

GUIDE TO CARING FOR COCKATIELS

FOOD AND WATER

A good quality cockatiel mixture or pellet food should be available from your pet shop. Check the food dishes daily, removing any empty seed husks, and refill as necessary.

Millet seed can be given as a treat, as can honey bells and seed bars. Fresh, thoroughly-washed green food may be given, such as chickweed and dandelion, but be very careful not to over feed.

Your bird will also require a good supply of mineralised or oyster shell grit, which helps to digest their food. Cuttlefish bones should be supplied too, as it is a source of calcium and helps to keep the beak worn down and maintain strong bones.

Bird-specific vitamin supplements are available and may be added to the drinking water or mixed with fruit or vegetables.

Fresh water should always be available.

PET CODE OF PRACTICE

Never release a pet (companion animal) into the wild. It is illegal and for most species this will lead to an untimely and possibly lingering death, as they are not native to this country. Any animals or plants that do survive might be harmful to the environment. This includes the need to properly dispose of soiled substrate, so that eggs and live food can't escape into the wild.

SHOPPING LIST

- cage and cage stand
- cage cover
- food
- seed pot and seed guard
- water pot
- perches
- bath
- toys
- grit
- sand/sand sheets
- cuttlefish
- mineral block
- pet-safe disinfectant
- Cockatiel care book



THE FIVE ANIMAL WELFARE NEEDS

The Animal Welfare Act 2006 means all pet owners have a legal duty of care to their pets. Anyone who is cruel to an animal or is found not to be providing the five animal welfare needs, as listed below, can be fined and sent to prison.

- 1 Environment:** pets should be given the correct housing according to its size, this includes shelter, space to exercise and a secure, comfortable place to rest.
- 2 Diet:** pets should be offered the correct type and volume of food to cover all their nutritional needs alongside access to clean, fresh water.
- 3 Behaviour:** all pets should be allowed to exhibit normal behaviour patterns and should be provided with the facilities to do so.
- 4 Company:** some animals require the company of their own kind, whilst others should be kept on their own.
- 5 Health:** all animals should be protected from pain, suffering, injury and disease, and given veterinary treatment if they become sick or injured.



This leaflet is produced by The Pet Charity, a national charity which promotes the joy and benefits of pet ownership.

To show your support for The Pet Charity please visit our JustGiving donation page at:
www.justgiving.com/thepetcharity



These organisations support the aims of The Pet Charity to promote the welfare and responsible keeping of pet animals



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the
pet
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For joy, health & companionship



Cockatiels are natural acrobats and mimics. They can learn simple words and phrases and are excellent whistlers.

Originally a native of the hot, dry Australian interior, all cockatiels for sale in the UK are now bred in this country.

THE PET CHARITY GUIDE TO CARING FOR COCKATIELS

Cockatiels are communal birds that make interesting and intelligent pets. The normal colour is grey but there are variations such as white, cinnamon, pied, silver or lutino (pale yellow).

You can expect to have the companionship of these fascinating birds for twelve to fourteen years, so you must be sure you're ready for a long-term commitment.

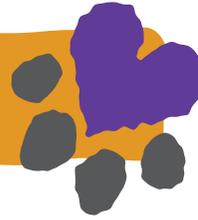
GENERAL CARE

- **Feathers:** you can use a suitable fine mist spray together with a special solution to spray on, your pet shop can advise you on suitable products. Some cockatiels do enjoy a bath, but not all of them.
- **Colds:** the bird will be listless, with feathers fluffed up and wheezing if it catches a cold. Keep him warm, do not bath and consult with your vet immediately.
- **Wet droppings:** this can be caused by an excess of green, mouldy or contaminated food, a change in diet, a lack of fresh water or an underlying illness. Keep him warm, make sure he has plenty of fresh water and consult your vet.
- **Mites:** this is a parasite that feeds on birds' blood causing itching, weight loss and feather loss. Mites are easy to destroy with a suitable spray and your pet shop or vet will advise.
- **Beaks and nails:** an iodine block can help keep your birds' beaks trim. If you suspect your cockatiels' nails and beaks are too long seek expert advice.
- **Feather plucking:** this can be due to many reasons such as a poor diet, internal diseases, lack of exercise or stimulation. Spend time with your cockatiels and provide them with toys for exercise and entertainment. If the condition persists consult your vet.

If you are worried about the health of your cockatiels consult with your vet. It is recommended to seek a vet that has experience with birds.

DID YOU KNOW?

