

## A Case of Foreign Body Obstruction in a Quaker Parrot

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A 6 year old green Quaker hen, named Chiquita, was presented to the clinic for not being herself over the last couple of days. She had been lethargic, quiet and fluffed. Her diet consisted of Vetafarm pellets and occasionally fruit. She received corn chips daily and the occasional peanut or cashew. Chiquita was always supervised whilst out of her cage.

There had been no recent changes in her management. On physical examination, Chiquita was lethargic but otherwise had no detectable problems. Faecal examination under the microscope showed no abnormalities. It was recommended to perform a general blood test and radiograph to further investigate the problem. The blood tests results showed some abnormalities. There was a slight increase in her white cell count and globulin levels, which indicated that she had inflammation occurring within her body. She had a mild increase in cholesterol which was likely attributed to her regular corn chip intake, as well as occasional nuts. The red cell level was also slightly increased which was likely to be due to mild dehydration.

The radiographic findings are shown below. The ventriculus (part of the gastrointestinal tract) was displaced craniodorsally (forwards and towards the spine) (blue arrow) and there was a mass within the caudal abdomen with bone opacity (white arrow). These findings were consistent with Chiquita having a reproductive related disorder. The mass with bone opacity was likely to be egg material and the ventricular displacement due to enlargement of the reproductive tract or adhesion formation within the coelomic cavity. Other changes evident on the radiograph were enlarged kidneys and moderate kyphosis (curvature of the spine). Enlarged kidneys can indicate kidney disease and kyphosis will often result from poor parental and juvenile nutrition.





A presumptive diagnosis of reproductive tract disease was made based on clinical findings and test results. Fluid therapy was initiated to treat dehydration and potential kidney disease. Antibiotic therapy was given to treat any potential infections that the bird had developed. Leuprolide (lucrin) therapy was initiated; this medication reduces oestrogen levels in the bird and therefore reduces reproductive activity. This allows time for healing of the reproductive tract and prevents further cyclic activity. Pain relief was also provided to make Chiquita more comfortable. Nutritional support was given by force-feeding with Roudybush

formula 3. Chiquita continued to improve with time and was discharged three days after admission. A plan was formulated which involved performing an exploratory laparotomy, a procedure which allows examination within the coelomic cavity, in four to five weeks to further investigate her problem.

Chiquita was admitted for an exploratory laparotomy as planned. The reproductive tract looked normal, however a significant swelling was identified within duodenum, a part of the small intestine. On palpation, a foreign body was detected. An incision was made just cranial (in front) to the swelling. A u-shaped foreign body (approximately 5mm long x 5mm wide) was successfully removed using haemostats. It is unknown what material the foreign body consisted of. The intestine was closed using 6.0 vicryl suture material in a simple continuous pattern. The coelomic cavity was closed and Chiquita was recovered from her anaesthetic. Chiquita was discharged two days after surgery and was bright, alert and active with a good appetite. Two weeks later, she came in for a revisit and was doing very well.

Foreign body ingestion in birds is a relatively common condition seen in avian veterinary practice. Birds may ingest anything they can chew and fit into their mouths. Common things ingested include hair, cloth fibre, parts of toys and heavy metal. Ingestion of foreign bodies can cause major problems in birds. It can result in toxicity and blockage of the gastrointestinal tract. Clinical signs shown by these birds will be variable including lethargy, weakness, fluffed feathering, anorexia, vomiting and diarrhoea. It is important that owners supervise their birds carefully when they are out of their cage to ensure that they do not ingest something that may be harmful. Additionally, owners should be careful about what they place into their bird's cage.