

Care & Information Sheet

Parakeet



Parakeets are the most common pet bird. They are talkers, but their little voices are sometimes hard to hear. They are active and need daily time out of their habitats to interact with the family. They enjoy a variety of chew toys and are social and get along well with their own kind. The average size is 7 inches and with proper care and nutrition they can live up 10-20 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 18" W x 18" D x 24" H, with metal bars spaced no greater than ½" apart will make a good home for your parakeet. It is best to provide the largest habitat possible, a flight cage is strongly recommended.
- Perches should be at least 4" long and 3/8" 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.
- Treats should not exceed 10% of total food intake. Avoid sugar and high fat treats.
- Fresh fruit and vegetables such as carrots, apricots (no pits), bananas, apples, dark green leafy vegetables (like spinach or kale), peas, celery, and corn.
- 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	Grooming Spray	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 Parakeets

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.

- Chlamydiosis - Appetite loss, fluffed feathers, nasal discharge.
- Feather Plucking – Birds sometimes pluck their feathers out of boredom or poor diet, change toys often provide a balanced diet.
- Diarrhea - Fecal portion of stool not formed. Multiple causes, from change in diet to internal parasites. Ensure correct diet and reduce fruit intake.

For information regarding parakeets 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