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FEATHER PLUCKING IN PARROTS

Feather plucking is a complicated problem with many causes. It can be caused by a number of diseases, husbandry/environmental factors, or be a behavioural problem.

Before a behavioural cause can be fully considered it is necessary to rule out other medical/pathological causes. This requires a general anaesthetic, x-rays, blood sampling and faecal samples as the first step, for which the costs can add up.

There are multiple treatments available, depending upon the cause, but with most the use of neck braces/collars are part of the initial treatment to stop further plucking/damage. It is important to recognise that these are used as part of the treatment not instead of proper treatment. ***It is inappropriate to leave a bird in a collar/brace in the long term as a substitute to treating underlying causes.***

It is not possible to guarantee a cure for many feather plucking birds. For some it is a case of ongoing management to bring the condition to a level that is considered acceptable for the bird's health and welfare. For some birds, the level of damage/self-trauma they continue to cause themselves cannot be controlled by medication or management practices. Sadly, in these cases we may need to consider euthanasia of the bird, as a last resort.

Our ['Exotics Expert' Ian Sayers](#) has a lot of experience investigating and dealing with these cases. The very nature of these problems means they are not easily solved in a standard consultation, so we offer longer specific feather plucking consultations. A pre-feather plucking consultation questionnaire may be sent to you for **completion prior to** the consultation to give us the best chance of helping your bird.

It is possible to insure your bird which covers the cost of treatment and investigation of many diseases and conditions but **be aware** some companies will retrospectively (i.e. after the event) decline to pay for investigation of feather plucking if it appears to be due to behavioural issues rather than medical causes or existed prior to you taking out the insurance. You will need to check in advance with your insurer if your bird is covered for this type of investigation, if you are considering trying to make a claim.