

### **Cockatiel (*Nymphicus hollandicus*)**

**Characteristics-** Cockatiels are originally from Australia, living in large flocks. Cockatiels are excellent and popular pets. Males are more outgoing and talkative. In the normal grey, males have brighter head colors and lose wing and tail bars. Females tend to be normally quieter. In the normal grey, females retain tail and wing bars. Markings on other breeds are more difficult to distinguish.

**Behavior-** Cockatiels can be quite affectionate and animated. Males are more likely to talk and sing. Females can be very affectionate, but less outgoing. Mature females are more likely to hiss when annoyed. These birds enjoy the company of other cockatiels. They also may become fond of a single human.

**Diet-** Cockatiel “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 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. Young males are susceptible to tail head injuries from leaping. Watch out for cats and small dogs. Mite preventatives are unnecessary. We recommend newspaper or equivalent for cage bottoms. Good room ventilation is very important.

**Health-** Young cockatiels are sometimes affected by bacterial, yeast (*Candida*, dermal yeasts, Avian Gastric Yeast) or *Chlamydophila* (Chlamydia) infections. Intestinal parasites, such as *Giardia*, can be harbored in normal-appearing birds. Mature cockatiels experience a high incidence of liver disease, kidney problems, and reproductive tract disease (females).

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

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 Exam- examines the stool for intestinal parasites and Avian Gastric Yeast.

**Mature Cockatiel Checkup-** In addition to a thorough physical examination, the following laboratory tests are recommended to screen your mature cockatiel:

Complete Blood Count/Chemistry Panel- blood cell and organ analysis.

Fecal Exam- examines the stool for intestinal parasites and Avian Gastric Yeast.

Gram stain in some cases

Whole body radiograph with sedation