

NUTRITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR:

PARROTS



Just like people, BIRDS ARE WHAT THEY EAT! A balanced diet is the single most important preventive medicine you can provide for maintaining your bird's health. Research has shown that the old habits of feeding seed and cuttlebone are just not enough. Your parrot (whether a macaw or budgie) needs a varied diet of protein, carbohydrate, fat, vitamins, and minerals - just as your body does. Parrots are also similar to people in that they like and need variety in their diet. They like all the tastes of sweet, sour, salty, and fruity.

Windsor Animal Hospital recommends feeding your parrot a daily balanced diet from the following 4 food groups:

- 1) SEED & GRAIN GROUP (Never more than 50% of your parrot's diet)
 - Be sure the seeds are fresh enough to germinate. If not they are empty nutritionally.
 - Match the size of seeds you buy with the beak size of your parrot. Large parrots get large seeds while little budgies get small seeds.
 - To sterilize, you can oven cook 2 cups of seed at 350 F for 10 minutes, or microwave 2 cups of seed, hi-power, for 6 minutes. **DO NOT FEED HOT SEED TO YOUR BIRD!**
 - *Windsor Animal Hospital* recommends you do not feed sunflower seeds to your birds as they are habit forming and often become the only food a bird will eat. This can lead to malnourishment and death.
 - Nuts should only be fed periodically due to their high fat content. Many birds love peanut butter.
 - Cereals (dry and cooked: Cream of Wheat®, Quaker Oats®), oats, whole wheat breads, cornbread, unsalted crackers, pasta noodles.
- 2) FRUIT & VEGETABLE GROUP (25-50% of your parrot's diet)
 - High percentages of what parrots eat in the wild.
 - Fresh, frozen (thawed), or cooked.
 - Wash all fresh fruits and vegetables thoroughly to remove pesticides.
 - Provide essential vitamins, especially vitamin A.
 - Vegetables highest in vitamin A are sweet potatoes, yams, corn, broccoli, spinach, chard, collard greens, carrots, red chili peppers, and dandelion greens.
 - Other vegetables birds are fond of include celery tops, beans, peas, rice, sprouts, onions, bell peppers, radishes, squash, cauliflower, sprouted seeds, and zucchini.
 - Well-liked fruits include apples, bananas, pears, oranges (and other citrus), berries, strawberries, grapes, and melons.
- 3) MEAT & DAIRY PRODUCT GROUP (25-50% of your parrot's diet)
 - This group gives protein, fats, and calcium to the diet.
 - Meats include cooked chicken bits and leg bones, cooked stringy beef, and bits of fresh bacon

- Dairy products include scrambled eggs, yogurt, cottage cheese, and hard cheeses.
- Pelleted foods include Monkey biscuit, Zupreme®, Bird Life Diet®, dry dog & cat foods.

4) VITAMINS & MINERALS (100% essential)

- Dry powdered supplements that are sprinkled over the bird's regular diet are preferred.
- Vitamins added to the drinking water often foul the taste of the water and cause birds not to drink. They also lose their potency in water after 24 hours and have to be changed often to be of any benefit.
- *Windsor Animal Hospital* recommends Super Preen® powder on the food.

Sample Breakfast: Fresh fruits, 2 types (change daily)
Vegetables 1 dark and leafy, 1 yellow. Cooked beans (change daily to weekly)
Dairy product and bread with peanut butter

Sample Dinner: Combination of seeds
Table foods of pasta, meats, vegetables, etc.
Pelleted food portion

- Suggestions:**
- Do not feed spoiled foods.
 - Clean out food bowls daily with soap and water.
 - Do not place food and water cups under perches (to avoid droppings).
 - If your house uses well water, use bottled water for your bird to avoid heavy metals and giardia (an intestinal parasite causing diarrhea).
 - Calcium deficient birds should be supplemented with one or more of the following (as prescribed by *Windsor Animal Hospital*):
 - Pelleted Trout Chow® (Purina)
 - Powdered D-Ca-Fos® (Fort Dodge)
 - Liquid NeoCalglucon® (Sardoz)
 - Injectable Ca
 - *Windsor Animal Hospital* does not recommend the feeding of grit.
 - *Windsor Animal Hospital* recommends that if you feed the following foods, you feed them in very small amounts as they can cause digestive upset: milk, avocados, tomatoes, and parsley.
 - *Windsor Animal Hospital* recommends you do not allow your bird to eat these hazardous foods: peach, apricot, nectarine or avocado pits, many houseplants, chocolate, hi-salt foods, hi-sugar foods, hi-fat foods, alcohol, and tobacco.
 - *Windsor Animal Hospital* does not recommend using the "pet store" antibiotics or "sick-bird food and water additives". If your bird becomes ill, increase the ambient temperature to 85 F, cover and darken the cage for 20 out of every 24 hours, and call *Windsor Animal Hospital* for an appointment.

