorrect lighting is a cause of a lot of problems in pet canaries. It’s one of the most common mistakes canary owners make. I’ll mention it several times throughout this ebook as I talk about causes of certain ailments.

In regards to prevention of illness though, not getting daylight hours correct can create a situation where your bird will suffer from an immune system that can’t do it’s job correctly and that will result in more sickness.

Hormones Are Affected By Light

Too many daylight hours may cause a disruption in your canaries seasonal hormonal output.

In the summer, days are supposed to be long, and in the winter, days are supposed to be short. Days are light and nights are dark. That’s the natural way of things and these daylight routines keep your canary well balanced throughout the year.

Keep your canary on track throughout the year by keeping daylight hours as natural as possible... longer in the summer and shorter in the winter. The simple way to do this is by covering your bird’s cage at sundown (or turning lights off) and UNcovering your bird’s cage at sunrise (or turning lights on). This will keep your canary on track throughout the year and prevent out-of-season molts and unwanted egg laying.

NOTE: When turning off lights at sundown, try to reduce the light before eliminating the
light. Typically, if your bird sees that the sun is going down he’ll partake of his final meal of the day, have a drink of water, and move to his favorite sleeping spot on a perch BEFORE IT GETS TOO DARK TO SEE. So, by reducing the light for 10-15 minutes or so, THEN turning off all the lights, your canary will have time to get himself ready for nightfall.

If the lights go off suddenly, before your bird is ready for it, he’ll have a hard time finding the perch and may even injure himself trying.

Breeders often use several lights with timers to simulate dusk before darkness. For instance, there may be 2 lights in the aviary. A timer shuts one light off 15 minutes before sundown and then another timer shuts the second light off at sundown. All birds have an opportunity to get to their perches for the night.

Even then, a nightlight is useful to prevent total and complete darkness in the room.

For the pet canary that’s in my office, I’ve placed his cage near the window. I usually leave my home-office at about 3pm to run errands and pick up my kids from daycare. Then I return about 7pm. But in the winter the sun has already set by seven so before I leave at 3pm I turn off all lights -- but he still gets plenty of light from the sun through the window. So, the light dwindles naturally for him each evening. Then, when I return at 7pm I cover his cage with a heavy dark cloth so my lights don’t bother him.
The Three Canary Seasons

Your canary passes through three distinct “canary seasons” during each 12 month period. It's your job to make sure his transition between each season is smooth and definite. What I mean by “definite” is this...

Don’t let your canary’s biological system “wonder” what time of year it is. How do you assist in the transition of seasons? By simply making sure he’s getting the right amount of daylight per day, year-round.

Here are the three “canary seasons”...

1. Breeding season
This season begins in the middle of winter when days are at their shortest but are beginning to get longer. As daylight hours increase the natural instinct to breed also increases.

Whether you’re breeding or not, your canary needs to experience this natural progression of daylight so he can stay on track hormonally. Days begin to lengthen immediately after the winter solstice which is around the 21st or 22nd of December each year--sometime about then ☺--the specific day isn’t important. Just remember that around the 1st of the year, your canary’s days should be getting longer.

NOTE: If you’re south of the equator like our friends in Australia, South Africa, or South America your solstices occur at opposite ends of the calendar.

Your day-lengthening, and start of the breeding season, happens around the first of July...but you already knew that. ☺
Natural breeding season will last until about early to mid-summer and then...

2. Molting Season
At the other end of the year is molting season. After the summer solstice, when days are at their longest, at mid-summer, the daylight hours will begin to decrease. This shortening of the days will begin the natural molt and will last 2 or 3 months. At this time your canary will lose and re-grow some 2,000 feathers! And then the molt should stop.

WARNING: One of the most common problems among pet canaries is when they soft-molt at odd times of the year. This is usually due to an improper lighting schedule. More on molting and off-season molting in a moment.

After the normal annual molt, it’s...

3. Resting Season
After the strenuous molt, your canary will appreciate a long period of rest before breeding season begins again.

If you live on or near the equator you may want to use artificial lighting to make winter days shorter and summer days longer. In other words, you can make the "change" in the length of days more dramatic, resulting in more noticeable changes in your bird’s reaction to the length of days.

Incorrect lighting often results in an unhealthy off-season molt.
A Normal Healthy Molt
and an Unhealthy Off-Season Molt

One of the biggest problems your canary will face is the annual molt. And if it lingers into an “extended molt”, he may REALLY have problems.

As you now know, your canary begins to molt in the summer when the long days begin to shorten. This annual molt generally lasts 6 to 10 weeks and ends around the end of summer. Like I said, though, a molt may last well into fall.

The Molt is Energy-Draining
The worst thing about the annual molt is that it’s hard on your canary’s health.

Molting is a difficult time because of the drain on your canary’s system while growing THOUSANDS of new feathers. If you can do something to end this rough period at the right time, and prevent an unnecessary extended molt, you should do it.

NOTE: You never want to prevent the normal and natural annual molt but you do want to make sure it doesn’t linger and damage your canary’s immune system unnecessarily.

Your Male Will Stop Singing
Another bad side effect of the molt is the lack of singing. Molting has such a weakening effect that your canary will almost certainly stop entertaining you with his songs. About 2 or 3 weeks after losing his last feather, a healthy male will begin to sing again.

3 Ways to Prevent and/or End an Off-Season Molt

I get emails almost every day during the winter months from canary owners who complain that their bird is losing feathers, has bald spots, or has stopped singing. This is usually due to an extended molt—also known as an “off-season” or “soft” molt.

OK Pop-quiz...What is the primary cause of an off-season molt? That’s right..."improper
lighting”. You may move to the front of the class. ;-)

However, there are two other triggers of an off-season molt that I want you to be aware of.

--Firstly, high temperature fluctuations and
--Secondly, no singing for miles around.

So, here are 3 ways to bring an off-season molt to a screeching halt and get your canary singing again.

1. **LIGHT**
   We’ve just discussed light extensively but here’s a quick recap...

   The long dog days of summer are the main things that trigger your birds molt. As the days get shorter around the end of summer the molt should naturally come to an end.

   You should notice less and less feathers littering the floor. You should also notice more and more singing. If not, here’s what you can do...

   --Reduce the number of daylight hours your canary is exposed to.

   Hopefully, you’ve been taking my advice and covering your canary’s cage at sundown and removing the cover at sunrise. This gives your canary the most natural number of daylight hours throughout the year.

   So...to reduce the amount of daylight your canary gets in order to end an off-season molt, simply cover his cage one hour BEFORE sunset---OR uncover one hour AFTER sunrise.

   You’ll be reducing the number of daylight hours by one. This should “shock” him into an autumn attitude and help end the molt.

2. **HEAT**
   Heat is another trigger of the molt. Long hot days induce feather loss and lack of activity.
If the area of your canary’s cage is warm, his body may be telling him that it’s still summer, even in the dead of winter.

To help end the molt, simply cool him off.

Here are few ways you can do that...

*Use your cooler or air conditioner to keep the house cool.

*Move your bird to a cooler room in the house.

*Move him away from warm windows or walls that get direct sunlight.

*Open some windows to allow air circulation.

*Provide a daily cool water bath.

3. FRIENDS
No. I’m not suggesting you go out and get more canaries as companions. Although...having a second singer in the house WILL help.

But it’s a lot less expensive and a lot less work to simply play some recorded canary songs.

Your canary doesn’t know if the singing is real or Memorex. So, playing a good quality CD will make him think it’s time to sing.

If he hears other canaries in the area singing, it will encourage HIM to follow suit. And it will help JOLT THE MOLT.

These 3 tips should help to end your canaries extended molt.

**However, you won’t want to be too drastic in making light and heat changes. Gradual changes are best.**

Sudden changes in temperature can especially be bad for your canary’s health. About a twenty degree drop in a 2 week period is plenty. All you want to do is make it feel like summer is ending and autumn is starting.
And you don’t want to end the molt pre-maturely. The molt is necessary for keeping feathers in good appearance and condition. But if you’re canary is having a hard time ending the molt you can use these tips to help put an end to it.

Once again...

--Less light
--Less heat
--More friends singing canary songs.

http://www.canaryadvisor.com/canary-song.html

TIP: There is one other thing you can add. Go to your local pet store and get a molting food for canaries. It’s a nutritious high energy food that may help him recover. Ignore the directions on the package. They almost always recommend too much of this rich food. About a half teaspoon every other day is plenty. Even then, watch for red swelling legs/feet or favoring one foot as if it’s sore...signs of gout.

Another way to prevent a depressed immune system is to...

6. Avoid drafts and extreme temperature changes.

I touched on this just a little bit earlier in regards to off-season molting. But let’s talk now about cool drafts. If you’ve ever sat in a warm room with a cool draft blowing across your body you know how uncomfortable it can make you. Well, it’s even worse for your canary. There no better way to weaken your canary’s immune system than to place him in a cool draft.

Most drafts occur near a window or door but also be aware of vents and evaporative coolers where cool air may leak in.

TIP: Test for drafts by lighting a match or lighter, holding it near your bird’s cage, and watching for a flickering flame.
Extreme temperature changes can also cause problems. This is why it’s NOT recommended that you keep your canary near a fire place, a furnace vent, near the ceiling where warm air accumulates, or near an air conditioner.

And while avoiding drafts, you should allow for ventilation...

**Keep room well ventilated and avoid excessive moisture**

Don’t let the room get too muggy or humid. Bacteria and fungus love this type of atmosphere and it won’t be long before they spread from the wall and floor surfaces to your pet bird.

**TIP:** You can keep windows cracked slightly or run a fan to help reduce moisture.

**7. Do not use harsh cleansers or toxic chemicals near your bird**

Your canary is much more sensitive to toxins in the air and on food then you and me. A little bit will suppress his immune system and a lot will kill him.

Remember the canary in the coal mine? Miners used to take a caged canary with them into the coal mine and if the bird died they knew there were dangerous gases in the mine and would evacuate to safety.

We’ll talk more about toxins in **Section III**. For now just remember to be cautious with...

- harsh cleaning solutions
- scented candles
- air fresheners
- over heated frying pans
- smoke
• and anything else that your canary might find harsh on his respiratory system.

AND those are 7 great ways to keep your canary healthy by preventing a depressed immune system. However, nothing is fool-proof. Your canary can still get sick. So now let’s get into how to treat your canary when he’s sick...even if you don’t know what the cause is.
The Canary Lovers Guide
To PREVENTING Your Canary’s Overnight Death

-- SECTION II --

--TREATMENT--
Canary Lovers Basic Treatment For A Sick Canary

5 Steps To Treating
Your Sick Canary...
...When You Don’t Know What The Illness Is

The problem you and I have as canary owners is that we rarely know *specifically* what the problem is when our canary is sick.

For instance, if you KNOW your bird has a bacterial infection, you could treat with the proper antibiotic. If you KNOW your bird has a fungal infection, you could treat with the proper fungicide.

But since you likely don’t know what the specific illness is, you simply have to do what you can to help your canary feel better AND help to insure that your canary has a strong immune system.

NOTE: This is where seeing a vet becomes valuable. A good avian vet will run some tests, find out exactly what’s ailing your canary (or at least narrow it down to a likely cause), and then treat with a specific medication.

But even if you can’t see a vet right away there is a basic treatment that will likely help fix up your sick canary.

There are 5 basic steps for accomplishing this task.

1. Quarantine
2. Peace and Quiet
3. Warmth
4. Various Foods
5. Cleanliness
STEP 1: Quarantine

If you have more than one bird, it’s a good idea to remove your sick bird to location where he can’t infect your other birds. A separate room or building is better than simply placing him in a separate cage at the opposite end of the room.

Many breeders have rooms, garages, sheds, or other forms of aviaries where they keep dozens, or even hundreds, of birds. When a bird gets sick they bring him into a quiet room in their house so they can watch him closely and better provide the things he needs.

So, you can move your sick bird into his own private cage--and preferably to a different room--so the illness doesn’t spread to other birds.

STEP 2: Peace and Quiet

There is another reason for moving your bird to a separate room...

The next thing you’ll want to do with a sick canary is make him comfortable. And that includes taking away all stresses so he can rest.

Stresses Can Depress the Immune System

STRESS can reduce your canary’s ability to heal himself. It decreases the effectiveness of his immune system and so slows healing time and healing ability.

According to achenet.org, stress is defined as...

"An emotionally disruptive or upsetting condition occurring in response to adverse external influences and capable of affecting physical health which can be characterized by increased heart rate, a rise in blood pressure, muscular tension, irritability and depression.”
And according to stress-and-health.com

“Stress causes physiological changes that tend to weaken our immune system. When our immune system becomes compromised, our health can be negatively affected: infections and illness occur more frequently…”

These two statements are specifically referring to humans but are also relevant to our pets.

Most canary owners have things in their home that may cause a little too much stress for canaries when they’re sick. Things like...

