Bumblefoot

SMALL FLOCKS COLLABORATIVE

Bumblefoot (pododermatitis) is a **common foot infection** in birds caused by bacteria. It usually starts when the bottom of the foot gets scraped or injured, letting germs in. Signs include swelling, heat, limping, and a hard lump or black scab on the foot pad. It can also affect toes and hocks. Bumblefoot is painful and can become serious if not treated quickly. Early detection, medical care, and prevention of future cases are key for control of bumblefoot.

Signs to Look For

Early Signs

- Soft, swollen bump or red spot.
- Bird may have a slight limp.
- High chance of recovery with quick care.

Moderate Signs

- Hard, dark scab on footpad.
- Bird is limping or avoiding walking on the foot.
- A veterinarian may be needed.

Severe Signs

- The foot is very hard and swollen.
- Swelling may advance up the leg.
- Infection may cause the bird to stop walking or become ill.
- A veterinarian is needed right away.

Quick Facts

Bacterial infection usually caused by *Staphylococcus aureus*

Early treatment helps prevent severe infections

Infections require veterinary care

Wear gloves and wash up after treatment, staph bacteria can spread to people

Linked to poor husbandry such as wet, dirty coops, sharp bedding, abrasive walking surfaces

Causes

- **Poor Environment:** Sharp objects, rough perches, and hard surfaces can cause foot injuries. Wet or dirty bedding weakens the skin and makes infection much more likely.
- **Obesity and Lack of Exercise:** Extra weight puts more pressure on a birds feet.

Bacteria enters through cuts, scrapes, or pressure sores on the foot.

Prevention

1. Keep a Clean, Dry Coop

- Use clean, dry bedding and change it regularly.
- Avoid mud, damp litter, and ammonia buildup in coops.

2. Prevent Injury

- Fix sharp or broken surfaces.
- Monitor for leg injuries and treat them promptly to avoid overuse of one foot.

3. Provide Proper Perches

- Provide soft flooring and smooth, low perches.
- Avoid sharp edges and rough landings.

4. Check Feet and Watch Weight

- Check daily for swelling, scabs, or limping.
- Prevent obesity to reduce foot pressure.

5. Clean Hands and Equipment

- Wash hands before and after treating foot injuries.
- Disinfect tools after each use.

When Birds Get Sick

1. Soak the Foot

- Use warm water and Epsom salts to soften the scab and reduce swelling.

2. Clean the Wound

- Wear gloves when treating.
- Gently clean the wound with a saline solution or diluted Betadine. Pack the wound with antibiotic ointment and wrap the foot to keep it clean.
- Clean treatment area and dispose of waste safely.

3. Monitor and Decide

- Isolate the bird.
- Check the foot daily and change the bandage every other day.
- If the wound worsens or doesn't improve, contact your veterinarian.

4. Work with a Veterinarian

- For severe cases, a veterinarian is needed for advanced care and to manage the infection.