

# OMAR'S EXOTIC BIRDS™

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## CARING FOR YOUR NEW BIRD

Congratulations! Whether this is your first bird or your latest addition, there are a few things you should know about the care of your bird.

### DIET

What do you feed a parrot? Not just seed and water! The best set-up for your bird is to have 3 dishes: one for a seed mix, one for water, and one for fruit, vegetables, miscellaneous treats and table food. You should give your bird fresh food every day. We recommend our Premium seed mixes which have seed, pellets, fruit and nuts. We also recommend adding a powdered vitamin and mineral supplement for all birds. A Calcium supplement should also be given for African Grey Parrots, Toucans, birds that are molting and all egg laying birds. People foods high in Vitamin A, are especially good for Amazons.

Instead of filling the seed mix dish full to the brim, try to give your bird only as much feed as it will eat in one day. The water dish must be cleaned thoroughly with soap and hot water every day and sometimes twice a day if soiled with food or feces. Omar's does not recommend the use of water tubes because they can promote bacteria if not cleaned often enough, causing illness. If you use a water tube, purchase a brush that you can clean it with, and be sure to wash the tube daily with soap and hot water.

Everyday you should serve your bird a variety of fruits, vegetables and treats. We thoroughly rinse off and serve all fresh fruits and vegetables raw. The bird will get more nutrients if raw. If you serve cooked or even thawed frozen fruits and vegetables, they spoil much quicker, so make sure you remove them after an hour or so. Remember to also remove the wet food from the floor of the cage too. If you are serving dinner and wish to share cooked foods with your bird, pick up what's left over in its cage when you clear off the table. Try our Mom's Healthy snack mix as a treat and Mom's Nutty Noodle as a cooked food treat. If your bird does not like different foods, there are creative ways to introduce them, such as a stainless steel skewer where you hang the fruit rather than put it in the dish. Some smaller birds will try some new foods if you sprinkle a commercial egg food mix on it.

Here is a partial list of the fruits, vegetables and "table foods" you may try serving your bird:

Apples	Oranges	Honeydew	Corn	Yams	Bell Peppers
Papaya	Cantaloupe	Raspberries	Zucchini	Cauliflower	Chili Peppers
Pears	Apricots	Kumquats	Spinach	Bok Choy	Sweet Potatoes
Pineapple	Kiwi	Grapes	Broccoli	Nectarines	Fava Beans
Cranberries	Bananas	Peaches	Cucumber	Peas	Green Beans
Plums	Mango	Blueberries	Kale	Carrots	Brussels Sprouts

Cooked Rice	Cooked Beans	Cooked Squash	Mashed Potatoes	Macaroni & Cheese
Cooked Chicken	Spaghetti	Scrambled Eggs (with shell)		Wheat Bread

## **DO NOT FEED YOUR BIRD THESE ITEMS NOR USE TEFLON**

Avocado (sometimes can be fatal to birds), Chocolate (a chemical in chocolate causes seizures and sometimes death), heavily salted or greasy foods, apple seeds or fruit pits, such as Peach pits, Cherry pits, Nectarine pits, etc. As humans do, Birds can become addicted to the caffeine in coffee and tea, so be very careful if you let your bird drink any caffeinated beverages. Also, NO Alcohol for birds-it can be fatal. Use common sense when feeding your bird; if it's not healthy for you, it's not good for your bird. Overheating or burning Teflon pans can be toxic to your birds. Self-cleaning ovens are also toxic to birds when used. Remove birds from the home completely when cleaning your oven.

## **BATHING**

Many people are afraid to bathe their bird because it is too cold, or because the bird does not like it. Birds need water and humidity to keep their feathers looking good. Birds that do not get enough baths are more likely to chew or pluck their feathers, so make it a habit to bathe your bird at least once a week. If it is cold outside, be sure to bathe the bird indoors in a warm room with no drafts. If the bird is healthy, bathing during the winter months will not make it sick.

### **A couple of ways to bathe your bird:**

1. Spray your bird with a spray bottle of water. Set the nozzle to mist. Cockatoos, Cockatiels and African Grey Parrots have a powder-base to their feathers and should only be bathed with water, not commercial sprays. If your bird is scared of the bottle, take your time introducing it to your bird.
2. Take your bird into the shower with you. Do this every time you shower. First, take your bird into the bathroom and let it sit on top of the shower door or curtain rod and get used to the noise and the room. When you think that it is calm enough to go near the water, just hold the bird at the edge of the spray, and only for a few seconds. Work up to longer periods of time closer to the water. Most birds will like the shower within a few times and will drench themselves.

If it is cool and you wish to dry your bird, use the blow dryer on a cool or warm setting. Hold the blow dryer at least 12-15 inches away and put your hand in between the blow dryer and your bird periodically so you can monitor the temperature of the warm air to make sure it is not too hot for the bird. Until the bird likes it, which it should after exposing it to the water a few times, talk to the bird and make it fun so it begins to look forward to this time with you.

## **GROOMING**

Your bird's wings and toenails should be checked and trimmed approximately every 2 months. If your bird's wings were clipped recently and it has also just finished molting, you may need to have the bird's wings trimmed in as little as 3 weeks. Beaks should only be filed if necessary. We have a high speed Dremmel and nail files that we use for the nails and beak.

If you wish to bring your bird in for grooming, please call the store (same day is fine) for an appointment, and bring a clean towel every time you bring your bird in for any type of grooming. If you use a towel in your bird's carrier, be sure to bring an extra towel for the groomer to use. Please make sure to bring your bird in a carrier as it may be less stressful for your bird.

## **CAGES**

It is better for your bird to have a cage that is too large than one that is too small. Your bird should be able to flap its wings inside of the cage without touching both sides of the cage. It is also good to have more than one perch in the cage so your bird may climb around and exercise when it is inside the cage. Food bowls should be positioned so that the bird cannot sit on them and get them dirty. Some birds need padlocks or quick-links on the cage doors because they are escape artists. When looking for a cage for your bird, be sure to pick one that is roomy and easy to clean. The new cages that we sell are powder-coated with a safe, non toxic paint, which is easier to clean. Stainless steel cages are longer lasting and prevent chipping of paint due to the bird chewing the cage. Purchase a cage with a grill on the bottom to keep your bird away from its feces or old food.

## **TOYS**

Be sure your bird has lots of interesting toys. Some birds are afraid of new toys. If this happens, the best thing to do is to show the bird the new toy, but don't put it inside the cage, just set it down near the cage. Every time you have the chance, pick the toy up and show it to your bird and tell your bird how neat this

new toy is. After a few days, try hanging the toy on the outside of the cage, down low. Move the toy into the cage when you feel the bird is no longer afraid of it. Be sure to rotate your bird's toys so they can experience variety. If the bird has a favorite, then leave that one, but replace the others. Get toys of different types, textures and colors. Foraging toys are also good.