

B i r d & E x o t i c s V e t e r i n a r i a n

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CARING FOR YOUR BIRD

Feeding

- A balanced diet is important for your bird. Bird pellets or crumble should be available at all times. If your bird is on a seed diet it should not eat only one type of seed and should have no more than 10-15 sunflower seeds per day.
- Ideally, each day your bird should be supplied a balanced selection of fresh vegetables such as spinach, beans, parsley, broccoli, carrots, silverbeet, etc.
- Grass should be provided daily for all non-fruit eating parrots.
- Other foods you can serve in small amounts as treats include pasta, rice, toast, eggs, mashed potato, chicken bones and other meats.
- Fruit may be also offered but many birds will not eat it.
- **Do not** give your bird chocolate, coffee or avocado – these are **toxic to birds**.

Health Care

- Worm every 3-6 months and have a crop tube worming at least once yearly.
- Spray for mites every 6-12 weeks.
- Book a yearly check-up to detect general health problems, chlamydia and parasite infestations. Annual blood screening is recommended in certain pet birds.
- Test or treat for chlamydia annually. Chlamydia is important as it is very common in parrots and can spread to humans. Birds may show signs such as sneezing, weight loss and/or green watery droppings, or no signs at all.

Remember – Birds often mask the signs of illness and may only show signs of being unwell when they are very sick.

Heavy Metal Poisoning

Heavy metal poisoning is extremely common. Lead, zinc and copper are the metals involved and are found in galvanised wire, paint, copper wires, metal ties, rusty metal toys, costume jewellery, solder, etc.

Cages and aviaries should be stainless steel, powder baked or the new BHP polymer covered wire. Repeatedly scrubbing galvanised wire with vinegar using a wire brush and then rinsing off with water will minimise the zinc toxicity but not eliminate it.

Cages

- Do not put sandpaper on perches or on the floor.
- Perches should be made of natural wood and various sizes provided.
- Place food and water bowls so that your bird does not defecate in them.
- Avoid using metal objects such as toys, food bowls (except stainless steel) or plastic-coated bag ties in the cage.
- Add fresh greenery to the cage regularly (e.g. gum leaves and grasses).

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