

## shopping list for needed supplies

- appropriately sized habitat
- habitat cover
- book about parakeets
- 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
- grooming supplies
- vitamins and supplements
- play gym

## sources

Speak to an associate about the Petco library of books on parakeets .

Speak to an associate about our many private brand items available for the care and happiness of your pet.

Because all parakeets are potential carriers of infectious diseases, such as Chlamydiosis, always wash your hands before and after handling your parakeet and/or habitat contents to help prevent the potential spread of diseases. Work with your avian veterinarian on protocols to treat your bird should the bird contract Chlamydiosis.

Pregnant women, children under the age of 5 and people with weakened immune systems should contact their physician before purchasing and/or caring for a parakeet and should consider not having a parakeet as a pet. For more information regarding parakeets and disease, go to the Center for Disease Control at [cdc.gov/healthypets/](http://cdc.gov/healthypets/) and [petco.com/caresheet](http://petco.com/caresheet).

This care sheet can cover the care needs of other species. See [petco.com](http://petco.com) for more information.

# parakeet (budgie)

*melopsittacus undulatus*



## care sheet

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

### parakeet (budgie) facts:

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

***Bird owners 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, please refer to the sources on the following page or contact your veterinarian as appropriate.

### diet

A well-balanced parakeet diet consists of:

- Specialized pellets should make up 60-70% of diet, fresh vegetables and 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.
- Remember, treats should not exceed 10% of total food intake.

### housing

- Parakeets acclimate well to average household

temperatures, not 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 metal bars spaced no greater than 1/2" apart, makes a good home for one parakeets. A flight habitat is strongly recommended. It is best to provide the largest habitat possible.
- Perches should be at least 4" long and 3/8" in diameter; a variety of perch sizes 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 provide important mental stimulation.

### habitat maintenance

- Clean and disinfect the habitat and perches regularly; 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 is not necessary, but when done correctly it 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
- eye or nasal discharge
- red or swollen eyes
- loss of appetite

*If you notice any of these signs, please contact your exotic animal veterinarian.*

### common health issues

Health Issue	Symptoms or Causes	Suggested Action
chlamydia	appetite loss, fluffed feathers, nasal discharge, green stool.	seek immediate avian veterinary attention.
diarrhea	fecal portion of stool is not formed. Multiple causes from diet change to internal parasites.	consult with an avian veterinarian and ensure proper diet.
feather plucking	bird plucks own feathers; may be due to boredom, poor diet or other illness.	consult with an avian veterinarian and relieve boredom with attention, new toys or new space.
mites (scaly face and leg disease)	white deposits on eyes, beak, legs, and feet.	consult with an avian veterinarian.