- Cats
- Dogs
- Active children
- Television
- Lots of activity and sudden noises like the clanking of pots and pans or loud talking.

**Stress From Other Pets**

In the case of other pets, they may or may not be a problem. If your dog or cat minds his own business and totally ignores your bird then all is likely OK.

But some dogs and cats just can’t help trying to get close to your bird. Dogs may bark or whine while staring at your bird. This can make your canary nervous.

Cats have a tendency to sit and stare at caged birds. I imagine they’re trying to figure out how to get into that cage!

Cats have also been known to climb on top of cages and paw at the bars. Do you think this would make your bird nervous? It’d sure make me nervous if I was a bird.

And if this happens at a time when your canary is sick, it’s 10 times worse. Your canary doesn’t need to be worried about these things, he needs rest.
Stress From Active Children

Active, energetic children may also be enough to cause stress. Make sure you teach your young children to respect your pet canary. Sticking hands in the cage, poking through the bars with a pencil, or putting their toys and other things in the cage that shouldn’t be there are all a “no no”.

Kids are also very active and usually noisy. But you can’t hardly ask your kids to stop being kids and having fun, right? Try to place your bird in an area that’s somewhat out of the way. And instruct your ‘younglings’ not to play near the bird’s cage.

TV and Radio

While a loud TV is not necessarily enough to cause stress, a super loud TV when your canary is sick may prevent him from getting the rest he needs.

In fact, a loud TV can actually encourage more boisterous singing...but that’s in a healthy canary, not when your canary is ill.

There are a lot of strange sounds and visuals coming from the TV that your canary won’t understand. Primarily it’s the visuals that can harm your canary. The flickering of the TV screen can harm your canary’s eyes.

Other Noises and Activity

Canaries are always on edge. It’s natural for them to be constantly alert and watching for predators. So any loud sudden noises like clanking pots and pans or raised voices can cause stress.

All these little stresses can prevent your canary from relaxing and thereby, lower his immune system.

Admittedly, for a healthy canary many of these “stresses” will be, for the most part, harmless. Your canary will get used to many of them and just accept them as normal. But if your canary is sick, he needs to relax. He knows that he’s sick and feels more susceptible to an attack from a predator and so that just increases his stress level.
How To Provide Peace and Quiet for a Sick Bird

So, the solution to reducing stresses for your sick canary is to either
remove all stresses from the room or remove the canary from the
stresses. The latter is much easier. Just move your canary to a more
quiet and peaceful room.

Away from the dogs, cats, children, and sudden loud noises.

Some quieter places you can move him to would be...

- a seldom used bathroom
- a bedroom
- a storage room
- a home office room.

It’s not necessary that activity be completely absent. But you do want
to keep things at a low level of activity and sound.

In fact, a LITTLE sound would be beneficial. Silence to a
canary is a sign that a predator is nearby. So, a little
sound and activity will not hurt. If you keep your canary in
a back bedroom, for instance, you should turn on the radio
or play some recorded canary songs. Keep the volume
relatively low so your canary can rest. But complete
silence is not necessarily good.

Dimming the lights during the day will also help a sick canary rest.

Perhaps the BEST thing you can do with a sick canary is provide
warmth.

STEP 3: Provide Warmth

The next thing you’ll want to do for your sick canary is to provide
warmth.
Sick canaries appreciate an environment that is around 85 degrees Fahrenheit (29 Celsius). Up to 90 degrees F (32 C) is OK.

This added warmth has been said to actually heal a sick canary in some circumstances.

The huddling, or fluffing up of feathers, is a sign that your canary is feeling chilled, one of the first symptoms of illness. And it takes a lot of energy for your bird to keep himself warm once he becomes chilled. And that takes energy away from the natural healing process of your canary’s body.

Have your bird in the cage before applying this new heat. Why? Because placing a bird into an already warmed environment may be too sudden a change in temperature. Canaries don’t like drastic temperature fluctuations so place your canary in the cage and slowly add the heat.

For instance, if your home is kept at 68 degrees F, immediately placing your canary in a 90 degree hospital cage is quite a sudden change and may not be best for your sick bird.

- - - 4 Simple Ways To Provide Warmth - - -

A. Hospital Cage

A hospital cage is a specially designed cage that provides warmth for sick birds.

Often times these hospital cages are designed with 2 compartments. In one compartment is a small area for your canary. In the other compartment is usually a light or some other kind of heat generating device. The heat from this device emanates through the wall separating the two compartments and provides warmth for your canary.

For plans on building your own hospital cage visit...
http://www.javafinch.co.uk/buildhospital/hospitalndx.html

Most likely you’re not interested in building or buying a hospital cage if you have just one or two pet canaries. They’re used primarily by people who have dozens of birds and deal with sicknesses on a regular basis.
You can check your local pet store or farm supply store for equipment that can be substituted as a canary hospital cage. For instance, a brooder for young chickens or a heated reptile cage may work for you.

**B. Ceramic Lamp**

Another option is the ceramic lamp. These are nice because they provide warmth to one side of your canary’s regular cage while NOT emitting any light. That’s important because at night you don’t want your canary to be exposed to light.

So, while providing warmth, be sure to keep daylight hours as natural as possible. Do this by covering your bird’s cage at sundown (or turning lights off) and uncovering your bird’s cage at sunrise (or turning lights on). This will keep your canary on track throughout the year and prevent out-of-season molts and unwanted egg laying.

The ceramic lamp let’s you do that because it emits no light.

_TIP:_ You don’t want the area PITCH BLACK DARK and you don’t want the room to go dark IMMEDIATELY. A gradual darkening is best. This gives your bird time to realize that night is coming and move to his favorite sleeping spot before it gets too dark to see.

**C. House Lamps**

House lamps of course emit light along with the warmth but there is a way to still use them. Although I will say that using house lamps is not a very efficient way of providing warmth. Here’s why...

1. First of all, it’s difficult to direct the heat that a house lamp puts out.

2. Second of all the light causes a problem when trying to use it to provide warmth at night when it’s supposed to be dark.

3. And third, the heat from the lamp placed up close to the cloth on the bird’s cage may be a fire hazard.
Here’s how to use a house lamp if that’s all you have available.
Place a heavy dark cloth over one side of the cage. Place the lamp on the outside of the cage, on the other side of the cloth, as close as you can. Be careful that the lamp is not so close to the cloth that you risk starting a fire. I don’t want you to burn your house down!

Some of the heat coming from the lamp will pass through the cloth and provide warmth for your canary. Your bird can move as close to the lamp as he feels comfortable and he’ll probably snuggle up right next to the wall of the cage where the lamp is.

The best lamp to use is one that is adjustable so that you can aim the light directly at the cage. Like a desk lamp.

Once again the major problem here is that at night you’ll need to cover the entire cage with a cloth heavy enough to block out 90 to 95% of the light from the lamp. And the heavier the cloth the less heat will come through.

But a house lamp will work if it’s the only option you have. You can at least use a house lamp until you can get a ceramic lamp, heating pad (see below), or take your sick canary to a veterinarian where he can be placed into a hospital cage.

D. Heating Pad

I’ve saved the best for last. Outside of building or buying a hospital cage, the heating pad is going to be your best option when providing warmth for your sick canary.

It’s easy to use and most households have one in their home.

Here’s how to use a heating pad...

Place the heating pad over one end of the cage so that it’s on top of one end of the cage and draping down over one side. This will create a situation where your canary will feel the heat from above and from the side.

We only place the heating pad on one end of the cage so that the pad creates a warm zone. So, one side of the cage is warm and the other side is simply room temperature. Now your
canary can move in and out of the heated zone as he feels comfortable. You don’t want him to become overheated.

Now place a towel or other cloth over the heating pad and cage. It should cover the top, back, and sides of the cage leaving the front open. This will help retain the heat and will provide your canary with some comfort in a private and safe nook.

**OPTION:** If your canary is so sick he won’t stay on his perch but just squats on the bottom of his cage, make sure the heating pad extends down to the bottom of the cage. Or you can even place the heating pad so that half is under the cage and the other half extends up the side of the cage. Just clip it to the cage bars at the top end with clothes pins or some other type of clamp. Remember to cover all but the front of the cage with a heavy towel or small blanket to retain heat.

When providing extra heat of any kind, use a thermometer and check the temperature in the warm side of the cage often. Make sure temps don’t get above 90 degrees Fahrenheit (32 Celsius). Any small traditional thermometer will work. Or for a digital one see...


**STEP 4: Provide a Large Selection of Foods**

Foods are basically natural healing elements. Your canary’s body will digest foods and use those nutrients to try and heal himself. So, providing good healthy foods in an attempt to bolster the immune system will be a big help to your canary while he’s trying to beat this illness.

If you’re only seeing the basic symptoms...

- Listlessness
- Lack of singing
- Huddling
• Sitting on bottom of cage

...then you can provide a multitude of food items and let him pick out the ones he’s craving.

In addition to his normal 24 hour a day diet of seed, cuttlebone, and water I also like to provide...

• Cooked or soaked couscous--A high energy food that is easily digested.

• Apple Cider Vinegar--Helps acidify your canary’s gut to fight off bacterial imbalances. Use no more than 1 Tbs per cup of water.

• Greens like broccoli, Romaine lettuce, or chicory--High in vitamins and minerals.

• Apple

• Probiotic--Helps balance gut flora by flooding the digestive system with healthful bacteria.

• A vitamin and mineral supplement like Guardian Angel or Prime (See the CANARY LOVERS RESOURCE LIST included separately with this ebook for suppliers of probiotics, vitamin/mineral supplements, and other useful information.)

He’ll pick out the items he’s most interested in and those will likely be the ones he needs the most.

NOTE: If you also see diarrhea or constipation or other “secondary” symptoms, those food items may change. No greens, for instance, if he has runny droppings.

Quarantining a sick bird from the rest of the flock then providing these three things--peace and quiet, warmth, and a large selection of healthy foods--may cure your canary all by themselves.
Make Sure He Is Eating

If your canary is staying on the floor of the cage you can place him in a soft cloth so he’s comfortable. Then locate shallow dishes (like jar lids) of food and water on the floor of the cage within easy reach. Even if he’s too weak to jump up to a perch and eat he should be able to lean over from his bed and take a nibble and a drink now and then.

FORCE FEEDING

A canary that’s extremely sick may stop eating all together. Ideally, you’ll be able to watch your canary closely. If you notice he has not eaten after a couple of hours, it may be a good idea to force feed him.

Commercial Formulas
You can use a hand rearing formula made for baby birds like

Kaytee Exact Formula
http://www.avianweb.com/babyfood.html

or

Embrace

Homemade Hand Feeding Formula
In an emergency (when isn’t it an emergency?) you can make up a homemade feeding formula.

Try thoroughly mashing up a boiled egg and adding apple or orange juice until you have a thick liquid. This mixture will do in a pinch. You can also add small amounts of cornmeal, wheat germ or wheat germ oil, baby food, whole wheat bread, or shredded wheat.

Mix completely into a liquid so that there are no chunks or bits of food. A blender or food processor would come in handy here.
Hand feeding is tricky because it’s a stressful situation for your bird and the last thing he needs right now is more stress. On the other hand, it’s even worse if he doesn’t eat.

**How To Hand-Feed a Sick Canary**

Hand-feeding adult canaries is definitely NOT an easy thing to do.

There are basically three methods of hand feeding a sick canary. Whichever method you try, remember to leave a small dish of this food nearby so he can take sips of it. This mixture will sour relatively fast so replace it every 2 or 3 hours.

**Method 1**

Put the liquid food in a small thin spoon. While holding your canary in your left hand (assuming you're right handed) place the tip of the spoon under the tip of the top portion of the beak. Gently put upward pressure on the upper part of the beak until the bird opens up. Then just let the medicine/food quickly trickle from the spoon into the open beak.

**Method 2**

Hold your canary in your left hand and with a fingernail or other thin device pry the beak open. Hold the beak open with the index finger and thumb of your left hand while holding the body of the bird with the remaining 3 fingers. With your right hand, place the medicine/food in the open beak with a dropper, spoon, or flat toothpick.

**Method 3**

Simply place a drop of the food on the tip of your bird’s beak. He’ll naturally open up and lick at it to try and clean it off. He’ll get a small taste and perhaps will then take a sip out of the small dish you’ve left in the cage.

After hand-feeding, clean off your canary’s beak and face as best you can with a cloth and warm water.

Also, placing a drop or two of cool water into the beak will help to insure he’s hydrated.
Obviously you have to be extremely careful that you don't injure your bird. But if the medication/food is potentially going to save your bird's life, doesn’t it have to be done?

And the fifth step in treating a sick canary is...

**STEP 5: Cleanliness**

When your canary has an illness, it’s important to place more importance on cleanliness of the cage and furnishings than when he’s healthy. Keeping the cage clean will help prevent re-infection of a contagious disease.

