

everyone who talks to the bird will repeat the same phrase. Note: Both males and females may be taught to speak, so don't stop training your budgie if *he* turns out to be a *she*.

The next step is to open the cage door, making sure that your bird cannot escape. Gently place your hand inside talking quietly all the time, until the bird becomes accustomed to its presence and stops fluttering about the cage. Eventually, your budgie will walk across your palm, and will even perch on your finger.

Only when it is used to perching on your finger should you attempt to take it from the cage. First, make sure that all doors and windows are closed and fireplaces blocked. You should also draw curtains over all windows to prevent your bird from flying into the glass. All ornaments which might be knocked down by a flying budgie should be removed. Particularly hazardous are open toilets, ceiling fans and open pots on a stove.

You may keep your budgie from flying off your finger by gentle thumb pressure on its foot. Initially, you should withdraw it from the cage for two or three minutes at a time, extending the period until it is comfortable with the procedure.

Care must be taken not to startle the bird. If it starts flying around the room nervously, let it light. Then gently approach and try to pick the bird up. If it again takes off, don't chase it or weeks of gaining its confidence will be lost. Simply repeat the gentle approach until it hops back onto your fingers. This is also a good opportunity to begin feeding your bird its favorite foods by hand.

The cardinal rule on training is: Be kind; be gentle, be patient. Your budgie will respond in kind.

### Special Warning

It has been recently discovered that the "non-stick" coatings on many pots and pans will cause budgies and other birds to die if a pan is left on a hot stove with nothing in it. Rather than burning, the coating becomes transformed into a gas which is highly toxic to birds.



### Finally

This informational pamphlet is not a substitute for a good book. Visit your pet store for a wide selection of books on the responsible care and maintenance of your budgie.

#### MY BUDGIE

Budgie's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Purchased: \_\_\_\_\_

Purchased from: \_\_\_\_\_

Veterinarian: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Vet Checks	Date	Care Prescribed
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Food: \_\_\_\_\_

Type: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Frequency: \_\_\_\_\_

Owner: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_



A PUBLIC SERVICE OF THE PET INFORMATION BUREAU  
 PET INDUSTRY JOINT ADVISORY COUNCIL  
 1710 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W., WASHINGTON, D.C. 20036

FUNDING PROVIDED BY:



AMERICAN PET PRODUCTS MANUFACTURERS ASSOCIATION

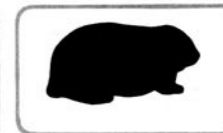
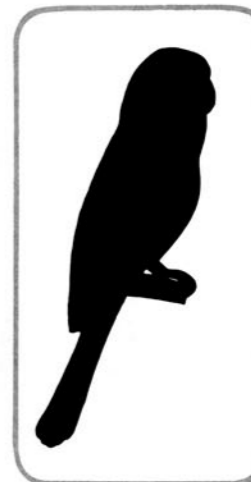


PET INDUSTRY DISTRIBUTORS ASSOCIATION



WESTERN WORLD PET SUPPLY ASSOCIATION

# TAKING CARE OF YOUR BUDGIE



PET INFORMATION BUREAU

"WE CARE ABOUT PET CARE"™

"WE CARE ABOUT PET CARE"<sup>™</sup> and we know you do, too!

That's why we're including this care and handling brochure with your new budgerigar (parakeet). This guide will answer many of your questions and will help you take good care of your budgie. Sometimes you will have to consult your local veterinarian on animal health problems. You, your veterinarian and your pet store form the team which will be responsible for your budgie's well-being during its lifetime.

A budgerigar is a friendly, cheerful companion for young and old alike, and is particularly suitable for apartments and other environments not conducive to larger pets. He or she is bright in appearance, personality and intelligence and will bring you many years of love, enjoyment and companionship.

Many budgies are classified as "bar-heads" which relates to the pattern of feathers across the top of the head that carries on down to the cere (band of flesh across the top of the beak). Bars indicate the age of the budgie since they gradually disappear beginning at about eight weeks. Full adult plumage is acquired when the bird is three to four months old. Some light colored budgies, such as Albinos and Lutinos, may not have discernible bars. Your budgie should be the picture of health, with clear eyes and glossy full plumage (unless he's moulting).

It is also difficult to guarantee the sex of a budgie until the bird is at least three months old. At this age, the cere will have turned blue for a cock or brown for a hen. Again, this does not hold true for Lutinos or Albinos.

### Taking Your Budgie Home

Your new pet will be placed in a special bird box so that you can take it home safely. Your pet store carries a wide variety of cages, and it would be a good idea to match your new pet to the proper cage for its needs. Any large cage having horizontal bars should be suitable. Horizontal bars are easier for budgies to grasp.

When bird and cage arrive in their new home, it is wise to follow a simple procedure prior to letting the budgie out of its box. First, situate the cage in a room which enjoys an even temperature, free of drafts. Position the

cage an adequate distance from windows so that the bird does not get too much heat from direct sunlight in the summer or too much cold in the winter.

