

parakeet care sheet



Parakeets, also called budgerigars, are small members of the parrot family. They can become good mimics.

facts

scientific name:	Melopsittacus undulatus
average adult size:	7 inches long, head to end of tail
average life span:	10 to 20 years with proper care
diet:	herbivores

Bird pet parents should avoid non-stick cookware and appliances as they can release fumes hazardous to your bird's health.



Note: The information on this Care Sheet is not a substitute for veterinary care. If you need additional information, refer to the Sources section or contact your veterinarian as appropriate.

Developed with and approved by a qualified veterinarian.

diet

A well-balanced parakeet diet consists of:

- Specialized pellets should make up 60 to 70% of diet, plus fresh vegetables, fruits and small amounts of fortified seeds.
- Clean, fresh, filtered, chlorine-free water, changed daily.
- Do not feed birds avocado, fruit seeds, chocolate, caffeine or alcohol as these can cause serious medical conditions. Avoid sugar and high-fat treats.

feeding

Things to remember when feeding your parakeet:

- Fresh food and water should always be available.
- Vegetables and fruits not eaten within a few hours should be discarded.
- Treats should not exceed 10% of total food intake.

housing

- Parakeets acclimate well to average household temperatures, not to drop below 65°F or to exceed 80°F; be cautious of extreme temperature changes. The habitat should be placed off the

floor in an area that is well-lit and away from drafts.

- A habitat approximately 18" W x 18" D x 18" H, with strong metal bars spaced no greater than ½" apart, makes a good home for one parakeet. It is best to provide the largest habitat possible.
- Perches should be at least 4" long and ¾" in diameter; a variety of perch diameters to exercise feet and help prevent arthritis is recommended.
- A metal grate over the droppings tray will keep the bird away from droppings; line the droppings tray with habitat paper or appropriate substrate for easier cleaning. To avoid contamination, do not place food or water containers under perches.
- Parakeets can be kept alone to bond with pet parent or in pairs to bond with each other. Different types of birds should **not** be housed together.

normal behavior

- Parakeets are talkers, but their little voices are sometimes hard to hear.
- Active and need daily time out of their habitats to interact with family.
- Keep in pairs if unable to devote daily interaction time.
- Provide foraging toys, which promote important mental stimulation.

habitat maintenance

- Clean and disinfect the habitat and perches regularly with a 3% bleach solution; replace substrate or habitat liner weekly or more often as needed.
- Replace perches, dishes and toys when worn or damaged; rotate new toys into the habitat regularly.
- Ensure that there are no habitat parts or toys with lead, zinc or lead-based paints or galvanized parts as these can cause serious medical issues if ingested by your bird.
- Do not use a lot of cleaning agents around your bird as the fumes can be harmful. It is recommended to use a

natural cleaning product.

grooming & hygiene

- Provide filtered, chlorine-free, lukewarm water regularly for bathing; remove the water when done. As an alternative, mist the bird with water.
- Clipping flight feathers, when done correctly, can help prevent injury or escape; consult an avian veterinarian on what is best for your bird.
- Nails should be trimmed by a qualified person to prevent injury to the bird.

signs of a healthy animal

- Active, alert and sociable
- Eats and drinks throughout the day
- Dry nares and bright, dry eyes
- Beak, legs and feet normal in appearance
- Clean, dry vent
- Smooth, well-groomed feathers

red flags

- Beak swelling or accumulations
- Fluffed, plucked or soiled feathers
- Sitting on floor of habitat
- Wheezing or coughing
- Runny or discolored stools
- Favoring one foot when not sleeping
- Eye or nasal discharge
- Red or swollen eyes
- Loss of appetite

If you notice any of these signs, contact your veterinarian.

common health issues

Health Issue	Symptoms or Causes	Suggested Action
Chlamydia	Appetite loss, fluffed feathers, nasal discharge, lime green feces and conjunctivitis.	Seek immediate avian veterinary attention.
Diarrhea	Fecal portion of stool not formed. Multiple causes, from change in diet to internal parasites.	Consult your veterinarian and ensure proper diet.
Feather plucking	Bird plucks own feathers; may be due to boredom, poor diet or other illness.	Consult your veterinarian and relieve boredom with attention, new toys or more room.
Mites (scaly face and leg disease)	White deposits on eyes, beak, legs and feet.	Consult your veterinarian.

shopping list for needed supplies

- Appropriately sized habitat
- Habitat cover
- High-quality parakeet food
- Millet spray
- Cuttlebone
- Cuttlebone/millet holder
- Treats
- Habitat paper or litter
- Food and water dishes
- Variety of perches
- Variety of toys
- Bird bath
- Nail clippers and styptic powder
- Vitamins and supplements
- Play gym
- Book about parakeets

sources

Ask a store partner about Petco's selection of books on parakeets and the variety of private brand products available for the care and happiness of your new pet. All private brand products carry a 100% money-back guarantee.

Because all birds are potential carriers of infectious diseases, such as Chlamydiosis, always wash your hands before and after handling your bird or habitat contents to help prevent the potential spread of disease.

Pregnant women, children under the age of 5, senior citizens and people with weakened immune systems should contact their physician before purchasing or caring for birds and should consider not having a bird as a pet.

Go to [cdc.gov/healthypets](https://www.cdc.gov/healthypets) and [petco.com/caresheet](https://www.petco.com/caresheet) for more information about birds and disease.

This Care Sheet can cover the care needs of other species. Go to [petco.com](https://www.petco.com) for more information.

