

What is crop milk?

Crop milk is a secretion of the cells lining the crop and is used to feed budgerigar chicks

Why is it important that the chick is fed crop milk?

Antibodies pass via the crop milk to the baby budgerigar after it has hatched; this helps the chick build up an immune system

Squashed chicks.....A flattened chick will rarely be caused by the hen.

Flattened chicks have more often died from another cause.

Empty crop

My chick has a yellow stomach

This is the yolk sac that the chick has not completely absorbed; once this is absorbed the hen will start feeding crop milk to the chick.

Empty chick crops.....Maiden hens often do not know how to feed a newborn chick.

Use a teaspoon and some tepid milk and just hold it up level with the chicks beak, it will drink.

A hen out of breeding condition may not feed her chicks correctly.

Do keep your eyes on all breeding birds with emphasis on their condition and foster chicks if necessary.

The maiden hen is still not feeding her new chicks.

Give her a three day old chick from another nest, it will shout and the hen will feed it, this will be all she needs to get her started.

Another flattened chick.

This could be because the chick was a weakling at birth; this may be due to a genetic fault.

Repairing the adults with different partners should eliminate any more weak chicks

And another flat chick.

A cold breeding room will encourage the hen to sit tight, a small chick could suffocate .Pop a couple of extra dummy eggs or glass marbles under the hen, this will help lift her up off the chicks

Dead chicks in the nest box

A possible cause could be due to a wet nest box, change the shavings daily. A wet box can cause pneumonia in the chicks.

More dead chicks in the nest box.

This could be due to a bacterial infection from mouldy soft food.

Was this because of serving rancid soaked seeds or was it mouldy soft food?

The hen feeds hard seed instead of crop milk

The hen is not producing crop milk, the chicks must be moved to foster parents or they will die.

The chick's crop is inflated.

This is due to the hen not feeding correctly. Hold the chick on its back and squeeze the crop gently, it will burp. If the inflation persists pierce the crop with a sterilised needle.

My chicks are getting feather plucked

Feather plucking, once a plucker always a plucker. This can be the cock and the hen but in my experience I found the hen was more often the culprit.

Try putting a millet spray in the nest box; this may take the hens mind off plucking her chicks. I apply bitter aloes or savlon to the plucked area. If the plucking continues then foster out all of her chicks.

The chick's beak is covered in food

Wipe carefully with a moist cotton wool bud, also check the top inside beak is free from hard food, this will remove easily with a tapered end on a matchstick.

Cold chicks

Sometimes a hen will die or leave the nest and the chicks will be cold and appear dead. Cup them in your hands and blow your warm breath onto them, you will be surprised at how many you can save. These of course will need to be fostered out.

White chicks

A chick in the nest that turns white on its flesh needs a drop of olive oil on its tongue; it will recover in twenty four hours

Single chicks

If only one chick hatches in the nest do transfer it if possible often a single chick never gets fed very well, the ideal number I like per nest is four

Dead Anaemic chicks.

Finding white under developed chicks is a sure sign that they are under constant attack from red mites, the anaemic appearance is lack of blood.

Clean feet

Any build up of droppings on the chick's feet must be cleaned off daily. Use a small bowl of tepid water and soak the feet, the soft droppings can now be picked off by hand, take care with the chicks claws as they can easily be pulled out at this age.

Chicks out of the box

If you do need to remove any chicks out of the nest box be aware that this must be for short periods only, your hands must be warm when handling chicks.

Sudden death.

None of us like to open the nest box and find a two or three week old chick dead with a full crop and no evidence of disease. We must check our feeding regime, have we supplied something new, could we have overdosed on vitamins or perhaps a poisonous contamination was the cause, have we any stale food lying on the cage floor?

Adults attacking the chicks.

When the chicks leave the nest box they need a safe retreat from their parents, my gazunders will keep these birds safe.

The adult male may see any young cocks a threat to his breeding partner, the adult hen may also see any young hens a threat to her breeding partner. If this occurs they will attack the chicks, this can be fatal.

Calcium

I believe if we supply a liquid calcium and vitamin d to our budgerigars, we will have larger clutches of eggs, stronger chicks and less splayed legs.

Splayed legs

Splayed legs are when a chicks legs are splayed out side ways from its body, the cure is to tie both legs together for a week.