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# Pets and Their People Veterinary Surgeries

Unley, Wayville and Fulham Gardens

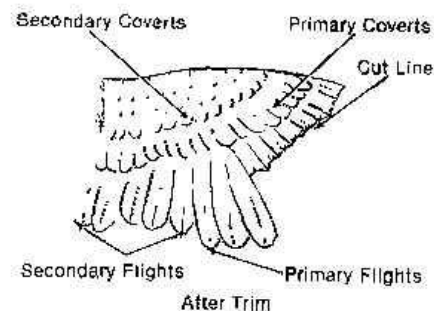
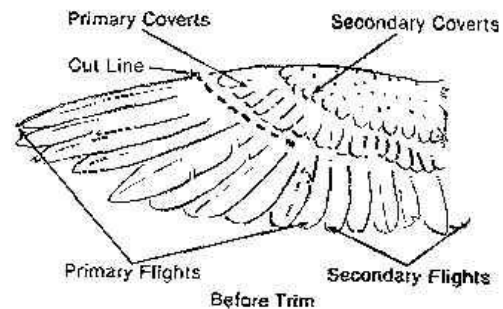
## Wing Clip Information

**We pride ourselves in offering the best possible care for your pet.**

There is much debate over the correct method for clipping a bird's wings. Avian vets agree that it is best to not clip wings at all if not completely necessary, however if it must be done clipping both wings is best.

The length and amount of feathers cut will depend greatly on the species, age, weight and personality of the bird in question. As a general rule, clip from the primary (outside) feathers inwards. 5-7 feathers are usually cut, below the coverts (small feathers covering inside of wing) on both wings to just above the level of the secondary feathers. This will usually allow them to gain limited height and speed, while retaining the ability to land safely. Cutting primary feathers reduces the ability of the bird to take off. Leaving the secondary (inside) feathers allows the bird to steer and land safely.

Think of a bird like a plane. The primary (outer) feathers are the engines. They provide thrust for take off. The secondary feathers (inside) are the flaps and brakes. They control air speed, angle of descent and allow for a safe landing. If we remove an excessive number of feathers or have a one wing clip the bird will fall like a stone. One wing clips can lead to a downwards out of control spiral and cause the bird to crash.



It is

important to allow a young bird to learn to fly before its wings are clipped. This is not so it learns to fly, but more that it learns to land. If a bird does not learn how to land safely they can do themselves a serious injury, as well as develop severe psychological behavioral problems.

Injuries from poor wing clips can include fractures of the legs, beak tip injuries, mutilated feathers, split skin, sternal trauma, loss of balance, as well as behavioral changes such as fear of stepping up or coming out of the cage.

This diagram shows the feathers cut a little too short for current recommendations. They should be cut to approximately the level of the secondary feathers in this diagram (just above them). When first trimming a birds wings, It is best to cut a smaller number of feathers. If the

bird can still take off, then cut an extra feather, one at a time until it can no longer take off. If you cut too many feathers off the first time, your bird will crash and could do itself serious injury.