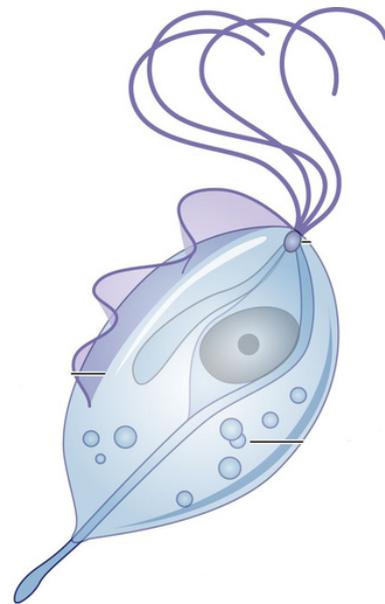


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TRICHOMONAS

An unknown respiratory tract infection in birds

By Dr. Peter Coutteel



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TRICHOMONAS

This time, let's talk about **TRICHOMONAS**, a disease we know quite well in racing pigeons and in birds of prey.

The disease trichomoniasis causes mainly yellow nodules in the beak cavity.

Recently, the outbreak of trichomonas in green finches in the wild has also been in the news.

Many adult canaries and European birds are nowadays carriers of this protozoa without many symptoms and therefore it is quite a confusing disease because the first symptoms are modest.



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What are the first symptoms?

- Rubbing the eyes against the perches
- A minor swelling under the eye
- Sinusitis with sneezing and wet nostrils
- Moisture loss through tear ducts
- Falling out of small plumage around the eye



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After that:

- Perspiration on the eyes which causes
- everything to stick.
- Keeping the eye closed
- Sometimes one-sided, sometimes two-sided
- Strong swelling of the sine under the eye
- Low mortality



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How do our birds get infected?

Infection occurs through direct contact. *Trichomonas gallinae* lives in the upper parts of the digestive system, especially in the beak cavity and the crop.

During the feeding of the youngster by the parents in the nest, this can be passed on directly through the saliva.



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There is also an indirect way through contaminated drinking water or contaminated moist food. An affected bird can transmit living trichomonas through its saliva while drinking.

This happens often in aviaries, during expositions and in transport carriers.



Color canaries and birds that are given extra colorants have become much more susceptible to this disease. The synthetic dye canthaxanthin has a negative effect on the mucous membranes when the dose is too high.

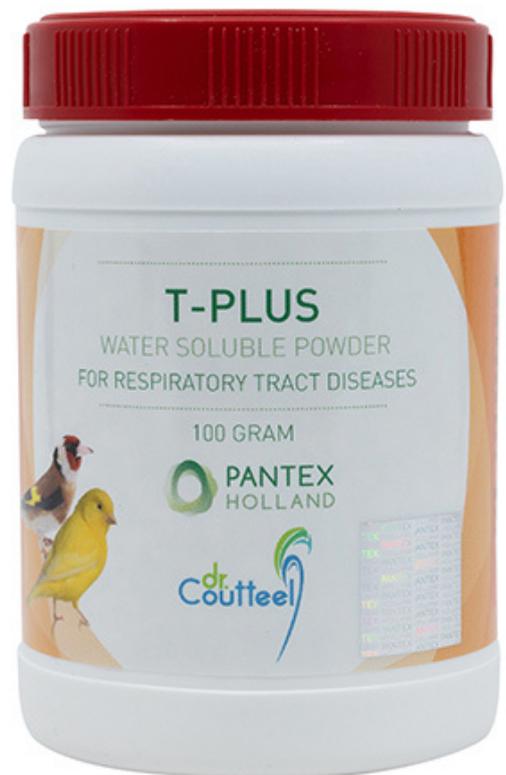
Its chemical molecule disintegrates and causes hypervitaminosis. We now know that the mucous membranes of the respiratory tract and digestion system react badly to this.



Course of the disease

Gradually thousands of trichomonas protozoa crawl into the sinuses of the head and especially in the infraorbital sinus just underneath the eye. It slowly starts to swell and then contains yellow pus that is not liquid but rather pasty in nature, like the contents of a pea.