Remove droppings everyday (even twice per day is a good idea) and wash cage, perches, and food/water dishes everyday with warm soapy water. Rinse and dry thoroughly before replacing items in the cage.

TIP: Perches tend to take quite a while to dry out. One way to deal with this is to have a second set on hand. While the first set is drying you can put the second set in the cage so you’re canary will have something to stand on.

Keep the area dry and warm.

--And that’s how you apply the 5 steps of basic canary treatment.

Again, they are...

1. Quarantine
2. Peace and Quiet
3. Warmth
4. Healing Foods
5. Cleanliness

Now that you’ve done these 5 steps your canary will have a much better chance at a fast recovery. In fact, this may be enough to cure your bird completely. If possible see a vet for further treatment.
With a severe illness medication may be necessary. Your avian vet will provide you with the proper medication for your bird’s specific illness.

But if these 5 steps don’t do the trick, and you’re not able to see a vet, then you may want to take the next step in treatment and use antibiotics.

**OPTIONAL STEP 6: ANTIBIOTICS**

If you can’t get to a vet you’ll want to watch for more specific symptoms and perform the simple 3 step at-home canary health exam. You can learn how to do that at CanaryBirdLISTENING.com. Then you may decide to use a broad spectrum antibiotic.

- - - ANTIBIOTICS - - -

After treating your sick bird with the *Canary Lover’s Basic Treatment for a Sick Canary* above, you may want to treat your sick bird with a broad spectrum antibiotic.

Unfortunately, though, antibiotics are not perfectly safe.

**What is an antibiotic?**

Quite simply an antibiotic is a medication that kills bacteria. So, if your canary is suffering from a bacterial infection, the antibiotic may clear it up right away. But if not--if the cause is viral or some other form of pathogen--the antibiotic may make matters worse.

NOTE: Keep in mind that when your canary gets sick, there’s an indication of a lowered immune system. You have to ask yourself, “WHY did my bird get sick?” Is his diet OK? Is he stressed by something? It’s better to keep your bird healthy than to try to cure an illness later. As Dr. Jones says...

> “Antibiotics may fight the disease, but they don’t improve the immune system that failed to prevent the disease in the first place.”

Dr. Andrew Jones,  
*Veterinary Secrets Revealed*
Antibiotics are hard on your bird’s system. If possible, see a qualified avian vet before treating with an antibiotic. A good vet will run some tests and try to narrow down the cause of the illness. Then she’ll help you decide on the best medicinal treatment.

I, and many canary breeders, often treat with an antibiotic when a bird has an unknown illness. But when I do, I accept the fact it may not help.

And of course, while treating with antibiotic, and hoping for improvement in your bird’s health, the REAL pathogen continues to make your bird sicker and sicker. So, now you’ve wasted a few more days time and potentially made things even worse than they were before.

You have to decide what’s best for you and your bird. At what point does the antibiotic become more objectionable than the existing illness?

**Don’t Like Risking Your Hard Earned Cash on a vet? Or there is not qualified avian vet in your area?**

If seeing a vet is out of the question and you’re afraid to use an antibiotic, continue to provide your canary with warmth, peace and quiet, and a broad variety of foods as described above. This may be enough to help him heal himself.

**What’s Wrong With Antibiotics?**

Antibiotics, although often VERY useful in treating bacterial infections, are not perfect...as you already know.

In a healthy canary 80% of the bacteria in his system are GOOD bacteria--bacteria that aids in digestion of food. The other 20% is "bad" bacteria but...although "bad" a small amount is necessary for digestion.

It's kind of like when your doctor talks about "good" and "bad" cholesterol. You don't want
to get rid of the bad cholesterol completely—it does have a benefit. You just don't want it to get too high. You want to have a healthy "balance" of good and bad cholesterol within your system. Similarly...

Your canary needs a healthy balance of bacteria in his digestive tract.

So, Here’s the Problem...

Antibiotics create a bacterial IMBALANCE. So, the bottom line is...

**Antibiotics will kill, indiscriminately, ALL the bacteria in your canary's system...both good and bad.**

Without a good bacterial balance your canary bird is not able to digest his food--->He will "go light" (lose weight)...day after day...week after week...until he starves to death. And...

It doesn't matter how much he eats. He may eat twice his normal diet but his system, with its lack of good bacteria--the bacteria that the antibiotic just wiped out--is unable to extract the nutrients from the food.

Taking the Bad With The Good

I know this sounds absolutely terrible and you’re probably thinking that you’ll never use antibiotics. But don’t over react. These bad side affects don’t get REALLY bad unless these drugs are used TOO MUCH. If used on rare occasions and only in the correct prescribed fashion antibiotics will do only a small amount of harm.

Antibiotics may work quickly in making your bird feel better. It will probably knock out any bacterial infection your canary might have. And besides, to a small extent, the side effects can be reversed...keep reading.

If your canary is still having problems after the antibiotic treatment you will, again, want to seriously consider seeing a vet.
Antibiotic Choices

Some antibiotics that have been shown useful as a treatment for canaries with a bacterial infection are...

**Baytril**-- Baytril is a brand name for the antibiotic Enrofloxacin.

Enrofloxacin was developed to help with treatment of the stubborn bacteria Pseudomonas aurugenosa which had been resistant to other antibiotics developed.

Enrofloxacin (Baytril) is effective on many bacterial infections and is commonly used in the treatment of bacterial infections in birds.

Full strength Baytril is only available via a prescription from your vet. However, a less potent version of Baytril is available here... [http://www.allbirdproducts.com/newproductpages/baytril.html](http://www.allbirdproducts.com/newproductpages/baytril.html)

As a substitute you can also use **Enroxil**. [http://www.allbirdproducts.com/newproductpages/enroxil.html](http://www.allbirdproducts.com/newproductpages/enroxil.html)

**Tylan**--(Tylosine)

Tylosine is an antibiotic that has been shown to be very effective on the bacteria that cause respiratory infections--particularly Mycoplasma. It's recommended by many bird breeders during an eye infection because respiratory infections are often present. It's also useful for birds with chronic diarrhea.

Tylosine has also been shown to be helpful for some birds that have a fungal mycoplasma infection. One of the symptoms is referred to as “silent singing”.

It is found in many bird medicines. It's often refered to as Tylan, which is the product name.

It's not cheap but you can read more about it and other medicines here...


Also see...
Your best bet may be to go with a treatment that is effective on multiple organisms. See...

OK now, remember I said that the bad effects of antibiotics can be reversed? It’s done with probiotics.

--- Probiotics ---

**Reversing The Bad Affects Of Antibiotics With PROBIOTICS**

Follow up any antibiotic treatment with probiotics. Probiotics are suspected of improving gut flora and thereby improving digestive ability.

Just how important probiotics are to your canary’s health is a matter of debate. Some swear up and down that probiotics are absolutely essential while others point out that there have been no documented studies to prove it.

As usual, I’m moderate in my approach. I don’t give probiotics regularly but I always give probiotics to sick birds.

*Antibiotics* basically kill bacteria. It even kills the beneficial bacteria in the digestive tract of your canary. So, after treating with antibiotic, a healthy dose of probiotic may help get your canary’s system back on track quickly.

**NOTE:** There’s no need to use antibiotic and probiotic at the same time. The antibiotic will kill all the beneficial bacteria that the probiotic provides.

When the antibiotic treatment is DONE--usually after 5 to 7 days--use the probiotic. Follow the directions on the package. Don’t stop using probiotic for several weeks. It’s impossible to overdose and there are no negative side effects.
For more on probiotics see...

http://www.canaryadvisor.com/bacteriaproblems

http://www.nationalbirddesigns.com/page2.html

Some of the most praised probiotic brands are...

ProBac
http://www.canaryadvisor.com/probac

Avi-Culture
http://www.nationalbirddesigns.com/shop.html

Prime

BioPlus
http://www.birds2grow.com/prod-bioplus.html

And that marks the end of SECTION II. Next we’ll get into more detail on specific illnesses and other canary problems.
The Canary Lovers Guide
To PREVENTING Your Canary’s Overnight Death

-- SECTION III --

--SPECIFIC ILLNESSES--
AND PROBLEMS
After you’ve made your canary comfortable, warm, and well fed, you should keep your eyes open for other symptoms. These “secondary” symptoms will help diagnose your bird’s illness. Then you make a good decision how to help your bird with the best treatment.

**DIGESTIVE PROBLEMS**

**WATCHING DROPPINGS**

**When Your Canary Is Healthy**
Ideally, you have a pretty good idea of how many droppings your canary leaves on the bottom of his cage in a normal day. When I say “normal day”, I’m referring to when he is healthy.

When your bird is healthy, devote one week to monitoring his droppings. Put fresh paper in the bottom of his cage each morning (or any other time of the day as long as it is done at the same time each day).

After each 24 hour period check the paper and note the droppings for size, quantity and consistency.

**When Your Canary Is Sick**
When your canary gets sick, you should immediately remove droppings and other litter from the bottom of the cage and insert a clean sheet of paper. This will allow you to watch his droppings. A sheet of white paper is best for making the droppings stand out visually but newspaper will work too.

**Watch for...**

- Runny droppings
- Large droppings
- Lack of (or a decrease in) droppings
- Unusual colors in droppings

For more on how to “READ” droppings see, [The Canary Lovers Guide to LISTENING to Your Pet Canary Bird](http://www.PreventCanaryDeath.com)

The most common change in droppings will be runny droppings or diarrhea.
RUNNY DROPPINGS

The Top 10 Ways To Treat Your Canary For Runny Droppings

After weeks of seemingly perfect canary health you may notice some changes in your bird’s behavior.

• Maybe your canary is not as active as he normally is.

• Maybe he’s drinking more water than usual.

• Maybe he’s even huddling on the bottom of the cage.

And then in addition to one, or all, or maybe even NONE of these...

• He has runny droppings

While it can be hard to tell what exactly has caused a bout of diarrhea, there are some things you can do for your bird to help him feel better. Much of the time the illness causing this will run its course in just 2 or 3 days. Any longer than that and you may want to see a vet.

Diarrhea is often accompanied by the symptoms noted above...listlessness, huddling, sitting on the bottom of the cage, and lack of singing. You might also see an increase in water consumption.

If you’ve been watching your canary’s droppings regularly you may have noticed the diarrhea before any of the other symptoms became apparent.

GOOD FOR YOU! You should always be watching your bird’s body language and his droppings for any unusual changes.

Anyway, regardless of HOW you discovered your canary’s runny droppings, it’s time to give him immediate treatment.

I would recommend you err on the side of caution and treat him as if he is a VERY sick little bird. Maybe this little illness is no big deal and will soon pass or maybe it’s the beginning of a debilitating disease. Either way, anytime your bird is acting poorly, you’ll want to...
Make Him Comfortable and Rested.

Just as noted on **SECTION II** of this ebook, the first thing you should always do with a sick canary is to put him in a room where it is quiet and peaceful, warm a portion of his cage to about 85 degrees F, and make sure he has plenty of fresh water, seed, and cuttlebone.

**DO THIS ANYTIME YOUR BIRD ACTS SICK.**

I also noted above that depending on the symptoms you see, the diet may change. And, with a case of runny droppings, which is a digestive problem, the diet most certainly needs some changes.

In addition to the *Canary Lovers Basic Treatment For A Sick Canary*, here are the specifics of diarrhea treatment.

**1. Firstly, cut out the greens and fruit.**

A. Some canary owners feed large amounts of greens every day and never have any problems. Indeed, canaries for the most part are able to consume large quantities of greens on a daily basis.

None the less, I think it’s safe to suspect that too many greens may be the cause of the diarrhea. It certainly isn’t helping. So, it would be a good idea to stop feeding greens until the “runny droppings problem” clears up.

B. And yet some canary owners feed greens only occasionally and irregularly. I want you to know, though, that introducing greens after a long absence may cause runny droppings. And greens are good for your canary so I suggest you feed greens to a *healthy canary* at least 3 times per week. Every day is OK if your bird tolerates them well.

C. Fruit can be overdone. Too much fruit like apples and peaches can cause runny droppings. So, for the time being, until this problem clears up, stop feeding fruit.

**2. Next, cut out eggs and egg food.**

Too much of this may also cause digestive problems.
Under normal circumstances, when your bird is completely healthy, I recommend boiled egg 2 times per week.

3. Third, provide your bird with a selection of foods that are known to help firm up his droppings.

- Cooked brown rice
- Uncooked oatmeal
- Millet Seed (millet spray)

4. Fourth, provide a small shallow dish of strong chamomile tea.

This tea is suspected of calming an upset stomach.

5. Probiotics and Apple Cider Vinegar

Probiotics
Probiotics are said to flood the canary’s digestive system with beneficial bacteria thereby improving his gut flora.