It should also be placed at a reasonable height since budgies don't like being low. A high cage also is not as apt to being interfered with by other animals such as cats and dogs. The cage should be set up complete with food and water and a small sprinkling of seed on the floor to ensure that the budgie has enough to eat until it finds the feeder. After the bird is acclimated to its new home, seed should no longer be placed on the floor since it could become contaminated with fecal material.

When everything is ready, you should gently open the box and let the budgie walk into its new home. At first, the bird may seem bewildered and might flutter about wildly in the unfamiliar surroundings. If it doesn't settle down quickly, drape a cover over the top and sides of the cage to give it a feeling of security. After it has been quiet for a while, the cover may be removed.

Your bird should be left to itself the first few days (or week) to allow it to adjust to its new surroundings. As it regains its confidence, it will start to explore its new home. Very young birds may just sit on the perch or the floor of the cage for the first day. Total adjustment to the new environment may take a week. Don't forget to clean the cage frequently and scrape the perches. Wash and disinfect the cage occasionally to prevent the build-up of fecal material.

### Feeding

Budgies are easy to feed, and your pet shop can supply a high quality budgie feed mixture consisting of canary, white millet and panicum seeds. The seed dish should be washed, dried and refilled as often as necessary since it can become soiled with fecal material. Wash and refill water dishes everyday, particularly if vitamins are added to the water. Millet sprays can be provided in small quantities as a treat, but not in excess. Honey bells and seed sticks may also be offered.

Cuttlebone or a mineral block as a source of calcium should always be available as should a variety of fruits and vegetables. You can also try your budgie on breads, cheeses

and table food. A number of pelletized diets and vitamin supplements are also good for your budgie and are available at your pet store. During the early months of adjustment and training, you may find twice-a-day feedings helpful. If your budgie is not receiving fruits and vegetables frequently, consider supplementing its diet with vitamins. Your pet store can advise you on type and amount.

### Toys

It is a good idea to provide your new pet with one or two toys, as it adjusts to its new surroundings. Toys should be introduced gradually, starting with a ladder, perhaps, then on to others as the bird's interest develops. Try changing the toys rather than simply adding new ones. This gives variety without crowding the cage.

And, if your budgie will spend a great deal of time alone, consider buying another budgie. These little birds are gregarious by nature and welcome company in the form of birds of their own kind.

### Bathing

Like all other birds, budgies need moisture to soften the sheaths of their quills and to allow their new feathers to grow straight and strong. Many feather disorders are caused by feathers becoming too dry. One way of supplying necessary moisture is to spray your bird with a fine mist early enough in the day for its feathers to dry thoroughly prior to roosting at night. Many prefer to shower under the kitchen faucet. One caution: make sure the water is not too hot and use a gentle stream (a trickle). Best not to try this until your budgie is comfortable outside the cage (discussed further on).

### Health

Properly cared for, your pet will live a long and happy life, but two conditions commonly afflict budgies: colds and diarrhea.

Colds may be caused by chilling but may also be caused by infection. If your bird appears listless, wheezes and has its feathers fluffed up, it is reacting to cold. It's important that the bird be kept warm. If the symptoms persist after you have kept it warm for a day or two, consult your veterinarian. And, in the

future, make sure you don't subject your bird to drafts or chills.

Diarrhea is sometimes caused by feeding an excess of green food, moldy seed or food which has been contaminated by rodents or insects. It can also be caused by parasites and bacterial infections. Withhold fruits and vegetables. If the stool does not return to normal within a short period, seek veterinary care. Stool color should be dark green to black and well formed, surrounded by a white watery substance. The watery portion is the urate. A normal stool should resemble a bullseye. If the dark fecal portion is not formed, the bird has diarrhea. Diarrhea is debilitating and causes dehydration very fast in a budgie's small body.

Another problem which can arise with budgies is an infestation of red mites. These are parasites which feed on your bird's blood. They may often be found on the ends of bird cage perches where they rest during the day. They appear as a small red blob, and are easily killed with a spray available from your veterinarian or pet store.

### Covering Up At Night

If a room is kept at a constant temperature throughout a 24-hour cycle, there is little need to cover your bird. However, it is advisable to cover the cage if the room becomes much colder during the night. This will protect your pet and, once started, should be continued. Covering at night is particularly important because it provides darkness and assures the budgie a good night's sleep. Ten to twelve hours of darkness per day are recommended for budgies.

### Taming and Teaching Your Budgie To Talk

Two of the more delightful aspects of owning a budgie are training it to speak and teaching it to sit on your finger. But achieving each of these takes time and patience. To start, you should spend time each day next to the cage until your regular presence creates a feeling of confidence in your bird.

The first phrase you wish the bird to say should be repeated clearly and distinctly. It is also a good idea to have the phrase written on a card placed above the cage so that