

cockatiel

care sheet



Cockatiels are small, crested members of the parrot family. They are known for their mellow nature. Gray is the most common color, but they are also available in pearl, white-faced, white-faced pearl, lutino, pied and more color variations.

facts

scientific name:	Nymphicus hollandicus
average adult size:	11 to 14 inches long, head to end of tail
average life span:	up to 25 years with proper care
diet:	herbivores

Bird pet parents should avoid non-stick cookware and appliances as they can release fumes hazardous to your bird's health.



Note: The information on this Care Sheet is not a substitute for veterinary care. If you need additional information, refer to the Sources section or contact your veterinarian as appropriate.

Developed with and approved by a qualified veterinarian.

diet

A well-balanced cockatiel diet consists of:

- Specialized pellets should make up 60 to 70% of diet, plus fresh vegetables and fruits and small amounts of fortified seeds.
- Clean, fresh, filtered, chlorine-free water, changed daily.
- Do not feed birds avocado, fruit seeds, chocolate, caffeine or alcohol as these can cause serious medical conditions. Avoid sugar and high-fat treats.

feeding

Things to remember when feeding your cockatiel:

- Fresh food and water should always be available.
- Vegetables and fruits not eaten within a few hours should be discarded.
- Treats should not exceed 10% of total food intake.

housing

- Cockatiels acclimate well to average household temperatures, not to drop below 65°F or to exceed 80°F; be cautious of extreme temperature changes. The habitat should be placed off the

floor in an area that is well-lit and away from drafts.

- A habitat approximately 24" W x 24" D x 30" H, with metal bars spaced no greater than ½" apart, makes a good home for one cockatiel. It is best to provide the largest habitat possible.
- Perches should be at least 5" long and ½" in diameter; a variety of perch diameters to exercise feet and help prevent arthritis is recommended.
- A metal grate over the droppings tray will keep the bird away from droppings; line the droppings tray with habitat paper or appropriate substrate for easier cleaning. To avoid contamination, do not place food or water containers under perches.
- Cockatiels can be kept alone to bond with their pet parent or in pairs to bond with each other. Different types of birds should **not** be housed together.
- Birds should be socialized daily by the pet parent.

normal behavior

- Cockatiels are known for mimicking repetitive sounds and noises.
- Bond easily with their human companions.
- Parent-raised cockatiels will require some time to acclimate to human handling.
- Provide foraging toys, which promote important mental stimulation.

habitat maintenance

- Clean and disinfect the habitat and perches regularly with a 3% bleach solution; replace substrate or habitat liner weekly or more often as needed.
- Replace perches, dishes and toys when worn or damaged; rotate new toys into the habitat regularly.
- Ensure that there are no habitat parts or toys with lead, zinc or lead-based paints or galvanized parts as these can cause serious medical issues if ingested by your bird.
- Do not use a lot of cleaning agents around your bird as the fumes can be harmful. It is recommended to use a

natural cleaning product.

grooming & hygiene

- Provide filtered, chlorine-free, lukewarm water regularly for bathing; remove the water when done. As an alternative, mist the bird with water.
- Clipping flight feathers, when done correctly, can help prevent injury or escape; consult an avian veterinarian on what is best for your bird.
- Nails should be trimmed by a qualified person to prevent injury to the bird.

signs of a healthy animal

- Active, alert, and sociable
- Eats and drinks throughout the day
- Dry nares and bright, dry eyes
- Beak, legs and feet normal in appearance
- Clean, dry vent
- Smooth, well-groomed feathers

red flags

- Beak swelling or accumulations
- Fluffed, plucked or soiled feathers
- Sitting on floor of habitat
- Wheezing or coughing
- Runny or discolored stools
- Favoring one foot when not sleeping
- Eye or nasal discharge
- Red or swollen eyes
- Loss of appetite

If you notice any of these signs, contact your veterinarian.

common health issues

Health Issue	Symptoms or Causes	Suggested Action
Chlamydiosis	Appetite loss, fluffed feathers, nasal discharge, lime green feces, conjunctivitis.	Seek immediate avian veterinary attention.
Conjunctivitis	Red eyes, tearing; closed, puffy eyes.	Consult with an avian veterinarian and wipe eyes with warm water.
Diarrhea	Fecal portion of stool not formed; multiple causes, from change in diet to internal parasites.	Consult with an avian veterinarian and ensure proper diet.

shopping list for needed supplies

- Appropriately sized habitat
- Habitat cover
- High-quality cockatiel food
- Millet spray
- Cuttlebone
- Cuttlebone/millet holder
- Treats
- Habitat paper or litter
- Food and water dishes
- Variety of perches
- Variety of toys
- Bird bath
- Nail clippers and styptic powder
- Vitamins and supplements
- Play gym
- Book about cockatiels

sources

Ask a store partner about Petco's selection of books on cockatiels and the variety of private brand products available for the care and happiness of your new pet. All private brand products carry a 100% money-back guarantee.

Because all birds are potential carriers of infectious diseases, such as Chlamydiosis, always wash your hands before and after handling your bird or habitat contents to help prevent the potential spread of disease.

Pregnant women, children under the age of 5, senior citizens and people with weakened immune systems should contact their physician before purchasing or caring for birds and should consider not having a bird as a pet.

Go to cdc.gov/healthypets and petco.com/caresheet for more information about birds and disease.

This Care Sheet can cover the care needs of other species. Go to petco.com for more information.