Some canary owners swear by them and think that any canary lover that doesn’t always have probiotics on hand is a complete numbskull. Still, others say probiotics are useless.

Either way they certainly won’t hurt.

I keep probiotics around and use them anytime a bird looks a little under the weather. If nothing else it helps me feel better knowing I’m doing all I can for my beloved pet.

We talked about probiotics earlier. For more info see http://www.canaryadvisor.com/probac

Apple Cider Vinegar
Most bacteria prefer an environment that is not acidic. Adding apple cider vinegar to your bird’s drinking water will help acidify your canary’s digestive system and help inhibit the ability of any harmful bacteria from multiplying.
Just add about 1 Tablespoon of apple cider vinegar to one cup of water.

6. **Provide a small amount of Bird Charcoal.**

Wild birds have been known to seek out and consume charcoal when they have digestion problems. Bird Charcoal is available as a canary treatment. Although it is not a cure for diarrhea, it does help to reduce acidity in the stomach.

Other remedies that many breeders use to treat diarrhea and settle an upset stomach include...

7. **A small piece of bread soaked in milk** is said to help settle an upset stomach.

8. **Poppy seeds** are thought to help firm up droppings.

9. **Pepto-Bismol**

For really bad cases you can force feed your bird one drop of Pepto-Bismol directly into the beak. Yes. It’s stressful for your bird...and you...but in a bad case it may be a great help. See **SECTION II** above on how to force feed your canary.

10. **Antibiotic**

As a last resort, you may want to treat your sick bird with a broad spectrum antibiotic.

If your canary is suffering from a bacterial infection, the antibiotic may clear it up right away. But if not--if the cause is viral or some other form of pathogen--the antibiotic may make matters worse.

If possible, see a qualified avian vet before treating with an antibiotic. A good vet will run some tests and try to narrow down the cause of the diarrhea. Then she’ll help you decide on the best medicinal treatment.

You decide what’s best for your bird.

---You can read more about antibiotics and probiotics in **SECTION II** above.
Diarrhea Causing Diseases

There are plenty of diseases that can cause diarrhea. There’s no use getting into the details of each one here but I quickly want to touch on a few of the most common.

You won’t have any way of knowing what disease or illness your sick bird has unless you take him to the vet for some tests. Even if you suspect one of the following diseases, the medications are often very expensive and may cost as much as seeing vet for a more accurate diagnosis.

---Coccidiosis

A protozoan infection arising from filthy and moist cages. You may also see...

- Bloody droppings
- Green slimy droppings
- Pasted Vent
- Large droppings
- Weight loss


My point is this...Don’t waste your time or money--or damage your canary’s health further--by haphazardly throwing medications at your sick bird. You may decide to use an antibiotic but after that, if no improvement is made, it’s much more beneficial to see vet for specific a treatment.

However, for your information, here are some diarrhea-causing diseases and their accepted treatments...
---Avian Gastric Yeast (previously known as Megabacteria)

A fungus that grows well in moist conditions. Yet another reason to keep your cage dry.

- Dark colored and slimy droppings
- Going Light
- Undigested foods in droppings
- Regurgitation of blood which may be seen on the beak or nostrils.
- Regurgitation of undigested food

Treated with Amphotericin B
http://www.allbirdproducts.com/newproductpages/megabac-S.html

For more on AGY (Megabacteria) see the bonus report included separately with this ebook.

---Candida (Thrush)

This is another fungal infection that often occurs when a bird is under stress, exposed to extreme temperature changes, over-use of antibiotics, or otherwise has a compromised immune system.

For more info see http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/VM031

Treated with Medistatin
http://www.ladygouldianfinch.com/product_medistatin.mgi

---E.coli Infection

A bacterial infection resulting from moist and old foods or moist conditions in the cage.

You may also see weight loss.

Treated with Sulfa-AVS
http://www.canaryhobby.com/catalog/item/3986739/3767107.htm
I always try the natural remedies--meaning using *The Canary Lovers Basic Canary Treatment* in SECTION II-- first and then move on to medicines as a last resort.

If you keep your eyes open and watch for important symptoms you’ll be able to catch an illness that causes runny droppings EARLY. *And that is so very important.*

Another problem you might see in a sick canary is constipation...

**CONSTIPATION**

According to The American Heritage Dictionary constipation is...

> “Difficult, incomplete, or infrequent movement of the bowels.”

If and when you notice that there is a significantly reduced number in droppings you can treat for constipation...or at least a slow and inactive digestive system.

Your bird is in serious condition if the droppings stop completely.

**SIDE NOTE: Pasted Vent**

Other than constipation, another reason you see no droppings may actually be diarrhea.

In severe cases of diarrhea, your bird may suffer from a condition called “PASTED VENT”. This is when sticky runny droppings become pasted to the vent and feathers surrounding the vent. The vent may actually become plugged and prevent further expulsion of waste.

So, if you notice no droppings on the floor of the cage, check your canaries vent first. Make sure it is clean, with no droppings stuck to it or the surrounding feathers.

If it is dirty, GENTLY clean with warm water. Watch closely to see if droppings begin to show up at the bottom of the cage. In this particular case, they may be runny and yellowish. Treat for diarrhea.
Prolapsed Cloaca
Another vent problem you might see is Prolapsed Cloaca.

A bird’s cloaca is a chamber that droppings pass through just before exiting the body through the vent.

Sometimes the cloaca gets pushed to the outside of the body. You’ll see what looks like a large swelling at the vent and a large piece of tissue may actually extend out of the vent about ½ inch.

Some reasons for this to happen are...

- Malnutrition
- A tumor or mass in the cloaca
- Pappilomatosis--A grouping of small tumor-like growths in the cloaca.
- Extreme sexual stimulation in males
- Egg binding in hens

SIDE NOTE: Diarrhea, accompanied by a swollen vent may be a sign of Avian Gastric Yeast infection (Megabacteria). See the bonus report included separately with this ebook.

It’s important to not let the cloaca dry out or become dirty or you risk infection. Keep the cloaca moist with a water based lubricant like K-Y Jelly. A good avian vet can usually re-insert the cloaca.

With a reduced number of droppings you may also see that each individual dropping is larger than normal. This is a normal sign of constipation.

You might also notice your canary bouncing his tail up and down as he tries to pass droppings. This is known as “tail-bobbing”.

So, the symptoms of constipation include...

- Reduced number of droppings
- Larger droppings
• Tail-bobbing (bouncing up and down of tail as he strains to have a bowel movement)

**What causes constipation?**

Constipation can usually be traced to an improper diet. For instance...

• Too much egg food

• Grit Impaction from consuming too much grit (canaries don’t need grit to digest their seed)

• Lack of vegetation in the diet

• Obesity

Other reasons for constipation include...

• Poor physical health from a lack of exercise

• Egg Binding (when a hen is not able to pass an egg)

• Tumor in the digestive tract

**How is constipation treated?**

1. As noted above, the first thing you’ll want to do is catch your bird and examine the vent area. Make sure it is not caked with droppings.

2. Secondly, provide stool softening foods such as apple or other soft fruit and greens such as broccoli, romaine lettuce, spinach, or dandelion leaves.

3. Next, a couple of drops of olive oil or wheat germ oil on a favorite food may help soften droppings. You can add the oil to a small piece of whole wheat bread or mix with soak seed.

4. As a last resort some breeders recommend using Milk Of Magnesia. One drop in the beak should do the trick.

Another sign of a digestive problem is...
LOSS OF APPETITE

There are a number of illnesses that could be affecting your canary if you notice a loss of appetite. Of course, your canary HAS TO EAT. He has a fast metabolism and could literally starve to death within 24 hours.

NOTE: A sign of starvation or dehydration is bloody droppings.

If you notice a lack of appetite, provide him with all his favorite treats...even if they’re not particularly healthy...breads, greens, fruit, sugar water, and even cake and cookies. Don’t let him gorge though. Let him have several nibbles then remove anything that’s not healthy. Hopefully, having a full belly again will encourage him to return to his seed dish.

Cooked or soaked couscous is a highly nutritious item that most canaries love. Mix in some honey and hopefully he won’t be able to resist.

Commercial sweetened seed treats are usually a favorite.

If necessary, you should consider force feeding a hand-feeding formula and seeing a vet for diagnosis.

EXCESSIVE EATING

Again, there are multiple reasons your canary may develop an insatiable appetite. Most of which can be blamed on internal parasites like worms and protozoa. It’s best to let a vet examine your bird’s droppings if you suspect internal parasites.

Worms
With worms you might also see weight loss, worm like shapes in droppings, bloody droppings, diarrhea, or undigested seed in droppings.

If you suspect worms you can use products such as...

Worm-Out
Protozoa
Watch for regurgitation, dried saliva on the beak, weight loss, and yellow masses in the throat or crop.

For Protozoa an often used product is Ronex
http://www.ladygouldianfinch.com/product_ronex.mgi

AGY
Excessive eating is also a sign of Avian Gastric Yeast (Megabacteria) and other infections. You’ll have to see a vet for this one.

WEIGHT LOSS

Weight loss sometimes is a symptom of digestive illness but pretty much any illness can cause your canary to lose his appetite and stop eating. There are also some illnesses that will cause your canary to lose weight even if he’s eating normally.

When you perform your regular canary health exam (http://www.canarybirdlistening.com) you’ll feel your canary’s breast muscles and this will let you know early if your canary is losing weight.

Some common causes of weight loss that you have the ability to control are...

- Protein Deficiency. Make sure your providing boiled egg or other high protein food a couple of times per week.
- General Malnutrition
- Mite Infestation
- Intestinal Parasites like worms or protozoa. An avian vet can examine the droppings for a diagnosis.
- Various bacterial and fungal infections

http://www.petmedicinechest.com/cgi-bin/at.asp?a=229278&e=avian/parasites.asp

Worm-Away
http://www.ladygouldianfinch.com/product_wormaway.mgi
Treatment
If your bird is losing weight give him cooked or soaked couscous everyday. Couscous is a high calorie food that most canaries love and will help put weight on fast.

Add some boiled egg and probiotics to add protein and promote healthy gut flora.

“Going Light”
“Going Light” is a symptom that describes weight loss even while the bird is still maintaining good eating habits. It’s also sometimes called “Fading Away” or “Wasting Away”.

The accepted cause is “a genetic degeneration of the the intestinal lining”. In plain English--your canary’s body simply loses his ability to digest food properly. It’s not necessarily caused by a particular illness.

However, secondary infections usually occur because your bird will be malnurished and have a lowered immune system.

While there is no cure for this “degeneration”, there is a treatment that may improve and extend your bird’s shortened life.

Treatment
• Feed large amounts of high calorie foods like couscous.
• Feed large amounts of Spirulina and dark greens.
• Provide avian specific probiotic daily.

Sleeping or Sitting in Food Dish

Weakness--A bird that sleeps or sits in his food dish is probably ill and simply doesn’t want to expend the extra energy to grasp and balance on his perch. This goes right along with a sick canary sitting on the bottom of the cage.

Feet and Legs--Other reasons for a bird to sleep or sit in a dish may be foot and leg problems. Check the bottom of his feet for sores, bumps, or other irritations. These could be a sign of Bumble Foot.
And check his legs for redness and swelling which may be a sign of a diet that is too rich in sugars and/or fat or perhaps full-blown Gout.

**Maybe It’s No Big Deal**—If after checking these things and there doesn’t seem to be any health problems I would just let it go and not worry about it. It seems some birds just feel more comfortable sitting in a dish. And a hen might even be trying to nest in a dish.

**Provide A Nest**
Regardless of whether your canary is male or female, you might want to provide your dish-sitting bird with a nest so he or she will stay out of the dish. Put the nest where the food dish is and move the dish to another part of the cage. *MAYBE* your bird will use the nest instead.

**NOTE:** Of course, staying in the nest constantly is not good either. Your bird’s legs will weaken over time. Try to encourage your bird to stand on the perches as much as possible. You can do this by removing everything he can sit in or on for a portion of each day. You can place the seed on a small piece of paper towel and water in a small shallow dish. Leave the perches only.

**Use A Rubber Band**
Another tip for keeping a bird out of a food dish is to wrap a rubber band around the center, or perhaps slightly off center, of the dish. Leave enough room that he can still get his head in to eat without rubbing on the rubber band but not enough room to sit in the dish.

Next up, we have the little buggers that cause us canary lovers with frustration after frustration...infections. Why are they such a pain? Because it’s so difficult to know which of the 4 pathogens are causing specific illness. And if you don’t know the cause, it’s difficult to treat.
BACTERIAL, VIRAL, FUNGAL, and PROTOZOAL INFECTIONS

These pathogens are the cause of many respiratory, digestive, and even neurological illnesses in canaries.

Respiratory--The symptoms of these infections are the same as noted below under Breathing Problems but you can also add...

