

# BIRD NUTRITION

## **IMPROPER FEEDING IS THE CHIEF CAUSE OF DISEASE AND DEATH IN PET BIRDS!!**

A balanced diet consisting of a variety of foods is highly advised.

### **SEED:**

- Packaged commercial feeds are available and should constitute the majority of the diet.
- Different types of seeds should be offered.
- For example, 3-4 separate dishes containing pellet food (LaFeber's, Zupreem, Kaytee, Harrison's, Bonemzon), treat food, molting food, and/or song bird (finch & canary) food should be available.
- NEVER feed your bird a diet of strictly sunflower seeds!!

### **GREENS:**

- Greens are a valuable addition to your bird's diet.
- Common table greens may be used or backyard greens when available. Since greens are high in water and bulk content, a soft-green stool will be passed. Do not mistake this for diarrhea. If your bird has never eaten greens, it may tend to overeat at first. However, if fed consistently, it will eat only a small amount.
- Remember to wash all greens very well!!!
- Suggested greens include Dandelion leaves, fresh branches, etc.

### **FRUITS & VEGETABLES:**

These are a part of a balanced diet for a bird, but should never be over 25% of the diet. Again, it is important to wash the food

### **THOROUGHLY:**

Canned fruits should be avoided due to the high sugar content, which tends to cause diarrhea. Suggested fruits and vegetables include oranges, apples, green beans, peas, corn, etc. Various juices and nectars may also be given.

### **ANIMAL PROTEIN:**

This is most important in carnivorous species of birds, which may be actually fed mice but all birds have a protein need. This may be met by feeding boiled eggs (yolk, white, and shell crumbled together), cottage cheese, milk, or peanut butter.

### **VITAMINS:**

Vitamins can be added to the drinking water. Of special concern are vitamins A, D3, and B Complex.

### **MINERALS:**

Minerals are essential and should be supplied daily in the form of cuttlebones, mineral blocks, milk, oyster shell, or egg shell. Parakeets should also be supplied with a source of iodine.

Many birds develop poor eating habits and border on malnutrition. One method of adding variety and interest is to include table food. Since there are no foods that are harmful to birds, don't hesitate to try different foods. (Except those containing caffeine, such as chocolate or coffee. Caffeine is potentially toxic to birds.)

### **BASIC RULES FOR FEEDING BIRDS:**

- Avoid heavily spiced foods.
- Remove any uneaten food within several hours after feeding to prevent spoilage.



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941 625-6610

- Try to develop your bird's taste by flavoring the water with milk or fruit juices--then start on the solid fruit. New foods may be mixed with the seed mixture.
- Begin by introducing only small crumbs of a food.
- Do not overwhelm your bird by suddenly dumping a handful of tablescraps in the cage.
- Do not try to starve your bird into eating a new food. It will die in 48 hours!!!



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