Histopathological examinations of affected eyes in a laboratory indicate an insane amount of trichomonas parasites that have settled there. These are the cause of additional secondary infections with all kinds of bacteria, which should undoubtedly also be treated with an effective antibiotic (see further **T-PLUS**).



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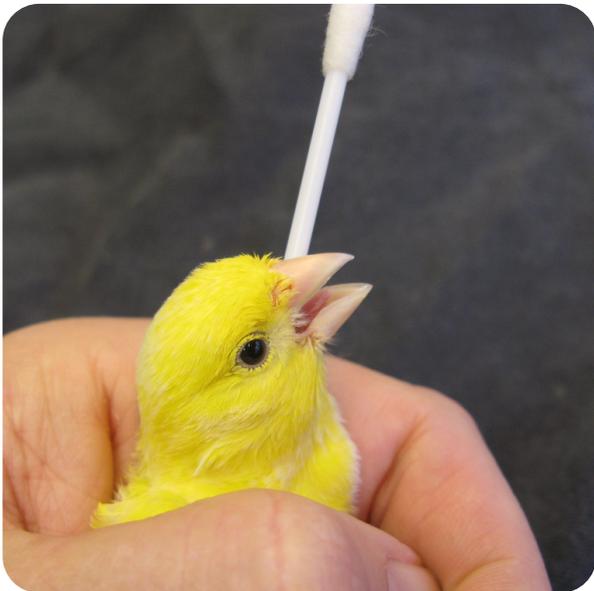
The disease can also appear in the beak cavity, oesophagus, the crop and the entrance to the trachea. This digestive localization is more common in parakeets and then mainly in budgerigars and cockatiels. They develop a thicker crop wall with white/yellowish coating and start to digest poorly and have a tendency to vomit. They shake their heads to throw out some mucus.

In tropical birds (Gouldian finches), zebra finches, amadines,) we see a similar protozoan disease caused by a brother of *Trichomonas* called "*Cochlosoma*". This flagellate lives more in the intestines and is the cause of disease in exotics that we also know under the name of "Bengalesefinch disease". Affected birds produce pale, voluminous droppings, lose weight, weaken and eventually die.



