



## General care

Properly cared for your parrot will live a long and happy life. Early signs of illness include loose droppings, discharge from the nostrils, laboured breathing, feathers raised to give a puffed up appearance, resting with head under the wing and both feet on the perch. If you are at all worried about your parrots health, contact your vet.

**Feathers** - These should not be allowed to become too dry. You should use a suitable fine mist spray, together with a special solution to spray on. Your pet shop will advise. Some parrots do enjoy a bath but not all.

**Colds** - Chilling causes colds. The bird will be listless, with feathers fluffed up and wheezing. Keep it warm and do not bath. Consult your vet.

**Diarrhoea** - This is commonly caused by an excess of green food, mouldy or contaminated food, a change in diet or lack of fresh water. Keep him warm, make sure he has plenty of fresh water and consult your vet.

**Mites** - Usually the red mite, this is a parasite which feeds on birds' blood, causing itching and weight loss. Mites are easy to destroy with a suitable spray. Your pet shop or vet will advise.

**Beaks and nails** - Should they become overgrown you will need to get expert help.

**Feather plucking** - This can be due to a poor diet, lack of exercise or stimulation. Spend time with your cockatiel and provide novel toys. If the condition persists, consult your vet.



## Shopping List

Cage and cage stand	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cage cover	<input type="checkbox"/>
Water pot	<input type="checkbox"/>	Seed pot	<input type="checkbox"/>
Perches	<input type="checkbox"/>	Seed guard	<input type="checkbox"/>
Food	<input type="checkbox"/>	Bath	<input type="checkbox"/>
Toys	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sand/sand sheets	<input type="checkbox"/>
Vitamin drops	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cuttle fish	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mineral block	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pet safe disinfectant	<input type="checkbox"/>
A good book on parrot care	<input type="checkbox"/>		

***This leaflet is produced by the Pet Care Trust, the national charity that promotes the benefits of pet ownership and education. For more information, go to [www.petcare.org.uk](http://www.petcare.org.uk), or phone 01234 273933.***



**Remember you must never release your pet into the wild.**

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# CARING FOR YOUR PARROT

Including Parakeets, African Greys and Amazons.

Parrots make interesting and enjoyable pets. However a single caged bird will require a lot of attention and stimulus if it is not to become bored and frustrated.

Parrots are natural acrobats and mimics. Some can learn simple words and phrases and are excellent whistlers.

Many parrots have a long lifespan and are therefore a long term commitment.





## Choosing and buying a parrot

A healthy parrot should:

- ❖ Be bright and alert.
- ❖ Have no signs of discharge from the eyes or nostrils.
- ❖ Have a clean vent area.
- ❖ Have feathers flush to the body and not fluffed up.
- ❖ Have no signs of breathing problems.
- ❖ Have fluent movement with no signs of lethargy.



## Housing

Although parrot cages make suitable homes for short-tailed parrots, long-tailed varieties should be kept in an outside aviary or an indoor flight, as can short-tailed parrots. A single caged bird will require a lot of attention and stimulus if it is not to become bored and frustrated (a common cause of feather plucking). If the bird is to be left on its own for long periods it is better to give it a companion.

Love birds should always be kept in pairs or small groups. A roomy cage is a necessity unless housed in an aviary and must be large enough for your parrot to stretch its wings and fly from perch to perch. Parrots are climbing birds so it is preferable to choose a cage with horizontal bars. A removable tray will make cleaning easier.

You should avoid putting the cage in draughts, direct sunlight or in damp or humid conditions. Sandsheets or cage bird sand should be placed in the bottom of the cage and replaced regularly. The cage should be furnished with perches of different diameter and one or two toys. Do not overcrowd the cage. Try and buy a selection of toys and rotate them to avoid boredom.

Remove droppings daily. The cage and furnishings should be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected with a pet safe disinfectant weekly. Do not place perches directly above food and water pots.

Outside aviaries must have a sheltered section to provide protection from wind, rain and strong sunlight and for many species may need to be heated. This is where you should position the roosting site (the highest perch or nest box) and the food containers. The cage/aviary can be furnished with non-

poisonous wood branches such as fruit wood which will add interest and aid with keeping the beak short.

### Introducing your parrot to its new home

Before introducing your parrot to its new home fill the food and water pots and sprinkle a little extra onto the floor to ensure that he has enough to eat until he finds its seed pots.

Make sure all windows and doors are closed and fires are guarded. Gently open one end of the carry box and let your parrot walk into its new home. If he appears anxious or does not settle drape a cloth over three sides of the cage until he settles. This can be gradually removed as he settles. Leave him to adjust quietly. Only cover the cage at night if the room temperature is likely to fall.



## Feeding and water

It is important that you give your parrot a varied diet. Each day you should offer food from the following categories.

**Cereals** - A good quality parrot mixture is available from your pet shop. Check the seed dishes daily and remove any empty husks. Refill as necessary.

**Fruits** - Apples, bananas, oranges, grapes, pears, cherries

**Vegetables** - Celery, carrots, beetroot, lettuce, cabbage, spinach, fresh peas and beans

**Supplements** - Cuttlefish is a source of calcium and helps to keep the beak worn down. A mineral block will provide essential minerals and trace elements. Vitamin drops should be added to the water.

Millet seed can be given as a treat as can honey bells and seed bars. Fresh foods must be thoroughly washed before being offered. Food and water pots should be washed regularly.

**Fresh water should always be available.**