

Essential Bird Basics
Compiled by Beth A Gleason
The Crystal Parrot



Diet

- Poor diet is the number 1 reason for poor health.
- Feed your bird daily a varied mix of pellets, vegetables, beans, grains, fruits, sprouts, seeds, and nuts.
- Pellets and fresh, clean water should always be available - change both at least daily.
- Birds are social animals and social eaters - share your healthy foods with them by giving them their own dish.
- NEVER give birds alcohol, chocolate, caffeine, avocados, guacamole, rhubarb, raw onions, raw mushrooms, peanuts, apple seeds, dairy, beef, high fat/salt/sugar or fried foods.

Health

- Learn your bird's regular habits. If your bird acts or looks different (i.e. listlessness, fluffed at the bottom of the cage, nasal discharge, irregular feces), see an avian veterinarian IMMEDIATELY.
- Bathe your bird 3-4 times weekly in a pan of shallow water, in the shower with you, or with a spray bottle. Bathing should be fun - make it enjoyable.
- Do yearly well-bird check ups with a qualified avian veterinarian, including gram stains or cultures, and blood work.
- Regularly trim nails and flight feathers by a qualified bird groomer.
- All birds need at least 10 hours of UNINTERRUPTED, dark, quiet sleep in their cages every night.
- Birds need vigorous exercise and time out of their cages every day.
- Keep your bird away from toxic plants; keep a list of bird safe plants handy.
- Birds are very sensitive to fumes. Keep them away from paint, smoke, aerosols, etc.
- NEVER use non-stick cookware, scented candles, plug in air fresheners, or your ovens self cleaning feature.
- NEVER leave birds unsupervised with children, dogs, cats, ferrets, reptiles or other pets.

Behavior

- Expect to spend a lot of your free time with your bird - you are their flock.
- With kindness and consistency, all birds can be taught how to be good companions.
- All birds should be trained with the basic commands of "step up," "step down," and "no."
- Respond ONLY to behaviors you like; ignore those you don't. Never punish a bird!
- Birds usually only bite when they have run out of other ways to communicate - pay attention.
- If you have problems living with your bird, seek out a competent avian behavior consultant.

Housing

- Your bird MUST have a cage for its safety and as an emotional haven.
- Bar spacing needs to be the right size for your bird. It should not be able to push its head through the bars.
- Provide at least two different perch sizes in the cage - a small one, so their toes wrap around and a large one so their toes rest flat. Natural branches from safe, non sprayed trees are great; ask us which ones are ok.
- Have several bird safe toys in the cage. Use plastic, wood, leather and shreddable type toys.
- Clean and wipe down cage daily. Change cage papers daily. Do not use corn cob as it can promote bacteria.
- Clean the cage thoroughly with appropriate cleaners at least once a week.

For more information, please call, or come in and talk with us. We will be more than happy to help you research and choose the feathered companion that is appropriate for you and your family.

Compliments of
The Crystal Parrot
15C College Highway
Southampton, MA 01073
(413) 527 - 2550

