

# Care & Information Sheet

## Canary

*Serinus canarius domesticus*



Canaries are well known for their beauty and varied colors. Canaries do well when kept singly or in female/female pairs. Male canaries are known for their singing, females tend to chirp rather than sing. Males may stop singing during their annual molt, this is normal. Male canaries should not be housed together, males kept in cages with mirrors may not sing. The average size is 3 to 4 inches and with proper care and nutrition they can live 10 or more years. Bird owners should avoid non-stick cookware and appliances as they can release fumes hazardous to the bird's health.

### Habitat

- A cage approximately 24" W x 14" D x 18" H, with metal bars spaced no greater than 3/8" apart will make a good home for your canary. It is best to provide the largest habitat possible, a flight cage is strongly recommended.
- Perches should be at least 3" long and 1/2" in diameter. A variety of perch sizes is recommended to exercise feet and help prevent arthritis.
- A metal grate over the tray will keep the bird away from droppings. Line the droppings tray with cage paper or appropriate substrate for easier cleaning. To avoid contamination, do not place food or water containers under perches.
- Birds acclimate well to the average household temperature. Avoid extreme temperature changes. The cage should be placed off the floor in an area that is well-lit and away from drafts.

### Food & Water

- Specialized pelleted diets are highly recommended and should consist of 60–70% of the diet. Use fortified seeds in moderation as they are higher in fat and less nutritious than pellets. If your bird is use to a seed diet, convert to pellets gradually. Replace food daily.
- Assortment of soft foods such as shredded carrots, dark green leafy vegetables, and apple slices can also be offered.
- Do not feed birds fruit seeds, avocados, chocolate, caffeine or alcohol as these can cause serious medical conditions.
- Fruits & vegetables can be offered as a treat daily but should be discarded if not consumed within 24 hrs.
- Clean, fresh, filtered, chlorine-free water changed daily.

### Maintenance

- Clean and disinfect the cage and perches regularly. Replace substrate or cage liner weekly or more often if needed.
- Replace perches, dishes, and toys when worn or damaged. Rotate new toys into the habitat regularly,
- Ensure that there are no cage parts or toys with lead, zinc or lead and lead-based paints or galvanized parts as these can cause serious medical issues if ingested by your bird.

### Grooming and Hygiene

- Provide filtered, chlorine-free, lukewarm water regularly for bathing, and remove the water when done or as an alternative mist the bird with water or a grooming spray.
- Clipping flight feathers is not necessary, but when done correctly it can help prevent injury or escape.
- Nails should be trimmed by a qualified person to prevent injury to the bird.

### Supplies

Cage & Cage Cover	Pellets & Fortified Seed	Treats & Grit	Cuttlebone & Millet Spray
Cage Paper or Substrate	Food & Water Dishes	Bird Bath	Nail Clippers & Styptic Gel
Variety or Perches	Vitamin supplements	Variety of Toys	Book About Canaries

### Health

Because all birds are potential carriers of diseases, always wash your hands before and after handling your bird and/or the habitat contents to help prevent the potential spread of disease.

***You should consult with an avian veterinarian if you observe any of the following conditions.***

- Lice or Feather Mites - Restlessness, scratching, feather picking.
- Mites (Scaly Face and Leg Disease) - White deposits on eyes, beak, legs, and feet.
- Pox Mouth lesions - face scabs
- Diarrhea - Fecal portion of dropping is loose – Weight loss, ruffled feathers. Multiple causes, from change in diet to internal parasites.

For information regarding canaries and disease, contact the Center for Disease Control at <http://www.cdc.gov/healthypets>

**NOTE:** The information contained in this document is for general reference only. Please consult a veterinarian for medical advice and concerns.

**Sources:** Avian Medicine: Principles and Application by Ritchie, Harrison, and Harrison  
The ASPCA Complete Guide to Pet Care by David L. Carroll