

Parakeets

Budgerigars (also called Budgies or Parakeets) may be small birds, but they have huge personalities that will entertain you over and over again. They are a great pet for almost anyone who wishes for a bird they can tame and bond with. Your parakeet may even learn to talk!

One or two?:

Parakeets are social animals and enjoy human companionship. However, if your schedule does not allow you much time to spend with your bird you should consider keeping 2 birds together. On the flip side, if companionship for yourself is your goal 1 bird will bond with you quicker and stronger.

General Diet:

Parakeets are basically seed eaters in the wild so they can be fed a diet in captivity that mainly consists of many types of seeds as found in parakeet seed mixes. Pelleted diets are available as well.

Vitamins/Supplements:

Birds benefit from a vitamin/mineral supplement added to their food everyday.

Treats/Extra Foods:

Parakeets should be given some vegetables and fruit along with their regular diet. These can include cooked or raw corn, peas, carrots, dark lettuces (no iceberg), beans, apples, raisins, and even some cooked pasta. Basically anything good for you is good for them (just avoid avocado, asparagus, and anything sugary, salty, or greasy). Seed treats such as millet and treat sticks are great for parakeets! Not only do they give extra nutrition but can keep a bird busy for hours!

Housing:

Parakeets like a cage where they can flap their wings easily, and the bigger the cage the better for the bird. Parakeets should be kept in cages that have bars no more than 3/8ths of an inch wide. Luckily, there are many colors and styles to choose from and can be matched to the area that it will be placed. One feed cup and one water cup are basics with the cage along with perches and a tray on the bottom. Cage paper or bird litter is best to use in the tray. Never use colored newspaper, wood shavings, or corn cob bedding.

Sanitation/General Care:

Every day scrub out the water dish with a light dishwashing detergent and rinse well. Birds eat their seed mix from the top, so take off the top layer of seed every day that has been eaten, and then add more new seed and mix thoroughly. Change seed completely every 2-3 days. The tray should be cleaned at least once a week or more often depending on cage size and the number of birds in the cage. Perches should also be cleaned off (washed if plastic, scraped if wooden) once a week or as needed. At least once a month, clean out the cage completely by washing the bars, base, tray, and all toys and accessories made of plastic or metal thoroughly.

General Maintenance:

Most parakeets rarely need their nails or beaks trimmed, but owners should keep an eye on these just in case. Birds can also be offered special perches made out of a material that can help keep the nails short, and the bill is usually kept trimmed by the bird chewing on a beak conditioner and cuttlebone. Wings may be trimmed every 4-6 months or the bird will be able to fly. For bathing, lightly mist your pet with a plant mister, or offer a birdbath, at least three times a week. Only mist or offer a bath to your pet in the morning (as this is their natural time of day to bathe) and be sure your bird stays warm until he/she is dry.

Health Care:

Parakeets are generally very hardy and healthy birds and can live up to 8-10 years. They do not need any type of vaccines but should be checked by a veterinarian right away if they show any signs of illness such as lethargy and puffed up feathers, discharge from their nose, mouth, or eyes, a change in their feces, or lack of appetite. Their cage should be kept in an area that is free from all drafts. Place the cage away from any vents, windows, or doors. They are very susceptible to airborne pollutants such as cigarette smoke or excessive cooking odors. Burned teflon fumes can be fatal so it is not recommended to keep your bird in the kitchen.

Special Section - Taming:

Young parakeets should always be handled quietly and gently at first when taming. Young birds that are being tamed should have their wings trimmed (which is just like having your hair cut, it does not hurt at all). Then it is best to work with them in a small, quiet area. Keep them close to the floor, as they will try to fly. When the bird is on the floor, push a finger slowly and gently against its lower chest. Once the bird is on, raise the hand and quietly talk to the bird. It may fly off a few times but be patient.

Supplies checklist:

Cage with suitable dishes and perches	Books on Budgerigars (parakeets)
Cage paper or bird litter	
Parakeet seed and healthy treats	
Vitamin/mineral supplement	
Cuttlebone (to provide calcium)	
Beak conditioner	
Plenty of safe toys as parakeets are very playful and inquisitive	

This information is brought to you by the Pet Professionals at:

The Pet Advantage
350 Dorset St.
So. Burlington, Vermont
802-860-1714