

## Diet

With the exception of most lorries and lorikeets, the natural diet of parrots consists of fruits, nuts, grains, seeds and flowers of tropical trees. Diet should be varied and include a high quality, clean seed mix or pelleted diet plus fruits (except avocados), dark green or yellow vegetables, hard boiled eggs and occasional bits of cooked lean beef or chicken. These supplements, along with commercial foods, will satisfy your pet's nutritional needs. In addition, provide calcium blocks or cuttlebone in your parrot's cage.

Peanuts, peanut butter, sunflower seeds, and safflower seeds should be offered in limited quantities because of their high fat content. Do not feed your parrot avocados, chocolate, raw onions, raw meat, raw chicken, moldy foods, or alcohol. These are toxic to parrots and can cause health problems. Also, the overheating of empty Teflon pots or pans creates fumes that are toxic to birds.

All food dishes, cups and feeding devices should be thoroughly cleaned and rinsed as they are refilled.

## General Care

Bathe your parrot several times a week with a fine mist, being careful not to soak its feathers. Keep your bird warm and out of drafts while drying.

Keep other animals away from your bird. Do not house with another bird until after a veterinarian's approval.

Re-cage your bird before leaving the house to discourage those that like to chew on furniture, rugs and electrical cords.

Call an avian veterinarian immediately if you notice a discharge from your parrot's eyes, nose, or mouth; any bleeding; or any change in behavior, activity, fecal droppings, or eating habits.

*This information is designed as a basic guide. There are several books and online resources available which provide in-depth information on parrots and their care.*

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## Caring for Your Parrot



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## About Parrots

Parrots are a very old family of bird species, first appearing 40 million years ago. Macaws, cockatoos, African greys, parakeets, cockatiels, lorries, and others are all parrots. Parrots are identified by their large heads and heavy hooked beaks, short and strong necks, short legs, and thick and muscular tongues.

## Choosing Your Parrot

Regardless of which bird species you have chosen, a veterinarian who specializes in avian medicine should examine your new parrot. The veterinarian can assure you of your parrot's health status, and vaccinate him against diseases that could be fatal. A test may be conducted to make certain your bird does not have psittacosis, a disease transmissible to humans.

We recommend separate/solitary housing of your new pet for at least two weeks or until your veterinarian approves group housing.

## Your Parrot's New Home

When choosing a cage for your new parrot, larger is better. Birds with long tail feathers should have enough vertical room to keep their tail feathers clear of flooring. The horizontal space should be large enough that their feathers do not touch the sides of the cage when their wings are extended.

A cage with a pullout tray at the bottom facilitates cleaning. If the cage has a grid that separates the tray and cage, most of the bedding material on the market may be used as a tray liner. If there is no grid, paper liners are the best choice.

Perches should have different diameters for comfort and exercise of the feet. Natural wood perches from a hardwood tree make excellent perches. There are also a variety of commercially produced perches available.

Food and water receptacles should be located above the perch so it is accessible, and protected from bird droppings.

Locate your parrot's cage in a quiet room. The cage should not be placed in direct sunlight, near heating and air conditioning vents, or near the kitchen.

Parrots require 8-12 hours of sleep, so purchase a cage cover to provide rest and a feeling of security. During the day, provide full spectrum lighting.

Besides human companionship on a daily basis, provide activities and toys that are appropriate for parrots to alleviate boredom and loneliness.

## Training

A tamed and trained bird rather than one afraid of humans makes a much better pet. Taming is not difficult once you understand how to accomplish it. If your bird is not yet already tame, consider having their wing feathers clipped professionally to initially limit your bird's ability to fly. New feathers will grow back.

Give your bird time to adjust to its new surroundings. Maintain a distance between you and its cage while talking softly. This will help ease any fears. Once your bird realizes you mean no harm, it will overcome its natural fear of humans and will begin to trust your display of friendship. Work with your bird daily to bolster trust and create a bond.

This leads to a human-companion animal bond that will last a lifetime. Once tamed, your bird can be permitted out of its cage to interact with you and your family.