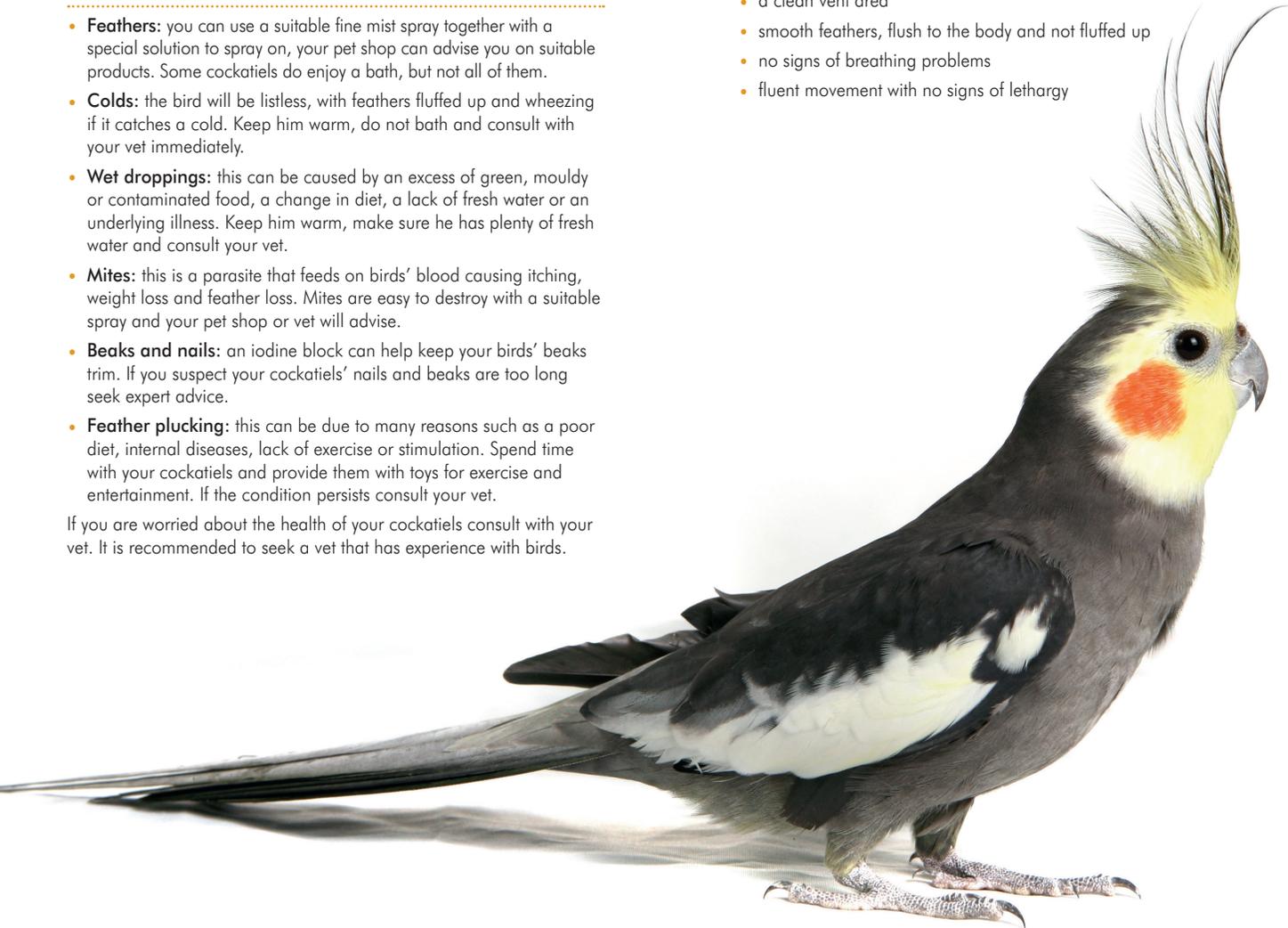
In an aviary cockatiels will mix with canaries, budgies, and some small parrots.



CHOOSING YOUR COCKATIEL

A healthy cockatiel should have:

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



HOUSING

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. In an aviary cockatiels will mix with canaries, budgies, and some small parrots, but not with the larger parrots.

For indoor cockatiels, a roomy cage is advisable and should be large enough for your birds to stretch their wings and fly from perch to perch. Cockatiels are climbing birds so it is preferable to choose a cage with horizontal bars. Cages must be easy to clean and must not be made from, or galvanised with, zinc. Avoid putting the cage in draughts, direct sunlight or in damp/humid conditions. Only cover the cage at night if the room temperature is likely to fall.

The cage should be furnished with perches of different thickness so the cockatiels can exercise their feet. Do not place perches directly above food and water pots. Put a few toys inside the cage but do not overcrowd it. Try buying a selection of toys and rotating them to avoid boredom.

Sand sheets or cage bird sand should be placed in the bottom of the cage and replaced regularly. The cage and furnishings should be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected with a pet safe disinfectant weekly, although droppings should be removed daily. A removable tray will make cleaning easier.

Outside aviaries must have a sheltered section to provide protection from wind, rain and strong sunlight. This is where you should position the roosting site (the highest perch or nest box) and the food containers.

Aviaries should also have a paved floor with a sunken wire mesh to prevent vermin and a double-door entry system for added safety.

INTRODUCING A COCKATIEL TO THEIR NEW HOME

Always take your birds home in a carry box, not in a cage. Before introducing your cockatiel to their new home, fill the food and water pots and sprinkle a little extra onto the floor, to ensure they have enough to eat until they find the 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 cockatiel walk into their new home. If they appear anxious or do not settle, drape a cloth over three sides of the cage until they settle. Leave them to adjust to their new setting quietly for a few hours.

To find out more interesting facts and advice on keeping budgerigars, why not visit The Parrot Society UK website at:

www.theparrotsocietyuk.org

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