

Feeding your Bird

A first time pet bird owner may be overwhelmed by the vast assortment of seeds, seed treats and other items that are sold on the market as "Bird Food" to stay healthy. Although the specific nutritional requirements for all pet species have not been determined, it is known that all birds require basically the same nutrients as other animals do. The task of properly feeding a pet bird

can be simplified if one takes into account the Basic Four Food Groups that have been developed as a guide for human dietary habits. Using altered proportions, one can select from each of

the Basic Four Food Groups for birds. Some foods that are of particular value to birds are suggested.

Give fresh water daily

Grains - Breads & Cereals Group

For B vitamins

Approximately 50% of the daily food consumption may be selections from this food group that includes seeds. Because many B vitamins are contained in the seed hulls (which the bird does not eat), other foods from this group are valuable to provide.

- Whole wheat bread
- Cooked brown rice
- Other whole grain products.

Fresh Vegetables and Fruit Group

For Vitamins A, C, minerals

Vegetables alone may account for approximately 45% of the dietary intake.

- Broccoli
- Carrots
- Pumpkin
- Endive
- Parsley
- Sweet Potato

Fruits are offered in only very limited amounts.

Fruit in combination with the remaining two food groups (Meat & Dairy), make approximately 5% of the daily intake.

- Apricots
- Apple
- Orange

Meat Group

For protein and fat

- Beef
- Chicken
- Tuna
- Other Fish
- Hard-cooked or scrambled eggs
- Peanuts or other mature legumes (e.g. navy beans, kidney beans).

Dairy Group

For calcium and protein

Excessive consumption of milk products by birds is not advised, but the calcium needs must be provided through other means (although birds do enjoy small amounts of yoghurt, cottage cheese and hard cheeses).

The greater the consumption of seed in the diet, the higher the need for supplementary calcium. This can be partially met by mineral supplements in the form of:

- Cuttlebone
- Oyster shell
- Mineral block

However, the amount of absorbable calcium available from these sources is limited and a bird may refuse to eat the above items altogether. A better alternative is to use a liquid calcium supplement (Calcivet) in the drinking water or mixed with other foods.

Feeding Tips

1. Carefully monitor TOTAL food consumption during a diet change.
2. Introduce very small pieces of a single new food at a time.
3. Gradually reduce the total volume of seed offered as consumption of other foods increases.
4. For adult birds, try offering cups of fresh food twice daily for 15-20 minute time periods rather than leaving food in the cage all day.
5. Vitamin supplements (e.g. Soluvet and Soluvet Liquid) should be supplied regularly via the drinking water or mixed with soft foods.
6. ALL food and water cups should be cleaned daily and spilled food removed from the cage.

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At Kellyville Pets, we encourage responsible pet ownership.

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