

Budgerigar (Parakeet)

Characteristics- Budgerigars are originally from Australia, living in large flocks. These little birds can be quite charming companions and make excellent pets. Males (usually have a blue cere or nasal area) are more boisterous and talkative. Females (usually light-colored or brown cere) tend to be normally calmer.

Behavior- Budgerigars can be quite busy and animated. Males will sometimes “socially” regurgitate to an object. Random regurgitation, however, may suggest a health problem. These birds enjoy the company of other budgerigars. They also may become fond of a single human.

Diet- Parakeet “mixes” are not balanced diets. These seed blends are typically loaded with fat, deficient in vitamins, minerals, and proteins. Factory enrichment of these seed mixes doesn’t lead to a balanced diet. Recommendation: Feed 80-90% of caloric intake with a formulated diet (pellets, crumbles), such as Harrison’s or Roudybush. Other national brands available include: Zupreem, Exact, Pretty Bird. Feed 10-20% of the caloric intake with: scant amount of seed, fresh leafy or orange-colored vegetables, starches (rice, bread, pasta, banana), small quantities of people food items (food groups from the kitchen). Grit or gravel is not recommended.



Environment- Toys and objects help occupy their time and space. Avoid homemade products which may be injurious or toxic. While exercise is beneficial, free flight should be avoided to prevent serious injuries. Mite preventatives are unnecessary and potentially harmful. Sandpaper perches should be avoided. We recommend newspaper or equivalent for cage bottoms. Good room ventilation is very important.

Health- Young budgerigars are sometimes affected by bacterial, yeast (Candida; Avian Gastric Yeast) or chlamydial (psittacosis agent) infections. Intestinal parasites, such as *Giardia*, can be harbored in normal-appearing birds. Mature budgerigars experience a high incidence of liver disease, cancer, and reproductive tract disease (females).

Young Budgerigar Checkup- In addition to a thorough physical examination, the following laboratory tests are recommended to screen your young budgerigar:

Complete Blood Count- examines the blood cells for internal infections

Gram Stain- examines a throat or stool sample for bacteria and yeast

Chlamydia Immunoassay- test of swab for psittacosis germ, which can be contagious to other birds and to humans

Fecal Parasite Exam- examines the stool for intestinal parasites.

Mature Budgerigar Checkup-

Complete Blood Count and Chemistry Profile- screens for disease and organ function

Gram Stain- checks for Avian Gastric Yeast

Fecal Parasite exam