



## Is Your Birds Beak Overgrown?

A flaky beak can be a normal part of growth and aging. However pet birds may not chew and play with toys with enough vigor to adequately wear down their beak, so sometimes the beak becomes too long or develops abnormal flaky areas.

Normal flaking must be differentiated from abnormal thickening and flaking, which can entrap bits of food within the beak keratin and result in infection or necrosis (tissue damage). Ask your avian vet to assess your bird's beak the next time you have him examined. Beaks can overgrow due to metabolic problems, such as underlying liver problems. Beak overgrowth can occur very rapidly or subtly. Also bites and trauma can permanently damage the beak and cause abnormal growth.

Beak trimming should only be performed by a trained veterinary professional, since it is possible to damage the underlying tissue when trimming and shaping the beak. It is also very important to evaluate the lower beak and to have the beak trimmed back to normal symmetrical proportions when necessary, so it doesn't end up skewing the upper beak to one side or the other – known as scissor-beak.

Toys play an important role in occupational therapy for the physical and mental health of our pet parrots. But the beak itself is an indicator of overall health, and your veterinarian should assess any dramatic changes.

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