

Keep Your Bird's Beak In Shape

Tips to keep your bird's beak healthy

By Rebecca Sweat

Take steps to help keep your bird's beak strong and healthy.
Courtesy Val Streit, California

There are steps you can take to make sure your bird has a healthy beak. Number one, feed it a well-balanced diet. A proper diet provides nutrients to keep the beak strong and prevents overgrowth, soft, splitting or peeling beaks.

"If your bird has a calcium deficiency, it will weaken the bone structure in the bill and make the bones more brittle. If you have a weaker bone structure, the bill is going to be more likely to crack or fracture," said Larry Nemetz, DVM, a birds-only veterinarian in Santa Ana, California.

Also provide your bird with a variety of soft wood and other destructible toys to chew on. This will prevent hyperkeratosis, which is the build up of keratin on the surface of the beak. "Birds naturally chew and need toys that have a variety of textures, such as hard and soft wood, and leather," said Jeffrey Jenkins, DVM, an avian veterinarian in San Diego, California. "If they're using their beak, it's going to stay in shape and trim down naturally while they're chewing."

Your bird may also benefit from having mineral blocks and cuttlebones in its cage. These contain essential minerals, such as calcium, to help strengthen the keratin that makes up the beaks. They can also provide a surface to swipe the beak and a hard texture to prevent beak overgrowth.