Evaluation Bird Droppings by Dave Hensen from H&D

Evaluating Normal & Abnormal Bird Droppings

You can learn a lot about the health of your bird from what is in the bottom of the bird cage.

IN GENERAL, it is recommended you use newspaper to cover your cage bottom. Its non-toxic, inexpensive and gives you a clear view of what your bird has dropped on it. This should be changed a least once a day and examined at that time as it can tell you many things. You can see what your bird has eaten or not eaten, how his fecal droppings have looked during the course of the day and even find the missing piece to that toy he disassembled. A bird eating its own droppings is a sign of a mineral deficiency and you should provide mineral or iodine blocks.

THE NORMAL DROPPING:
Normal droppings in pet birds consist of three parts.

The stool is coiled or partially coiled and varies in color from rich green to brown depending on the bird's diet. It will be green for birds on a seed diet and for birds on a formulated diet it will reflect the color of the pellet. Certain fruits and vegetables can also effect its color. For example, beets, blueberries and others can give the stool their color.

The urates are a by-product of the kidneys and are usually snow white when dry. They are chalky in texture and will vary in size from tiny (as in the budgie) to large and spread out (as in the macaw). It's normal to have some transient color changes during the day and some colored formulated foods can tinge them a creamy color.
Possible problems: There are two basic reasons for white droppings only. (there are others)
One is that the bird has been temporarily stressed. I have often noticed such faeces in birds which have, for example have just been caught up. If nothing has stressed them, however, birds with liquid whitish faeces need treatment. They are losing a lot of urine and will become dehydrated. Check your feeding routine. Only a vet can determine if the bird is lacking a vitamin or mineral supplement or if it has an internal kidney or liver problem.

The urine is the liquid portion and its normally clear. The volume of urine will change according to what the bird is eating. You will see more after consumption of fruits and vegetables and less after pellets.

THE ABNORMAL DROPPING:
Once you've learned what your bird's dropping normally looks like you can be on the lookout for problems.

Watery droppings:

An increase in the amount of urine is often confused with diarrhea. The fecal matter will be the same, but there will be notably more fluid around the feces. A change in the color of the urine is also a warning. Excessive watery vegetables, poor quality or dirty water and even the stress from being moved to a new home can cause watery droppings.

Loose stool: Or true diarrhea, can show up in one or two droppings due to stress, but if you're seeing it constantly throughout the day it is cause for concern. The tubular formed feces will lose its shape and become mushy. Birds tend to make droppings often because they have such a high metabolism and eat often. A normal healthy bird should have anywhere up to 25 droppings. There are several reasons why a bird can have loose droppings. It is recommended that you should never drastically change your bird's diet. If this has occurred it might cause diarrhea in your bird and should be taken to the vet immediately. Stress can also cause this condition in birds. It is rare for a bird to have constipation and if you find this happening in your pet bird you should consult a veterinarian.

Color changes The feces can change color from bright green or black and texture change to slimy is an indicator of trouble. Yellow or green stained urates is also a warning of trouble. This part of the dropping should always be white when dry.

Undigested seed

or food in the droppings, pale or foamy droppings and a consistent change in the volume or number of droppings during the course of the day are also of concern.

Blood in droppings:

Fresh blood in the faeces, or dark brownish-black or reddish-black droppings, indicating that blood has been digested, could be a symptom of enteritis or septicemia or of poisoning.

Undigested seed:

This will often be the first indication that there is some thing wrong with the bird's digestive system if the faeces contain undigested seed or other food,

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