

## Illnesses affecting the mouth: Trichomoniasis

Canker is caused by a flagellate protozoan. It is not transmittable to humans or other mammals but can be caught by other birds that share the same water, eat seed dropped by an afflicted pigeon or through beak-to-beak contact.

The most common symptom is a yellow or brownish cheeselike growth in the



mouth. This will usually be far back in the mouth...yellow growths outside the body or in the very front of the beak are not likely to be canker.

The condition must be treated, otherwise the pigeon will die of starvation, asphyxiation or choking.

It is important not to try to remove any of the growth unless you know what you are doing as this can cause a fatal bleed.

These are the most common symptoms of canker in pigeons:

### **SYMPTOMS IN SQUABS** (baby pigeons)

Not all these symptoms will be present in each case. The symptoms appear 6 days after infection.

- Visible lump in the neck or navel area.
- Stretched skin over site of lesion.
- Cheesy growth in mouth or throat.
- Patches of baldness around neck and mouth .
- Slow blinking

- Ruffled feathers
- Loose watery droppings
- Excessive thirst
- Loss of appetite
- Loss of weight

## **SYMPTOMS IN ADULTS**

Not all these symptoms will be visible in each patient:

- Visible lump in neck or vent
- Firm yellow or brown cheesy mass in back of mouth
- Soft flat creamy white growths in throat
- Inability to swallow seed
- Mouth may be partially open
- Birds stand upright with head high and neck straight (penguin posture)
- Crop full of water
- Distortion or swelling of forehead (if sinuses have been invaded)
- Vomiting
- Increased mucous in the throat

## **TREATMENT**

The condition is treated with Flagyl Syrup (obtained by veterinary prescription) or by Spartrix ,which can be obtained without prescription and given at a dose of 1 tablet once a day for 3 to 5 days. While it is being treated the pigeon might not be able to swallow but staff at a wildlife sanctuary should be able to find a way to tube feed it [\*\*Critical Care Formula\*\*](#) or [\*\*Poly-Aid\*\*](#), which is a product designed to stop sick pigeons from starving. The canker will usually clear up completely within 10 days as this “after” photo of the pigeon pictured above shows.Canker is an organism that does not survive long outside the digestive tract and its associated organs so you won’t find canker of the foot or anything similar. If you think a pigeon has canker of the foot it is more likely to be pigeon pox or scaly leg mite!

