



Heavy metal – Good for Music, Bad for Birds!

Bobbie was a 2 year old cockatiel, who presented one step from death's door. He was barely able to stand, and spent all of his time with his head tucked under his wing and his owners could not think of any source of poison or toxin.

Given the severity of Bobbie's signs, he was immediately anaesthetised for x-rays. The x-rays showed small bits of metal in his system, which were poisoning him. While he was asleep, blood was taken to determine how his organs were going.

Treatment was started immediately, drugs to counteract the heavy metal and vomiting drugs, fluids by injection and crop feeding. After searching the house, Bobbie's owner's discovered an old lead weight that was being used as a door jam. It had telltale small beak marks on the side, and matched the fragments seen inside Bobbie on the x-ray! Strangely, the lead weight had been in the house for a number of years, and Bobbie had never touched it prior to this.

The blood tests showed damage to the kidneys and liver. As heavy metal poisoning can cause kidney failure, Bobbie's results were of concern. The good news is that the results allowed us to fine tune his treatment to provide protection to the organs at risk.

The next day, Bobbie was still very unwell, but was slightly brighter. He had started trying to bite us when we were medicating him, which was a very welcome sign!

On his third day in hospital, Bobbie was anaesthetised and x-rayed again. They confirmed the good news that the metal particles had passed through his body! It was now safe to stop the treatment for heavy metal poisoning. Bobbie was much brighter than he had been on admission, but was reluctant to eat in hospital. After discussion with his owner, it was decided to send Bobbie home. Happily, Bobbie went from strength to strength at home, and is continuing to do well! His owners have now removed the door stop that caused so much trouble!

Treatment for heavy metal poisoning usually takes at least 3 days, and is very intensive. It is much easier to prevent heavy metal poisoning, than it is to treat it! Check out our heavy metal poisoning care sheet for more information.