- Coughing
- Sneezing
- Nasal Discharge

Digestive--If your canary has a digestive infection you may see one or all of the following...

- Tail bobbing
- Diarrhea
- Pasted Vent
- “Going Light” (Weight Loss)
- Unusual size, color, or consistency in droppings

Neurological--When a pathogen begins to attack the nervous system you may see...

- Stargazing
- Twitching
- Shivering
- Leg/wing paralysis
- Fits/seizures
- Blindness

1. Bacteria

“Any of numerous sometimes parasitic unicellular organisms having various forms and often causing disease.”
The American Heritage Dictionary

Bacterial infections are treatable with antibiotics but antibiotics have no affect on viral and fungal infections. However, antibiotics are often
prescribed for birds with viral or fungal infections to help prevent SECONDARY bacterial infections.

The antibiotics available from pet stores may help but are widely considered to be of sub-par value. Breeders usually use Baytril or Tylan to treat their canaries discussed above.

2. Viruses

“Any of various submicroscopic pathogens that consist essentially of a core of a nucleic acid surrounded by a protein coat and are capable of invading and destroying living cells and causing the release of a large number of new particles identical to the original one, thus producing a disease.” The American Heritage Dictionary

Unfortunately, there is no specific cure for viral infections. If you’ve treated an illness with an antibiotic and there was no improvement, there’s a good chance that your canary has a virus.

Continue to treat your sick canary with the Canary Lover’s Basic Treatment for a Sick Canary--warmth, peace and quiet, and plenty of fresh water and food--and your bird may recover.

See a vet if possible.

One of the most common viral infections is Tracheitis.

TRACHEITIS is a viral infection that attacks your bird’s trachea of the throat but can affect the entire respiratory system. Any respiratory problem can cause a loss of song but Tracheitis is specifically damaging to the mechanics of song.

4. Funguses--or “Fungi” if you prefer. Both are acceptable...I looked it up. ;-)
Aspergillosis is a fungal infection and is the most common cause of deaths in show canaries. It is contracted by your canary’s inhaling or ingesting of fungal spores.

These fungal spores thrive in warm moist conditions on...

- Nests
- Unclean cage surfaces
- Moist foods--soft food, boiled and soaked seed, egg, veggies, fruit, etc.
- Also on droppings, compost piles, hay, piles of grass clippings, etc

This is just one of the reasons why it’s so important to clean the droppings and aged food from your canary’s cage regularly. Particularly, if there is moisture in and around the cage. Funguses do not do well in a dry atmosphere and therefore cleaning can be done less often in a dry situation.

Fungal disease shares the same symptoms as any respiratory disease such as...

- Heavy or labored breathing
- Darkening, bluing, or graying of legs and beak
- Making clicking or wheezing sounds with breaths

Plus, you might also see signs of neurological damage...

- Dizziness
- Stargazing
- Head turning

You’ll need to see a vet for diagnosis of fungal disease.

For more on fungal disease get your free report, Aspergillosis--There’s A Fungus Among’Us here...
4. Protozoa

“Any of the single-celled microscopic organisms belonging to a group that includes the most primitive forms of animal life.” The American Heritage Dictionary

Protozoa are creatures that are found in stagnant pools of water and are not a major problem for our caged canaries. If you've had your canary for a while and you keep things relatively clean this canary disease probably will never become an issue.

But if your canary is in an outdoor aviary with exposure to wild birds and insects you should be aware of this disease.

It is also possible that a NEW bird can have protozoa. He could have picked it up at the breeder's aviary or the pet store.

There are several types of protozoa that may infect canaries. It’s not necessary to get into the details of each one here.

**Symptoms**

Some of the unique symptoms in a canary with a protozoa infection are...

- Green slimy droppings
- Pasted Vent
- Large droppings
- Sometimes bloody droppings
- Skin lesions
- Vomiting
- Going Light
- Frothing at the beak
- Dried saliva on the beak

It’s highly recommended you see an avian vet if you suspect protozoa.

**Prevention**

- Avoid excessive moisture in and around cage.
- Prevent contact with wild birds and insects
- Quarantine a new bird for 30 days that is brought home from somewhere else.
• Keeping your canary's cage and food dishes clean and disinfected.

**FOOT AND LEG PROBLEMS**

One of the most common problems I get asked about is a bird that is favoring one leg. Usually the leg appears red and swollen.

This is often a sign of an **injury** or **gout** which I’ll describe in a moment.

Swollen legs can also be caused by...

- Inactivity (lack of exercise)
- A seed or other items getting caught between the leg and the leg band
- Genetics
- Mites
- Malnutrition
- Aging

The first thing you should check for, though, when your canary is standing on one foot or the leg/foot appears to be sensitive is **injuries**.

**INJURIES**

Check for injuries such as scratches or bleeding. Also take a look at toes and toenails which can get caught in wire joints in the cage.

Minor wounds can be treated with an antiseptic cream or peroxide to help prevent infection.

**Bleeding**

Wounds that continue to bleed can be covered in styptic powder, flour, or corn starch to help coagulate the blood. You can read more about bleeding below.

**Threads or Strings**

Look at the leg, foot, toes carefully and check for a piece of thread or string that may have gotten wrapped around the foot or leg.
If the leg or foot is extremely swollen a small piece of thread may get covered up by the swelling tissue. Use a magnifying glass and look carefully at the area. Look for small creases where a thread or string may be hiding.

Obviously, you’ll want to carefully remove the thread. Carefully cut it with cuticle scissors, finernail clippers, or—if necessary—a razor blade.

**Leg Bands**

Once in a while a physical problem will develop involving a leg band. Other times it just becomes a psychological irritation for the bird and you may see your canary picking at it.

If the leg is swollen, due to gout or injury, to the point of the leg band becoming tight on the leg, the band should be removed.

---There are “open” bands and “closed” bands.

**Open Bands**

Open bands are not permanently closed and have a split in them. All you have to do is bend it to open it up for removal. There is a special tool for spreading the band apart but you should be able to do it without the tool. Other bands snap together and can be unsnapped and opened for removal.

**Closed Bands**

Closed bands are actually solid all the way around.

Your pet store might have a special tool for removing closed bands. Ask your vet too.

Also see...  
http://birds2grow.com/prod-birdbands.html#band%20cutters

Once you’ve eliminated injury as the cause of the leg problem, look for another common ailment that causes red swollen and sensitive legs...
GOUT
In the case of a red sensitive leg, my next question would be “What are you feeding your canary?”

Gout is the result of a lack of exercise and poor diet (usually a diet that is too high in protein and fat). It may cause a canary to favor one foot. The foot may appear red and warm.

With Gout, waste (uric acid) is absorbed into joints and body cavity causing pain in your bird’s legs.

This condition is easy to prevent but once developed it tends to re-occur easily.

Symptoms of Gout
- Stiff swollen joints in legs.
- Standing on one foot.
- Red and swollen legs and feet.

Gout Treatment
I would cut out all treats and leave the bird with only seed, cuttlebone, and water for few days. Cut out all high protein (eggs, egg food, nestling food, conditioning food, fish meal, or sunflower seeds) and high fat foods (flax or millet seed) for a week and see if the condition improves.

NOTE: The one “extra” you can continue feeding is greens which will help cleanse your birds system.

If the condition improves, you can slowly re-introduce one treat food at a time until you figure out which one is causing the reaction.

Ultimately, though, it's not what you feed but HOW MUCH you offer. For instance, fruit 3 times per week is plenty. And although the nutrient rich molting and conditioning seed mixes available at pet stores suggest a daily feeding, ½ a teaspoon once or twice per week is plenty. When feeding treats--even healthy whole food treats--you should offer them in small amounts.

Especially go easy on foods that are high in uric acid or purines...
--Anything with fructose as an ingredient. Watch out for commercial conditioning foods and treats including honey sticks and other sweetened seed products.

High amounts of the following foods may cause gout like symptoms:

--egg or other high protein products
--asparagus
--cauliflower
--spinach
--mushrooms
--green peas
--lentils
--beans
--oatmeal
--wheat bran
--wheat germ

The above foods are not necessarily bad but your canary won't do well if he’s fed large amounts of these things on a daily basis.

Here are my basic nutrition recommendations for canaries...

--Fresh seed, fresh water, and cuttlebone at all times.

--Boiled egg twice per week

--Greens or soak seed 4-7 times per week depending on how well your canary tolerates them--be watchful of runny droppings.

--Include one healthy treat per day like corn, grated carrot, dry oatmeal, millet spray, or whole wheat bread. But only in tiny amounts. For instance, two or three flakes of dry oatmeal per bird is enough. Your bird is tiny, make his servings tiny. A small pinch will suffice. (Now if I could only take my own advice and limit MY serving sizes. SUPER SIZE ME!)

**Scaly Legs and Feet**

Scales on the legs and feet of your canary are caused by a build up of **calcium salt** between the scales of the feet and legs.
Older canaries commonly have this appearance on their legs and some canaries are more susceptible to having the calcium salt problem their whole life...even when they’re young.

It’s a normal part of aging and nothing to be concerned with. But...

**Scaly Mites**
Scaly feet are also caused by an infestation of mites.

If your bird is relatively young and has a large accumulation of scales, it is safe to assume you have a mite problem.

If you haven’t treated for mites lately you should spray the bird and cage once per week for 4 weeks with a mite spray like Avian Insect Liquidator (AIL) [http://www.allbirdproducts.com/newproductpages/avian_insect_liquidator.html](http://www.allbirdproducts.com/newproductpages/avian_insect_liquidator.html)

NOTE: The mites that come in contact with the spray will die but the spray has no effect on mite eggs. Therefore, we spray once per week so that we can kill the mites that have hatched out since the last spraying.

Also use Scatt [http://www.ladygouldianfinch.com/features_scatt-s76.mgi](http://www.ladygouldianfinch.com/features_scatt-s76.mgi)

NOTE: Scatt is also useful for killing any mites that feed on your birds bodily fluids such as air sac mites and red mites.

If the scales are caused by a mite problem it will take some time for the excess scaling to subside but regardless of what is causing the scales you can remove them.

**Removing Excess Scales**
Wash your canary’s feet gently in warm water.

Mix together 2 Tbs Vaseline and 1 Tbs Campho Phenique mix well and keep in an air tight container. (An alternative salve is baby oil or you can use Vaseline exclusively but the Campho Phenique will add some healing power to the process.)
Very gently apply this mixture to your bird’s feet and legs every day for 5 or 6 days. At about that time the scales will begin to come off. If necessary rub the scales off GENTLY. A wash cloth may help to pull the scales away but if they don’t come off easily let them be. If the scales are pulled off before they’re ready you can cause bleeding.

**Bumps And Sores On Feet And Legs**

**Bumblefoot**
Bumblefoot is a condition where canaries get corn-like bumps and then open sores on the BOTTOM of the feet.

Bumblefoot is caused by a bacterial infection. The bacteria are able to enter tiny abrasions on the bottom of your canary’s foot.

TIP: This is one reason to NOT use sandpaper covered perches or floors.

Eventually, if untreated, the infection may spread into the joints of the foot and the rest of the body. Bumblefoot may lead to gangrene and even death.

Bumblefoot is often caused by obesity, lack of exercise, Vitamin A deficiency, and unsanitary perches.

**Symptoms**
- Favoring one foot
- Sitting on bottom of cage instead of on perches
- Swelling of foot
- Redness of foot
- Spots of blood on perches
- Blister-like sore on sole of foot--This sore eventually breaks open and leaks a yellowish puss.
- Corn-like sore on bottom of foot

**Treatment**
- Other birds in the same cage may also contract this infection so it’s best to quarantine the sick bird to his own warm cage.
• Apply an antibiotic cream or iodine solution (Terramycin salve or Betadine) to open sores.

Terramycin  
http://www.dog.com/itemdy00.asp?T1=220602&srcCode=FR0401

Betadine  
http://www.petsupersavers.com.au/?page=139&item=1798&product_search=pep&dosearch=&pwid=de31fe7490d6d9eaa6a9f61c5ccc75b9

• Clean and disinfect perches and cage with a bleach solution.

  o It may be a good idea to toss out wood perches. It’s very difficult to get the bacteria out of the wood. At the very least, soak the perches in a strong bleach solution for 24 hours and dry in the hot sun.

  o It’s recommended that disinfectant containing phenol is not used. Phenol has been known to cause irritation to open sores and eyes.

• Cut down a little on high protein and high fat foods.

• Pad perches with large Band-Aids, Dr. Scholl’s Moleskin, or wrap them several times with a paper towel--use tape to keep it in place. OR you can create rope perches instead. Their softer than a wooden perch and have some “give” to them. Just stretch a cotton or polypropylene rope through the cage.

Prevention

• Clean and disinfect cage and perches regularly.
• Do not use sandpaper perches or cage bottoms.
• Use healthy perches with no splintering.
• Provide 3 or more sizes of perch to help avoid constant pressure on the same spot of the foot.
Make sure your bird’s cage is big enough for exercise or allow regular free flight in the room.

