

Cockatiel Care Sheet



Biological Facts

- Cockatiel (*Nymphicus hollandicus*)
- Weight: 80-120 gm
- Sexual maturity: 6-12 months
- Avg. life span: 6 years
- Maximum recorded life span: 32 years
- Origins: Australia

Behavior

- Relatively quiet bird. Better known for whistling ability than for talking.
- Cockatiels that are parent-raised, but also exposed to regular human handling through weaning, grow to be tamer and better adjusted than those that are entirely handfed or parent-raised.
- Tamed birds readily adapt to new surroundings and activities – expose early to daily activities in your household as well as to other pets
- Are intelligent, curious, and easily amused with simple toys. They love to explore their surroundings
- Cockatiels are very social and require regular interaction with people in order to satisfy their sociable nature.
- Cockatiels may bond with humans, cage mates, toys, or other cage furnishings. Courtship, mating behavior and egg-laying commonly result.
- Foraging stations, puzzle-feeders, and “busy” toys provide necessary environmental enrichment and reduce the chance of feather picking, aggression, or other problems
- Birds with unrestricted access in the home will encounter numerous dangers: drowning, toxin ingestion, electrocution, injuries, etc. Cockatiels should be confined to their cage or housed in a “bird friendly” safe room when not under direct supervision.

Diet

- Seeds are high in fat and low in many essential nutrients. When offered a seed mixture, cockatiels usually chose the seeds with the highest fat content, and selectively pick those from the mix.
- “Vitamin enriched” seeds have a coating on the hulls, which is usually discarded by the bird.
- Formulated diets, on the other hand, are complete. Each pellet contains balanced nutrition, preventing a bird from feeding selectively.
- Cockatiels should be fed a diet consisting of 70-80% formulated pellets
- Dark green vegetables or fruits can be 10-30% of diet
- Treats (including seeds) should be limited to only 5% of the diet
- Clean, fresh water should be provided daily

Environment

- Enclosures should be as large as possible, with the bird able to fully extend it's wings and flap without touching the sides of the enclosure
- Cage should be clean, secure, safe and constructed of durable, non-toxic materials, with perches of various sizes
- Avoid placing perches directly over food or water to prevent contamination
- Access to natural light is preferred, drafty areas should be avoided.
- Some birds will require a night light in order to prevent episodes of "night fright" - frantic flapping and vocalization that can occur without provocation
- Birds outside of cages need constant supervision to avoid access to other pets, small children, and hazards in the home.

Preventive Care

- Physical examination every 6-12 months
 - Consult a veterinarian with experience in avian medicine if you have any questions or concerns about your bird's health.
- Annual fecal examination for parasites, yeast, and bacteria
- Vaccination for Polyomavirus, as directed by your veterinarian
- Blood work annually, as directed by your veterinarian
- Wing or nail trimming as needed

Common Medical Disorders

- Obstetrical problems (excessive egg-laying, egg-binding, egg-related peritonitis, yolk emboli)
- Liver disease
- Kidney disease
- Internal parasites
- Bacterial and yeast infections
- Obesity
- Feather picking
- Broken blood feathers