

WHAT IS A CROP NEEDLE?

A crop needle is a blunt stainless steel needle with a small hole near the end which can be passed directly into the bird's crop without any harm or stress to the bird.

The reason we would use a crop needle would be to administer food or medicines directly into the bird's crop. It is a tool that all bird breeders should be capable of using.

HOW TO USE A CROP NEEDLE

- **Do use** the correct gauge size as this will prevent the crop needle accidentally going down the bird's windpipe, this is impossible if no force is applied because the needle is bigger than the windpipe and once the tip of the needle is in the birds mouth the bird will close the epiglottis at the top of the windpipe.

A 22-gauge needle is ideal for chick's aged 3-4 days through to 2-3 weeks old, large chicks and adults require an 18-gauge needle.

Crop needles are available in curved or straight, most find the curved ones are easier to use but others may prefer the straight needle.



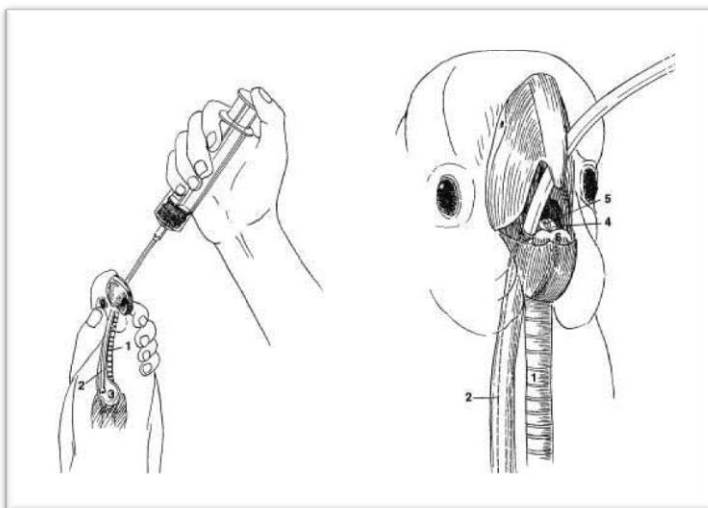


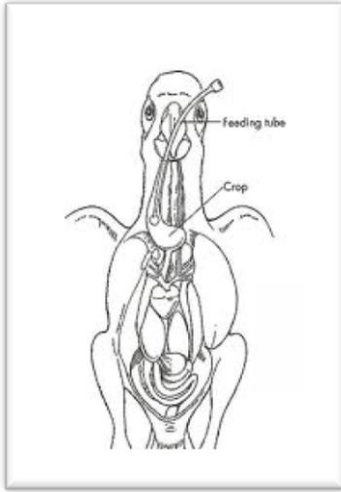
- **Straight and Curved needles**

Order a syringe and needle together as not all syringes and needles are compatible.

Before using the crop needle dip it into tepid water to lubricate it as sometimes the oesophagus can be a little dry.

You must be able to hold a bird correctly and in the left hand, do not wear gloves as you will not have the sensitive touch to feel the needle entering the crop.





It sometimes gets confusing when you read that the crop needles must be entered into the birds mouth from the left and others tell us from the right, both are correct. With the bird held in your left hand the tip of your left thumb should be over the crop. The needle then enters the birds mouth from the right hand side as the bird faces you, this is actually the birds left hand side.

The crop needle must be washed between birds to prevent cross infections.



Dosing a bird directly into the crop guarantees exact measures of medicines.

Medicines added to the drinking water of a budgerigar will not always work satisfactory as the intake of water can range from between one and five ml per day and less if the birds are served soft foods, vegetables and soaked millet sprays.

Some medicines will not dissolve in water and others can have a bitter taste.

Let us take another look at using a crop needle

Once the mouth is open pass the tip of the needle over the tongue towards your left thumb

Once the tip of the crop needle is over the tongue start pointing the tip down towards your left thumb.

Now you are in the correct position your needle will almost find its own way into the crop, just give the needle a slight twist as it goes down.

Do not use any force

Once the crop needle is inside and you can feel the needle with the tip of your thumb from inside the crop just gently empty the contents of the syringe.

With practice the whole procedure can be done in seconds.