

Parakeet Care Sheet



Difficulty of care:
Beginner

Average lifespan:
10-12 years with proper care

Average adult size:
7" long, from head to end of tail

Diet:
Grainivorous (grain-eaters)

Minimum habitat size:
18" W x 18" D x 18" H



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Supply Checklist

- Appropriately sized habitat (at least 18" W x 18" D x 18" H)
- High-quality pelleted parakeet food
- Millet spray (as a treat)
- Cuttlebone
- Cuttlebone/millet holder
- Treats
- Habitat paper or litter
- Food and water dishes
- Perches
- Toys
- Bird bath
- Grooming supplies
- Play gym
- UV light

Habitat

Environment

- Cages should be at least 18" W x 18" D x 18" H for a single bird.
- The space between the cage's bars should be a half-inch apart or smaller to prevent birds from escaping or getting their head or legs stuck.
- The habitat should be large enough for the parakeet to stretch and flap their wings comfortably.
- Homemade habitats or any habitat made with wood or galvanized wire are not recommended. These materials can expose birds to potentially toxic chemicals that can cause serious medical problems if ingested.

Bedding

- The bottom of a parakeet's habitat should have a removable metal grate so droppings can fall below the bird's feet.
- Line the tray at the base of the habitat with habitat paper or other paper-based bedding. This will help keep the environment clean and minimize dust.

Perches

- Provide parakeets with perches of assorted sizes, heights, textures, and materials.
- Perches should be at least 4 inches long and 3/8-inch in diameter.

- Do not place perches above the bird's water or food bowl—waste droppings will land there.

Lighting

- Birds need exposure to ultraviolet (UV) light to produce vitamin D in their skin so they can absorb dietary calcium.
- Glass windows filter out UV light, so placing a parakeet's habitat next to an indoor window is not enough.
- Birds can get natural UV exposure by spending time outside in an escape-proof outdoor cage when weather permits.
- Birds should never be left unattended while outside and should not be placed in direct sunlight.
- To supplement UV exposure, shine a full-spectrum UV light designed for birds on your parakeet's habitat for 10–12 hours each day.

Toys

- Toys may be made from cardboard, paper, soft wood, or plastic too hard for parakeets to chew off and ingest.
- Rotate toys regularly to prevent boredom.
- Toys should not have small parts that can be removed and swallowed.
- Cuttlebones provide calcium and other trace minerals in a bird's diet.

Habitat

Water and Food Dishes

- Dry food, fresh food, and water should all be offered in separate dishes.
- Water dishes should be large enough for the parakeet to bathe in.

Cleaning and Maintenance

- Spot-clean your parakeet's habitat daily, removing any soiled material and discarded food.
- Water and food bowls must be washed daily.
- Substrate, bedding, and habitat liners should be replaced at least once a week.
- Perches, dishes, and toys should be replaced when worn or damaged.



Diet and Nutrition

- Parakeets should always have access to fresh, clean water.
- A nutritionally complete and balanced pelleted food should make up at least 60–70% of a parakeet's diet.
- Treats, vegetables, and fruits may be fed in limited quantities. Treats should not make up more than 10% of a parakeet's diet.

Parakeets enjoy and can safely eat a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables, including:

- Berries
- Melons
- Papaya
- Sweet potatoes
- Bell peppers
- Broccoli
- Pea pods

Foods to Avoid

- Avocados
- Fruit seeds
- Chocolate
- Caffeine
- Alcohol
- Treats high in salt or fat

General Care

Avoid using nonstick cookware and other appliances with a nonstick coating (such as Teflon™). Nonstick coatings have a polymer called polytetrafluoroethylene (PTFE). When heated, PTFE releases colorless, odorless fumes that can kill pet birds if inhaled.

Water dishes should be large enough for the parakeet to bathe in. Pet parents can groom birds that do not regularly bathe themselves by gently misting them with warm water from a clean spray bottle a few times a week.

Nail and Beak Care

Nails must be trimmed on an as-needed basis, which can range from every few weeks to months. Nails should be trimmed by a trained professional, avian veterinarian, or someone otherwise trained to trim birds' nails to prevent injury.

Most birds will not need to have their beaks trimmed; they should stay in good condition with daily use.



Veterinary Care

Parakeets should see a veterinarian who has experience with birds every year. A healthy parakeet has:

- Ideal body condition
- Smooth, brightly colored feathers
- Clear and bright eyes
- Nares (nostrils) with no discharge or discoloration
- Smooth healthy skin
- Clean vent
- Formed droppings that are a green-brown color with a small amount of white

Contact your vet if you notice any of the following:

- Abnormal behavior or appearance
- Watery, loose, or discolored droppings
- Vents that are moist or have fecal matter sticking to the feathers
- Sneezing
- Nasal discharge or discolored feathers over the nares
- Tail bobbing
- Open mouth breathing
- Overgrown beak or nails
- Growths, swellings, or discoloration throughout the body, such as the skin, legs, feet, wings, and/or face
- Broken, missing, or bleeding feathers
- Seizures

- Weakness
- Lack of balance
- Lack of appetite

Common illnesses in parakeets include:

- Tumors
- Goiters
- Hypovitaminosis A (low levels of vitamin A)
- Parasites (especially mites)
- Obesity
- Liver disease
- Bumblefoot or other foot disorders
- Psittacosis
- Osteoarthritis

Parakeet care sheet on PetMD.com:

