

## CLIENT INFORMATION SHEET

### CHLAMYDIOSIS/PSITTICOSIS/PARROT FEVER

#### What is Parrot Fever?

Parrot fever, also known as chlamydiosis or psittacosis, is a bacterial infection which affects birds. All birds are susceptible to the infection, but it may be seen most commonly in cockatiels, parrots and budgies.



#### What are the clinical signs of Parrot Fever in my pet bird?

Clinical signs include any difficulty breathing, nasal discharge, ocular discharge and inflammation, diarrhoea (often very green in colour), fluffed up appearance, inappetence, lethargy and depression. Some birds may appear completely asymptomatic.

#### How does this condition spread?

Infection can develop through direct contact with other birds, aerosol routes including feather dust or via fomites (contaminated objects in the environment). It is important to note that the bacterial can live on fomites in the environment for very long periods of time.

#### How is this condition diagnosed?

At Stanhope Park we recommend that ALL new pet birds or sick birds be tested for parrot fever. The condition may be diagnosed by a faecal or blood test. As birds can shed the bacteria in their faeces intermittently a negative result however is never a guarantee of no infection.

#### Can this condition be treated?

Treatment will include a course of antibiotics and good hygiene practice. But as the bacteria is shed intermittently there is no way to ever 100% prove the organism has been eliminated from the birds system.

#### Why is this condition so important to bird and human health?

Parrot fever/Psittacosis is a ZOO NOTIC condition. This means that the bacteria can spread to humans via inhalation of particles. Therefore clinical disease can develop in humans.

Human signs include anorexia, nausea, chest pain, vomiting, pneumonia, headaches, fever, night sweats. Humans typically respond well to treatment, provided a correct diagnosis has been made. Although it often causes mild illness in humans it can be severe if left untreated in elderly or immunocompromised individuals. Please seek further medical advice from your GP should you require any further information on this condition in humans.

**How can I help prevent this condition?**

At Stanhope Park we recommend that ANY new or sick bird be seen at the practice for a full health check and to test for the condition. New birds should also be isolated before joining a new aviary for a minimum of 2 weeks. Good hygiene practices should be in place as the bacteria can live in the environment for a long period of time. For more information on introducing new birds to your aviary please contact Stanhope Park Cats and Exotic Practice on 01325 620968.