

# ASK OUR VETERINARIANS

## Avian Care

There are 3 main aspects to keeping your pet bird healthy: socialization, husbandry, and feeding. If you aim to make these 3 parts of your birds' life as ideal as possible, you will have a good friend and great pet for MANY years to come.

Socialization involves your interaction with your bird. Birds are social creatures and will live in flocks for protection and happiness. If you have a single bird at home, YOU are now the rest of the flock. Ample time needs to be spent with your bird daily. Time spent should involve: training (i.e. step up, step-down, vocabulary words, etc), preening, and bathing. Don't forget that birds HATE it when you leave the room. Place their cage in a room that is mostly accessible to the family so your bird can see his or her "flock."

Husbandry involves the space in which your bird lives. In almost all cases (abused birds are exceptions), bigger is better. Purchase the largest cage possible. The cage should measure at least 2x's the width/depth of the wingspan. Some people have dedicated entire rooms to their larger birds, such as hyacinth macaws. The cage should be clean and free of feces. If you are noticing serious wear on the bars, the cage should be replaced. Toys, including interactive foraging toys for food and treats, should be rotated weekly to help with boredom. Water should be changed as frequently as necessary to keep it clean (1-2x's daily.)

Feeding is VERY important. Seed diets are NOT adequate. Instead, pellets should compromise about 75-80% of the diet. The remainder of the diet can be fresh veggies/beans, and nuts for the larger birds. Nutriberries are a healthy treat to offer. Birds should not eat: seeds (>5% of their diet), fruits (occasional treat other than mango or papaya), chocolate, onion, garlic, pasta, or rice.

Basically when purchasing a bird make sure that you are willing to commit to these three areas and focus on making them as ideal as possible to keep your bird healthy and happy.

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