Feed a well balanced diet.

**CANARY POX**

Canary Pox can cause bumps on feet and legs in the form of pustules and open sores. This often fatal disease also produces pustules on the face around the eyes.

Dab open sores with **Betadine** antiseptic to aid healing.

There is no cure for Canary Pox but if treated as noted in SECTION II of this ebook your bird may recover. Seriously consider seeing a vet if you suspect Canary Pox.

**TIP:** Some breeders that have dozens of birds will give their canaries a Canary Pox vaccine. If you have an outdoor aviary or take your pet canaries outside on a regular basis where they’ll have contact with mosquitoes and perhaps wild birds, you may want to vaccinate as well.

Visit [http://www.biomunecompany.com/canaries/poximunec.html](http://www.biomunecompany.com/canaries/poximunec.html) and contact those people for more info on the Canary Pox vaccine.

**ARTHRITEIS OR SORE JOINTS**

Joint problems can develop if your canary has only one size perch to grip. The foot stays in the same gripping pattern day after day until it gets painful.

It’s best to have 3 different sized perches--although 2 different sizes perches would be OK--ranging from 1/4 inch to 1/2 inch in diameter.

For instance if you get 3 perches, get...
• a 1/4 inch perch
• a 3/8 inch perch and
• a 1/2 inch perch.

If your cage only has room for two perches (you don't want to crowd the cage with too many perches) it's usually enough. Especially when you consider that your bird also probably has a food dish with a different sized perch or platform attached...in effect he'll have 3 different sized perches. When providing two perches, I would go with the 1/4 inch and the 1/2 inch.

TIP: When shopping for perches, make sure you get the correct length of perch for your cage. Just measure the length across your cage where the perches will be placed and let the store attendant know what that measurement is.

BALANCE PROBLEMS

If your canary has a balance problem he may fall off the perch or stumble around on the bottom of the cage. He may even have a hard time flying straight.

Some of the causes of bad balance are...

Vision Problems
Make sure, if he or she is crested, that the feathers do not completely cover the eyes.

Cataracts occur in older canaries especially in Yorkshires or Norwiches. Look for a cloudy appearance in one or both eyes. Although it’s difficult to perform cataract surgery on canaries it can be done. See a qualified avian vet for a diagnosis and treatment.

Temperature Extremes
This may affect your canary’s blood pressure which can cause balance problems. For the most part, if you keep room
temperature above 32 degrees F and below 95 degrees F your canary will be alright.

**Inner Ear Infection**
With an ear infection you might also see your canary holding his head to one side. An inner ear infection can be treated with a broad spectrum antibiotic.

Some believe that colloidal silver can have a great healing effect. See...

**Stroke**
He may have had a small stroke. Also look for the loss of use of one leg. Little to nothing can be done for a canary that has had a stroke. Make him as comfortable as possible.

Often a lack of balance results from neurological problems.

**NEUROLOGICAL PROBLEMS**

There are several diseases and other issues that can cause the nervous system to work incorrectly. These often have symptoms that look like a balance problem.

Some symptoms of nervous disorders are...

- Stargazing
- Twitching
- Shivering
- Leg/wing paralysis
- Fits/seizures
- Blindness

**Stargazing and Neurological Problems**
Although Stargazing is often referred to as a “condition” it’s really more like a “symptom”. Stargazing refers to strange and perplexing neurological disorders in canaries. It’s also known as Twirling Disease or Wryneck.

Very few studies have been done on this condition. Stargazing is relatively uncommon and so it’s difficult to do thorough studies.
Stargazing is a symptom that can be caused by numerous pathogens and/or dietary deficiencies including...

- Fungal Infection
- Viral Infection
- Bacterial Infection
- Protozoa

These pathogens apparently get inside the brain and attack the nervous system. The end result is strong contractions of, primarily, the neck muscles and affects the entire nervous system as you’ll discover in a moment.

Some dietary deficiencies that seem to promote the onset of Stargazing and other neurological disorders are...

- Vitamin B deficiency
- Vitamin E deficiency
- Vitamin D deficiency
- Manganese deficiency

Some other causes of neurological disorders are...

- Toxic Poisoning--We’ll talk about this in a minute.
- Trauma to the skull
- Tumors

**Neurological Problems Caused By Toxins**
Your canary can acquire toxins by inhaling toxic fumes like tobacco smoke, burning scented candles, household cleaners, over use of drugs, or an overheated Teflon frying pan. He can also ingest metal flakes off of the cage bars...make sure no metal is exposed.

In addition to neurological symptoms also watch for difficulty breathing.

The Avian Medicine Chest claims their products can cleanse toxins from your bird’s system. For more about that see... [http://www.petmedicinechest.com/cgi-bin/at.asp?a=229278&l=avian/discussions/toxintext.asp](http://www.petmedicinechest.com/cgi-bin/at.asp?a=229278&l=avian/discussions/toxintext.asp)

We’ll talk more about toxins in a moment. Right now let’s look at the symptoms of neurological disorders.
What Does Stargazing Look Like?
Because of the strong contraction of the muscles, when suffering from Stargazing your bird will look straight up as if staring at the ceiling but sometimes will reverse it and stare at the floor.

Other Neurological Symptoms
In addition to loss of balance, Stargazing is often accompanied by several other symptoms of neurological problems. You may also see your bird

- lean to one side
- fall off his perch
- stand on the floor of the cage and spin in circles
- flip over while fluttering his wings as if having a seizure...he may then simply hop up to his perch as if nothing has happened.

What can I do if my bird is Stargazing or has these other symptoms?
The jury is still out on specific causes and treatment. There is no known cure for the condition but birds have even been known to completely recover with no treatment at all. This is known as “spontaneous remission”.

Some breeders and avian vets have seen success against Stargazing and other neurological problems with the following...

**Vitamin B**
An increase of Vitamin B in the diet has been shown to reduce symptoms. Good natural sources of Vitamin B are eggs, brewers yeast, soy, bananas, lentils, and chili peppers.

**Vitamin E**
Vitamin E may also help. A great natural source of Vitamin E is wheat germ oil. It’s also found in sunflower oil, olive oil, sunflower seeds, and other nuts.

**Vitamin D**
The best method here is to let your bird soak up some Vitamin D by placing him in direct sunlight (not filtered through a window).
TIP: Vitamin D is absorbed with the help of calcium so make sure your bird has a cuttlebone or mineral block available.

**Multi-Vitamin Supplement**
A popular vitamin supplement for canaries is **Prime by Hagen**. Prime also has probiotics in it and that won’t hurt anything.

Another nutrient rich supplement is **Guardian Angel**.

**Sulfa**
**Sulfa Drugs** are antibacterial and have sometimes helped birds that are Stargazing.  

**Nystatin**
Another drug that has been shown to be affective for Stargazing is **Nystatin** which is antifungal. You’ll have to see your vet to get a prescription for this drug.

**Calcium EDTA** has been shown to help cleanse a bird’s system of metal toxins. You’ll have to see a veterinarian about acquiring and using this product.

Another major issue with canaries is difficulties in breathing.

## BREATHING PROBLEMS

**Symptoms**
Some of the breathing problems you might see in your canary are...

- Heavy breathing
- Rapid breathing
• Labored breathing--shortness of breath or gasping for air
• Breathing with mouth open
• Clicking sounds with breaths
• Wheezing
• Whistle or squeak with breaths

Birds with breathing problems may also have...

• Darkening, bluing, or graying of legs and beak
• A hoarse singing voice
• A failure to sing

THE 5 MAJOR CAUSES OF BREATHING PROBLEMS

The most common illnesses that cause such symptoms are...

1. Air Sac Mites
2. Toxic Poisoning
3. Respiratory Disease--Bacterial, Viral, or Fungal Infection
4. Heart Failure
5. Vitamin A Deficiency

It’s difficult to know exactly what is causing the breathing problems in your bird. But a qualified avian vet can run some tests to eliminate certain causes.

1. AIR SAC MITES

The first thing I would do for a canary that has breathing problems is to treat for air sac mites. These mites are the most common cause of breathing problems. These pests live in your canary’s air sacs, lungs, nostrils, and throat. They can become so numerous that they can kill your canary.

Symptoms
Other symptoms of air sac mites include...

• Making clicking sounds while breathing
• Coughing
• Sneezing
• Gagging
• Open mouth breathing
• Tongue wiggling
• Nasal discharge
• Hoarse or unusual singing voice  
• Tail bobbing  
• Weakness  
• Weight loss

**Diagnosis**
A competent avian veterinarian can look into the airways of your bird to look for the mites. You can also do it yourself by shining a bright light into the back of your canary’s throat and look for tiny black specs which would be the mites. Obviously, this would be stressful for your canary and treatment is so easy there is really no need to see a vet or try to see the mites yourself.

If your canary has any breathing problems at all just treat for air sac mites. (If your canary is extremely weak and listless, seeing a vet WOULD be the best thing to do. Your bird may have a more serious disease.)

**Two Ways To Treat For Air Sac Mites**

1. **Scatt**
The easiest way I’ve found to successfully treat for air sac mites is Scatt which has an active ingredient of *Moxidectin*. Scatt is easily used. Just a drop on your bird’s skin will do the trick.

Moxidectin attacks the nervous system of mites that are feeding on your bird’s blood but in normal doses is completely harmless to the bird himself.

The Moxidectin in Scatt stays in your birds system for about 10 days. After that it’s likely that existing eggs will hatch out so it’s important to treat with Scatt a second time (3 weeks after the first treatment). As the mite eggs hatch out and feed on your canary they will also be killed.

For more on Scatt see...

2. **Ivermectin**
Ivermectin is primarily used to treat for mites on sheep, cattle, and horses. The product traditionally used is Ivomec. It’s useful for treating birds too but you’d have to dilute the original product to use on your birds. This
makes Ivomec difficult to use on canaries. And if you have just one or two birds, it’s just not worth the trouble.

You’ll have to mix it with water before applying to the skin of the bird or putting it into the drinking water. A big hassle if you ask me. Plus, once mixed with water the effectiveness of it dissipates. Not just because you’ve diluted it but also because it simply becomes less effective.

**S76**

However, Ivermectin is now available as a premixed solution for treating birds as a new product called S76. S76 can be applied to your bird’s skin or mixed with drinking water. That means you won’t have to catch your bird to administer the medicine.

If you have a large flock of birds, then S76 may be your best bet. Otherwise, it will take you forever to catch each bird and individually treat with a drop on the skin with Scatt.

Another big drawback of Ivermectin is that it stays in your birds system for a very short time. It’s recommended that you treat everyday for 5 days in a row…and repeat the process in 3 weeks.

For more on treating a large flock with Ivermectin see... [http://www.abbaseed.com/Supplements/Suppl2/IVERMECTIN/ivermectin.html](http://www.abbaseed.com/Supplements/Suppl2/IVERMECTIN/ivermectin.html)

**For Most People SCATT is Easier**

Unless, you have a flock of birds that would take forever to treat individually, I would use Scatt. You should be catching your canary every few months to cut his nails anyway so why not treat with Scatt at the same time?

You may see improvement in your bird’s breathing within 24 hours if he is being plagued by air sac mites.

Overdoses of Ivomec sometimes happen due to improper mixing of the original liquid. Be on the safe side and get something that’s premixed--Scatt or S76.
FEATHER MITES

AIL (Avian Insect Liquidator)

While Scatt and S76 are affective on mites and lice that feed on the blood of your bird, they are NOT useful for treating for Feather Mites which feed on flaking feather residue. It can also be sprayed on the cage and surrounding areas to help get rid of mites and lice.

So, the bottom line...

- Use Scatt to treat a small number of birds for air sac mites, red mites, and scaly mites.
- Use S76 to treat a large flock by adding it to their drinking water.
- Use AIL to spray your bird and his cage for feather mites.

Dangers of Treating for Mites

If your canary is heavily infested with air sac mites, a treatment may kill so many of the mites that the dead can plug your canary’s air ways and prevent proper breathing. Your bird may actually suffocate due to the dead mites in his system.

You can avoid this danger by keeping your eyes peeled for early symptoms. Then treat for mites before they reproduce to high levels.

You can also treat on a regular basis even if you don’t see symptoms. I like to treat with Scatt every 3 or 4 months...symptoms or no symptoms.

Transmission of Air Sac Mites

Air Sac Mites are transmitted orally from bird to bird. So, if you have one pet canary you’ll probably only have to eradicate the mites once for all time.

A second common cause of breathing problems is...
2. Toxic Poisoning

Imagine…It's a beautiful Sunday morning-->The sun is shining, the wild birds are fluttering in the bushes outside your kitchen window, and inside, your canary is singing a beautiful song...

You set a pan on the stove, start cooking some eggs and 30 minutes later your canary is dead.

