

Bird Safety Corner

Miscellaneous Household Hazards, Part 2

Aluminum foil is a common household staple used most often in the kitchen. As such, it may on occasion be accessible to your bird. And what bird doesn't like bright shiny things? The jury is still out on whether ingesting aluminum can directly poison a bird, but at the very least, it can block the intestines if ingested. If your bird swallows any aluminum, bring it to the vet immediately. If it is still in the crop, it can be irrigated out. Keep in mind that aluminum doesn't always show up on x-rays. While some birds have sickened and died after aluminum foil was heated, that was most likely from nonstick coatings on the aluminum foil, not the foil itself.



Pencils have a graphite core, not lead. Being made of wood, pencils are very attractive to a parrot, and some people even give their birds pencils as toys. Ingesting graphite can cause gastrointestinal irritation, however, so pencils are not safe bird toys.

Button cell batteries are particularly hazardous to animals and small children. Many deaths and severe airway burns have been documented in children who swallow button batteries. Batteries can generate current inside the body, causing burns. They can also leak acid. Never leave batteries lying around where a curious bird can pick one up and swallow it. Remember that they are shiny and fun to play with! Small hearing aid batteries are easy to lose track of, especially if they're removed every time the hearing aid is taken out. Button batteries are found in many household items and even in such things as singing greeting cards. If your bird swallows a button battery, it must be rushed to the vet IMMEDIATELY to remove it before it leaves the crop.



Magnets are found in many toys, not to mention on refrigerators. Small magnetic parts are a lot more common than people realize. Swallowing one magnet is not particularly risky other than for the possibility of obstruction of the intestines. But if two or more magnetic parts are swallowed, there is a risk of intestinal perforation as the magnetic parts attract and clamp down on anything in between them. Since you may not know if your bird has swallowed more than one magnet or not, take your bird to the vet IMMEDIATELY if you think it has swallowed any magnets.

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