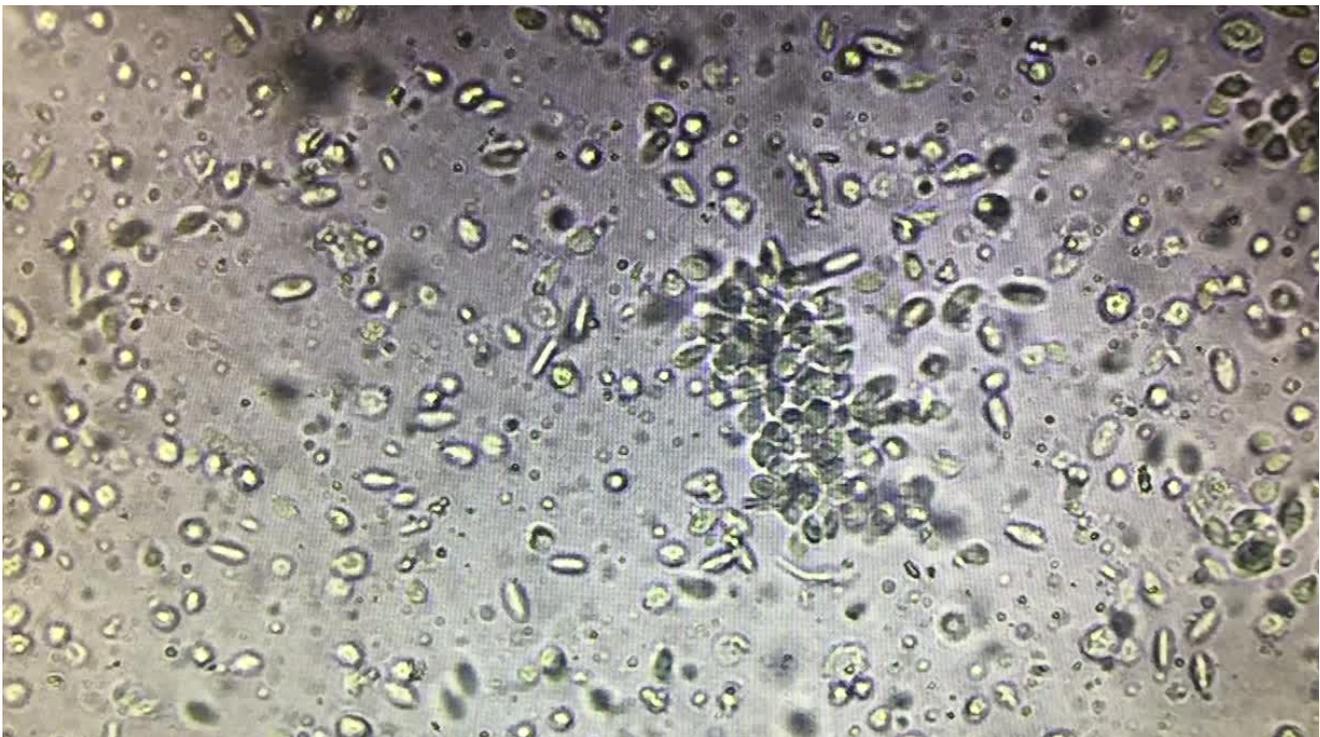
Diagnosis

One can make a quick diagnosis by examining a living bird with symptoms at a veterinarian. With a cotton swab, soaked in physiological water, one has to take a sample from the beak cavity and possibly the crop as well.



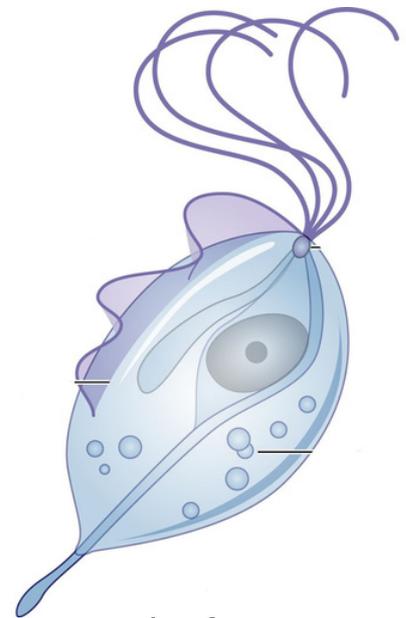
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The swab is immediately examined under the microscope to recognize the swimming flagellates. These little parasites only keep swimming at body temperature, which is why the diagnosis can be missed on a dead bird.



Treatment

The earlier the start of the treatment, the better the achieved results. Afterwards, many cases have become irreversible for complete healing of the eye(s), although some birds can return regular activity.



Trichomoniasis is a protozoan disease, and for these eye infections also the primary illness, therefore it is essential to intervene quickly with the right treatment. Therapy with classical Baytril does not give an effective treatment because protozoa are not sensitive to this antibiotic.



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RONELLA contains the substance ronidazole, which actively fights against trichomonas when administered for at least eight days. In this way, you tackle the cause of this disease efficiently, and the thousands of trichomonas slowly die.

Often at the same time, we are dealing with associated bacterial infections. Therefore it is advisable to combine the treatment **RONELLA** with a broad-spectrum antibiotic such as **T-PLUS** to tackle the respiratory diseases. **T-PLUS** also affects the diarrhoea problems of exotic birds.



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If the eyelids stick together, you can clean with lukewarm water so the bird can see again and find its food. Preferably do not use eye ointment because then everything will stick together as well.

The exchange of information and the collaboration of breeders and veterinarians are vital to the development of bird medicine and provide better care for our pet birds.

In order to prevent/heal certain diseases **Dr. Coutteel**, in cooperation with **Pantex Holland**, has brought a number of products on the market that can be valuable when certain diseases appear.





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To prevent the development of resistance and inappropriate treatments, in case of any doubt or abnormal mortality always consult an avian veterinarian.

DR. PETER COUTTEEL

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