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This actually happened recently to a New Zealand family. Only they ended up losing not only a canary but 2 parakeets as well. A family in Michigan lost over 50 birds when they let a pan of boiling water run dry.

The cause in these instances was Teflon Toxicosis…a result of an overheated Teflon coated pan. The Teflon need not be overheated to cause problems…fumes emanate from the pans even at normal temps.

At normal temps this may not have an effect on your bird TODAY. But over months and years of use, toxicity can build up in your bird’s body.

These toxins are known to cause nerve damage resulting in convulsions, respiratory problems, and eventually, death. Unexplained difficulty in breathing may be the first sign that your canary may be suffering from toxic poisoning.

It's not uncommon for people to write me and ask why their canary suddenly, after 5 years in their home, went into convulsions and died.

Often, the answer is mild but long term exposure to toxic fumes.

No Batteries Needed

As you've no doubt heard…Canaries were used to detect noxious gases in coal mines during the 1800s and into the 1900s.
The bird’s respiratory system is highly sensitive. Their breathing is naturally rapid and because birds have air sacs, as well as lungs, fast absorption of harmful gas fumes is unavoidable.

If the canary in the coal mine began labored breathing--or keeled over--the miners would rush out of the mine to avoid breathing in the poison air. Many a canary died while saving lives of humans.

Fortunately, today's gas detectors are battery powered gizmos that sound the alarm when necessary.

**Poisons in Your Home?**

As mentioned above Teflon cookware is the worst offender but...

Stove top pans are not the only Teflon coated products in our homes. Other household appliances that use Teflon are...

- space heaters
- ovens
- drip pans
- cookie sheets
- electric skillets
- toaster ovens
- irons and ironing board covers

Apparently, Teflon, when heated to high temperatures **separates into 15 deadly gases!** These gases are terrible for humans, causing flu like symptoms, but **DEADLY to your canary.**

Your bird's tiny lungs simply can not handle the toxic gases. The lungs hemorrhage and fill with fluid, leading to suffocation.

Tests have shown birds dieing within 17 minutes of being exposed to these toxic fumes!

And it's not just Teflon you have to worry about...
Toxins Everywhere!

There are other chemicals that can kill your bird in a matter of minutes.

- Pretty much any **household cleaner** can have a negative effect on your canary's health...
  - ammonia
  - bleach
  - floor and furniture cleaners
  - bathroom cleansers
  - etc.

Virtually anything that has a **chemical odor** to it can be **toxic to your canary**. No matter how mild you may think it is, it can be harmful.

- Some other items to limit your canary's exposure to:
  - scented candles
  - mothballs
  - paint
  - perfume
  - matches
  - tobacco smoke
  - nail polish
  - suntan lotions

- **Metal poisons** also play a factor in canary health. Often found in water is...
  - zinc
  - lead.

As a result many canary owners will buy bottled spring water for their birds.

- It's also common for overuse of **drugs like antibiotics** to create toxicity in the system of canaries. **Kidneys and livers tend to be collectors of harmful chemicals.**

**What to do...**

You can minimize your canary's exposure to Teflon Toxicity by...
• Keeping his cage far away from the kitchen or appliances used.
• Be careful to never overheat your pots and pans.
• Replacing all Teflon coated cookware. Good substitutes are...
  o Stainless Steel
  o Cast iron

Also...

• Remove your canary from the room when using harsh cleansers or burning candles.

No matter how clean you keep your canary's environment he will have toxins in his system. It's inevitable...Toxins are in the air everywhere AND in the water. But if you keep exposure to a minimum your canary will likely live a long healthy life.

Detoxing

According to the makers of Hematox there is a way to clean out a birds system. Hematox is an herbal supplement. These natural ingredients have been shown to help cleanse the blood, liver and kidneys.

Read more about Hematox here.

http://www.canaryadvisor.com/hematox

Keeping your canary's environment as clean as possible and then cleaning out his system on a regular basis will help insure many more years of his good company. :-)

Another cause of breathing problems is...

3. Respiratory Disease

The 3 common causes of respiratory disease--bacterial, viral, and fungal infections--are difficult for you and I to diagnose and treat. The only way to be sure what is causing the illness is to have an avian vet run some tests. These three pathogens can also affect the digestive system so also watch for a change in droppings.
Bacterial infections are treatable with antibiotics but viral and fungal infections are not.

**Bacterial Infections**--If you’re reasonably sure your birds’ breathing problems are not caused by air sac mites, which is something that’s easily treated, you have an option of treating with an antibiotic. (See the warning regarding antibiotics in SECTION II.) This may clear up the problem up right away.

**Fungal Infections**--There are also treatments for fungal disease just as there are for bacterial infections. Some of these treatments are *Fungilin lozenges, Amphotericin B, and Ketoconazole*. But, if after treating a sick bird with an antibiotic and seeing no improvement, rather than experimenting with another treatment, I would highly recommend seeing a vet. You’ll have to see a vet to get a prescription for these medications anyway. She’ll be able to run some tests and find out if the cause of your canary’s current illness is fungal or not.

Next are viral infections.

**Viral Infections**--Unfortunately, there is no cure for a viral infection. Just continue to use the *Canary Lover’s Basic Treatment for a Sick Canary* to help boost your bird’s immune system.

**TIP:** A *Vitamin A* supplement may be helpful in fighting off a virus. Any liquid vitamin supplement for birds should have enough Vitamin A for your canary.

The amino acid *methionine* may also be helpful. Sunflower seeds and safflower are high in methionine.

The fourth cause of breathing problems is...

**4. Heart Failure**

The reason why this can cause breathing problems is because heart failure is often accompanied by a gathering of fluid in the
lungs and other parts of the body and, as a result, difficulty in breathing.

-Coughing or wheezing may also be a sign of heart failure.

This is the reason vets will recommend **Lasix** as a form of treatment. It helps eliminate fluids in your birds system.

Other symptoms of heart failure include...

- **Tiredness or fatigue**

- **Weight gain**—As your canary retains fluids he may gain weight. I doubt you know what your canary weighed before getting sick so this may not be of much help. But if, while holding your canary, you can feel a difference in weight, and in conjunction with some of the other symptoms of heart failure, you may be able to come to a reasonable diagnosis.

- **Swollen legs and feet**—Again, caused by water retention.

- **Lack of appetite**

- **Increased heart rate**—This is tough to monitor but I’ll include some tips here for your information. The heart rate for a normal healthy canary is 500-800 beats per minute...very difficult to count as you can imagine. You'll have to pick up your canary to check his heart rate-->a stressful time for your canary. You can place 2 fingers across his chest OR put the bird’s chest up to your ear. Count for 15 seconds and then multiply by 4 to get beats per minute.

**Treatment of Heart Failure**  
If you suspect Heart Failure in your canary there’s very little you can do but make him as comfortable as possible and keep stress to a minimum.

See your avian vet for treatment of heart failure. She may prescribe Furosemide (Lasix). Furosemide is often prescribed for heart failure in order to reduce water retention.
Finally, the fifth common cause of breathing problems is...

5. Vitamin A Deficiency

A lack of Vitamin A in the diet can result in abnormal swellings at the roof of the mouth making it difficult for your canary to breathe properly.

So, anytime your canary is having breathing problems you can increase Vitamin A in his natural diet and provide a vitamin supplement.

Natural sources of Vitamin A include broccoli, collards, apricots, and cantaloupes.

Or use a vitamin supplement like Prime or Guardian Angel.

BALD SPOTS

Bald spots on a canary are not normal. Not even during the annual molt. While molting, your canary loses and replaces his feathers gradually over a 2 or 3 month period...but never all the feathers from one particular spot-->unless something is wrong.

Some of the things that may cause bald spots are...

Stress
Stress can cause feathers to fall out. Stress can be caused by overcrowding, small cage, lack of exercise, excess activity around the cage like cats, dogs, active children.

Provide some kind of toy like a sisal fiber rope or strings to help eliminate stress and boredom. Something he can peck at and pull on.

http://www.parrot-fever.com/Product_List/Shredding-Bird-Toys.htm

Allow plenty of exercise..either a cage large enough for fluttering back and forth between perches or free flight out of the cage.
Feather Plucking
Feather plucking can also be caused by stress.

Obviously, your canary can't pluck out feathers on the back of his neck or the top of his head but if he’s sharing the cage, the other bird may be the problem.

Another reason your canary may have bald spots is...

Excessive Scratching or Rubbing
Scratching or rubbing on the perch may be the result of mites or dry skin.

Treat your canary for red mites with Scatt and spray him and his cage with Avian Insect Liquidator (AIL).

Provide natural foods or a vitamin supplement that contains Vitamin E which promotes healthy skin.

A great natural source of Vitamin E is wheat germ oil. It’s also found in sunflower oil, olive oil, sunflower seeds, and other nuts.

Also use a vitamin supplement such as Prime or Guardian Angel Prolonged or out-of-season molt.
Adjust daylight hours accordingly by covering cage (or turning off lights) at sundown and UNcovering cage (or turning on lights) at sunrise.

Respiratory Illness
Even respiratory illness can cause bald spots on the head and neck or around the eyes.

Also look for...
Increased respiratory rate, eye discharge, tail bobbing, sleepiness, puffed up feathers, and blue legs or beak. Antibiotics Baytril or Tylan are often useful with respiratory infections.

Extreme Temperatures or Temperature Fluctuations
Also, make sure your canary is not exposed to excessive heat or high fluctuations in temperature. Canaries kept near the ceiling or near a furnace or fireplace often suffer with bald spots during
the winter months. It’s always hotter near the ceiling as heat rises.

**Overworked Hen**
Some breeders will artificially extend the breeding season by adjusting light, temperature, and diet. By the time molting season comes around the hen is so exhausted that she does not go into her annual molt. Her feathers wear out and fall out-->bald bird.

Hens that have laid an excessive amount of eggs have been known to develop bald spots due to a hormonal imbalance. Three clutches of eggs per year for about 3 years is accepted as normal and healthy for hens.

A good avian vet can provide hormonal treatment if necessary.

**Bacteria or Fungus**
Some bacteria and fungi like to develop on the skin of our birds. This can cause feather loss and bald spots around the eyes and above the beak. You may want to try Tylan antibiotic to clear it up or see a vet for a topical cream (Chlorhexidine) prescription.

**Vitamin and Mineral Deficiencies**
Calcium is needed for healthy feather growth. Make sure your canary has constant access to a cuttle bone or mineral block.

You can also provide a vitamin/mineral supplement like Prime or Guardian Angel.

Vitamin D is needed for calcium absorption. Whenever possible allow your canary to sit in direct sunlight...not filtered trough a window. But avoid overheating and be careful of predators and mosquitos when outside.

Iodine is needed for healthy feather growth. Use a mineral block that contains iodine.

Feather UP is a product that promotes healthy feather growth. See...
http://www.thecanarysnest.com/articles/moulting/index.html
Other Feather Loss Issues
Other issues that may cause extreme feather loss are hypothyroidism and low testosterone levels which your vet can test for if you want to spend that kind of money. With low testosterone levels you may also notice a lack of singing in a male and lack of interest in breeding.

Your bald bird may also just be genetically inclined to have a bald head and neck. You can blame that on in-breeding and other genetic abnormalities.

EYE PROBLEMS

Just like most other illnesses, eye problems have many causes.

Watery, swollen, closed, or partially closed eyes are often a sign of a bacterial infection in the eye or maybe just a foreign object in the eye. Feather loss around the eye may be due to your bird wiping an itchy or infected eye on the perch. Feather loss around the eyes might also be due to a bacterial or fungal infection on the skin around the eye.

Foreign Objects
The first thing I do is check for something in the eye like a seed hull or piece of feces. In this case you can rinse the eye with an eye wash for animals.


This is a good first step when there is an eye problem.

Injured or Scratched Eye
It's also possible that your canary has simply scratched his eye on part of the cage, the corner of a seed dish, a perch, or maybe even with his own toe nail while scratching. Or, of course, having a foreign object in the eye can scratch it too.

I’ve got a cat that was scratched on the eyeball a few years ago by another cat. I can still see the scar tissue on the eye.
and it's surrounded by a white "foggy" area. There's no way she can see clearly as the scratch is right on top of the pupil but it doesn't seem to bother her.

So, a minor scratch on the eye is not the end of the world for your canary. He may have difficulty seeing out of the injured eye but he'll likely get along just fine.

If you suspect an injured eye I suggest you see a vet for treatment.

**Eye Infections**

Eye infections often show up in conjunction with a respiratory infection.

They also may be caused by a severe deficiency of Vitamin A, a virus, parasite, or--most likely--bacteria.

Although eye infections are not common in canaries they are also not unheard of...it happens.

