



CARING FOR YOUR PARAKEET

ABOUT PARAKEETS

Originally from the Australian grasslands, parakeets have been domestically raised for the past 100 years. Originally green with black striations and a yellow face, parakeets are now available in a multitude of color varieties including yellow, blue, violet, and albino.

Their ease of care, affection towards people, cute comical antics, and ability to talk have made parakeets one of the most pleasurable pets for all ages. Their average life span is 6-10 years.

GENERAL CARE

Allow your parakeet to bathe twice a week by misting him down using a spray bottle of lukewarm water. Always be sure to keep your bird out of drafts, especially while drying. You can also provide a bird bath for your parakeet.

If you plan to train and spend a lot of time with your parakeet, it is best to only have one parakeet. If you do not have the time to dedicate to taking your parakeet out of its habitat multiple times per week, two same-gender parakeets are recommended to keep each other company.

To begin training your parakeet, work with him to accept your finger as a perch. Have him step from one hand to the next. To keep your parakeet from flying away from you, some experts recommend trimming some of the primary feathers on each wing. Ask your pet store or veterinarian to show you how. These feathers will grow back after molting so they will need their wings trimmed regularly. In addition, you will need avian nail clippers and styptic powder to regularly trim your parakeet's nails.

Arrange a visit to veterinarian who specializes in avian medicine as soon as possible after picking up your new bird. They can make sure your bird is healthy and answer any questions you have. If bringing a new bird into your home where other birds reside, it is best to keep them separate/in solitary housing until their veterinary exam.

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

PREPARING YOUR PARAKEET'S HOME

When choosing a cage for your parakeet, allow enough room for him to spread his wings and move about. The cage should be at least 18" in width, but the wider the better. Parakeets like to fly horizontally, so you want to make sure you are providing enough room for them to enjoy their new home.

The spacing between the bars of the cage should be no wider than ½". You don't want the bars to be wide enough to allow the bird to squeeze his head through. A pull-out tray at the bottom of the cage with a paper-based litter will make weekly cleaning easier. Corn cob substrate should not be used.

Food and water receptacles should be located above perches, so they are protected from bird droppings.

Your bird's cage is his home and security blanket. It should have sufficient space for climbing and flapping wings, as well as room for toys, mirrors, swings, bells, chews, hanging treats, fruits, vegetables, and an assortment of perches and branches.

Parakeets are very social, therefore locate their cage in a room with plenty of family activity. Avoid placing the cage near the air conditioning or heating vent, in direct sunlight, or near a stove. **WARNING: The overheating of empty Teflon pots or pans creates fumes that are toxic to birds, potentially fatal.**

The cage bottom can either be covered with a special cage bottom absorbent paper or one of the commercially available litters. Your parakeet's cage and all accessories should be spot cleaned as needed, with the substrate sifted or changed (depending on what you are using in the cage tray) 2 – 3 times per week. Thoroughly clean the habitat and all accessories using a non-toxic, pet-safe habitat cleaner on a monthly basis. Never use food preparation areas to clean small animal habitats or anything in their habitats. If you clean the habitat in the bathroom, disinfect the area completely afterwards.

WHAT ELSE DO I NEED?

- Since your parakeet's beak is continuously growing, add a cuttlebone or mineral block to give them the calcium and essential minerals he needs while helping to keep his beak properly aligned.
- There are many toys and exercise accessories available that will provide hours of enjoyment. Rotate toys so your parakeet always has fresh and interesting experiences to help keep them mentally stimulated.
- For proper foot health, your parakeet should have multiple perches of varying diameters and textures to exercise their feet. Discard and replace toys and perches with excessive wear to prevent injury.
- Another useful accessory for training and playing with your parakeet is a "T" perch or bird playpen.
- A cage cover is helpful when you put your bird to "bed" at night, and a cage stand will help protect your parakeet from the other pets in your home.

DIET

Your parakeet needs fresh food and water daily. 80% of the diet should be a commercially prepared pelleted food for parakeets, in addition to a parakeet seed mixture. Supplement your parakeet's staple diet with vegetables and fruit and specialty foods such as spray millet and treats but be sure treats do not exceed 10% of their daily diet.

Also feed your parakeet fresh fruits and vegetables such as carrot, apple, pear, green beans, leafy dandelion, and romaine lettuce. This will also provide him with the nutrition and amino acids his high metabolism requires.

Parakeets also need a vitamin and mineral supplement on a daily basis. A mineral cube and cuttlebone hung in the cage will give your bird access to calcium and other essential minerals. In order to keep your bird's continuously growing beak in proper alignment, hang a beak conditioner in the cage.

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

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.

Children younger than 5 years old, people with weakened immune systems, and people 65 years of age and older are more likely to get diseases spread between animals and people (also known as zoonotic diseases); contact your health care provider for more information.

This is a basic guide. There are books and online resources with in-depth information, or contact your veterinarian.