The most agreed upon cause is the canary rubbing his eye on a dirty perch. You've probably seen your canary rubbing his beak and eye area on his perch. He's basically using it to clean his face. It's not so hard to imagine that bacteria can be transferred from a dirty perch to his eye.

Specific SYMPTOMS of an eye infection are...

- Closed or partially closed eyes (or just one eye)
- Discharge from the eye
- Teary eye
- Crusty eye
- Inflamed eye

If you suspect an eye infection you can apply an antibiotic ophthalmic ointment twice a day (ophthalmic Terramycin, Neopolycin, or Neosporin).
If there is an infection, the ointment will probably knock it out. However, if the infection is in the eye for a long period of time before you treated it, it can cause blindness.

**PREVENTION**

You can help prevent eye infections by keeping your bird’s cage, dishes, and perches clean. Use a 10% bleach solution. Spray on cage to get into all the little cracks and crevices. Remove your bird first...you can place him in another cage, let him get some free flight in the room, or even place him in a paper bag for a short time.

Perches can be sanded to remove hard crusty droppings then soaked in a bleach solution and dried in the sun.

Cage, dishes, and perches should be completely dry before returning your bird to them.

**NOTE:** If you happen to bring a new bird home keep him isolated for 30 days. If after 30 days he has remained healthy you can introduce him to your other birds.

This will protect against more than just eye infections. There’s a multitude of infectious diseases that you’ll want to protect your existing bird(s) from.

**Respiratory infections** may result in eye infections so remember to watch for signs of breathing problems as well.

**Vitamin A deficiency** may cause a canary to close his eyes. Natural sources of Vitamin A include broccoli, collards, apricots, and cantaloupes.

Or use a vitamin supplement like Prime or Guardian Angel.
Canary Pox causes sores around the eyes. Look for small pustules around the eyes and on legs. Canary Pox is spread primarily via mosquitoes so if your canary has spent some time outside, or if mosquitoes have come into the room, he may have contracted this fatal disease.

Just like any virus, there’s no cure for canary pox but The Canary Lovers Basic Canary Treatment may help your bird recover.

Blindness
Blindness in canaries is usually caused by cataracts and is not worth treating (although you may wish to contact your vet to get details). Cataracts usually appear in older canaries of 8 or more years old.

Other causes of blindness include neurological problems like...

- Trauma to the skull
- Tumors
- Pressure on a nerve due to injury or feather lump

Also...

- Infectious disease
- Stress...overcrowding
- Vitamin deficiency

If an injury or infection causes blindness in one eye, like my cat, there is no reason your canary can't live a long happy one-eyed life. He doesn't need both eyes to watch out for predators--not inside his cage. However...

A lack of singing may be attributed to his blindness. In the wild, vision is important. For instance, a canary won't sing at night. He can't see if there is a predator nearby.

If your bird has limited vision or he is blind in one eye, may feel the same way. He doesn't trust his eyesight and so is afraid to sing.
**BLEEDING**

Hopefully, you will never ever see blood leaving your canary’s body. He doesn’t have much to spare and any bleeding wound is an emergency in my opinion.

Bleeding may be caused by breaking a feather, getting scratched by a loose wire in the cage, or while getting nails cut.

**Stopping Bleeding with Powders**
If you’re canary is bleeding and the blood does not stop within a few seconds, you can apply some styptic powder, corn starch, or flour to the wound as a help in coagulation.

**Pressure**
Also try applying soft pressure to the wound for several minutes.

**Cauterization**

“*The act of coagulating blood and destroying tissue with a hot iron or caustic agent or by freezing.*”

Wordnet Definition

In the case of excessive bleeding that won’t stop, cauterization may be necessary. I know, I know...You’re thinking, “How could I possibly put a burning hot object up against my canary?” Well, if you have two choices: 1. Cauterize the wound or 2. Your bird bleeds to death, which one will you choose? Without a doubt this is a last resort and you’ll likely never need to use it.

**Cauterizing Blood Feathers and Toe Nails**
It’s actually very simple to cauterize a broken blood feather or a nail that’s been cut too short. Simply light a match--preferably a large wooden match--let it burn for a second or two, blow it out and press the tip of the match against the feather or nail to stop the bleeding. Hold it steady until the match cools then gently take it away.
Cauterizing Flesh Wounds
I hope you never have to cauterize a flesh wound because no doubt it is painful to your bird. Plus, in your excitement and worry you might slip and make a mistake. You have to make a fast and logical decision here...if the bleeding simply won’t stop, your bird might bleed to death.

Here’s how I would do it...Heat the tip of a flat butter knife on the flame of the stove until it is very hot. Then lightly press against the wound. Hold for a few seconds until you think the wound is cauterized and gently remove the knife.

Like I said, I hope you never have to do it.

Another thing I hope you never have to do is deal with a broken bone...

BROKEN WING

Broken wings seldom occur with your household pet canary. When they DO occur, it usually happens when you are trying to catch him...whether by hand or using a net.

Flying into walls or windows or being attacked be a dog or cat are other causes.

A canary with a broken wing will probably sit on the bottom of his cage in a corner with one wing drooping. A break that causes the wing to angle up and away from the body is unusual but I can imagine it happening.

Often broken wings, if they are not severely out of shape or don’t have major open wounds, will heal OK. Your canary, however, may not ever fly again.

Broken wings will often heal on their own in about 2 weeks.

Caring For A Broken Wing
With any new break, your best bet is to have an avian veterinarian set the bone. If your bird experiences any bone breaks in the future the following may be of help...
Canary breeders have been known to set broken bones themselves. Here’s how they do it…but remember an experienced avian vet will do it better...

1. If the skin is broken apply an antiseptic.

2. Locate where the bone is broken, reset or re-align the bones and secure in position with a firm wrapping of gauze around the body to prevent movement of the wing and to keep it in a normal position against the body.

3. Remove all perches and other landing platforms from the cage. The canary will be required to sit on the floor of the cage…no flying or jumping allowed!

Locate shallow dishes (like jar lids) of food and water on the floor of the cage within easy reach.

It’s very important to keep your bird as calm as possible. Move him to a quite warm room with little activity. Continue to feed eggfood, greens, and fruit as normal—as well as seed.

Some extra Vitamin D, calcium, and Cod Liver Oil will help the healing process also.

The broken wing should heal quickly and bandages can be removed in 14 or 15 days.

**The Amazing Wing**

The canary’s wing is a masterpiece of engineering. The muscles that control the wing are extraordinarily strong and highly developed. If you’ve seen slow motion of birds flying you no doubt agree. The way the wing moves forward and back, almost in a circular motion, is visual poetry.

The flight muscles of the wing are attached directly to the sternum. This creates the leverage necessary for flight.

The skeleton of the wing is made up of the humerus (upper arm) and—working down toward the tip of the wing—next comes the ulna and radius, then the manus, metacarpus, and phalanges at the tip.
Canary Bones
Canary bones are extremely light weight. Some canary bones are as thin as eggshells but still relatively strong. These bones actually contain more calcium then the bones of large mammals! They are also “hollow” containing air pockets or air sacs in a honeycomb-like labyrinth.

Canary Feathers
A canary’s feathers are also works of art. Designed not only to make flight possible they also have incredible insulating qualities.

On a cold day a bird will fluff up his feathers-->making him look nice and plump. This traps tiny pockets of air inside the network of feathers. This creates a nice warm bubble of warmth around the canary.

And that’s why, when your bird is sick, he will huddle with feathers fluffed up. He’s trying to stay warm.

BEAK PROBLEMS

If you see any beak problems at all it will probably be an off center beak (malocclusion) or an overgrown beak (rhinorrhea).

An Off-Center Beak
An off center beak is exactly what it sounds like...the upper and lower portions are not centered or lined up with each other.

Off center beaks are treatable when the bird is still a baby and growing but with an adult bird there is not much that can be done except filing and trimming. It's best to let a qualified avian vet or an experienced breeder do this. It can be very stressful for your bird.

An Over Grown Beak
Your canary’s beak can grow as much as 1 ½ inches per year! But in a healthy bird, the normal wearing action of eating keeps the beak wore down. So, an over grown beak is abnormal and may be a sign of a health problem such as liver disease or malnutrition. It would be a good idea to see a vet and find out exactly what’s going on if your bird gets an overgrown beak.
Trimming and filing can be useful to fix an overgrown beak. However, it will grow back unless the cause of the problem is fixed.

**Beak Trimming and Filing**
If you want to try trimming your bird’s beak, use small cuticle scissors or finger nail clippers and trim tiny amounts off at a time. Or you can use a fine fingernail file and gently and lightly file off small amounts.

The beak is alive and contains blood vessels. Bleeding and pain may occur if TOO MUCH is trimmed or filed. However, the overgrown areas are likely blood vessel free and usually can be trimmed or filed without causing damage.

Go slow, take your time, and take off tiny amounts at a time. You don’t have to do it all at once…do a little now and a little later.

Make sure your canary has access to a cuttlebone or mineral block. These may help in keeping his beak wore down.

**FEATHER LUMPS**

**WHAT IS A FEATHER LUMP?**

Feather Lumps are a common problem and are usually found on your canary’s back or shoulders.

These lumps are caused by an “ingrown feather”…instead of growing thru the skin and to the outside of the body, the feather actually stays under the skin continuing to grow until a lump forms.

These lumps will start out small and soft and as the feather continues to grow the lumps will become larger and harder. Eventually, the lump will become so big that the skin will split open, increasing the likelihood of infection.

They can also become painful…especially if it happens to be pressing on a nerve or other sensitive area.
Causes of Feather Lumps

I've heard it said by breeders that feather lumps can result from poor nutrition but there have been no tests to prove it. Whether poor diet and living conditions increase the likelihood of feather lumps is not clear. One thing we DO know...feather lumps are genetic.

Some canaries get multiple lumps, all at the same time...and they will often return after each molt as the new feather grows in.

Certain canary varieties are more susceptible especially so with the frilled breeds. They're also common in Gloster, Borders, and Norwich canaries and are attributed to the common practice of in-breeding among these varieties of canary.

Treatment of Feather Lumps

A veterinarian can do a test, likely while you wait, in his office to determine if your canary has a cancerous tumor or a harmless cyst or perhaps, and hopefully, a feather lump which is easy to remove.

Your best bet is to let a vet take care of these lumps...if you can afford it. Keep in mind, though, that your canary will probably have them again after the next molt.

Removal Of Feather Lumps

You know what I’m gonna say here right...“It’s best to let a vet do this.” Sorry, if I’m starting to sound like broken record! But let’s face it...a good avian vet is always your best bet when you have a sick or injured bird.

However, you CAN do it yourself if you so choose.

If your canary has only one or two feather lumps you can remove them yourself...if you’re willing to take the risk of doing your own surgery and are not too squeamish. You'll likely not see much blood but the ingrown feather is usually surrounded by a yellowish pus or reddish discharge.

It's best to perform this operation when the lump is hard. Some breeders will wait--assuming the lump doesn't seem to be causing any major discomfort--until the soft lump gets large and hard before removing it.
Like I said, a vet would be a better choice but many canary breeders and hobbyists do it themselves.

**If you decide to do it yourself, here are some basic instructions...**

Hold your canary gently in one hand and, using a very sharp sterilized scalpel (or razor blade) cut a small incision on top of the lump.

Pull out the lumped-up feather with a sterilized pair of tweezers or ease it out with a needle.

Be very careful not to actually cut or poke the muscle of the canary. This would cause extreme pain, as you can imagine. The small incision and the pulling out of the lump don’t seem to cause any real pain. In fact, it appears to be quite a relief for the bird.

Keep a styptic powder like Kwik-Stop handy to stop bleeding...just in case. You should be able to find Kwik-Stop at your local pet store. [http://www.petvetdirect.com/home.asp?searchstr=kwik&ovcpn=&ovcrn=&ovtac=&ovrfd=&ovchn=](http://www.petvetdirect.com/home.asp?searchstr=kwik&ovcpn=&ovcrn=&ovtac=&ovrfd=&ovchn=)

If necessary you can also use corn starch or flour to stop bleeding.

Treat area with peroxide or an antiseptic cream or both. The wound should heal fine. Please let a vet do this if possible.

**PREVENTION OF FEATHER LUMPS**

There is not much you can do to prevent feather lumps. Of course, you should always feed a well balanced diet...perhaps it will help. Some have gone so far as to actually have the feather follicle removed by an avian vet. This will permanently prevent the same feather lump from coming back. This is an expensive alternative that most canary owners pass on.

If your interested talk to your vet.
Well, that’s about all I have to say about preventing illness and treating your canary when he’s sick. The items discussed above are the most common canary illnesses and problems.

It’s been a blast sharing this with you. Now it’s your turn. Go take care of your canary. Prevent illness as best you can and treat when necessary.

I’m confident you’ll have many great years with your canary.

Wishing you all the best.

Your Friend,
Darren P.D. Walker
http://www.PreventCanaryDeath.com