

## FOOD AND WATER

In the wild, budgies feed on a variety of seeds, including seedling grasses and leaves of plants. Your pet budgie will require a good mixture of seeds to ensure they are getting all the nutrients they need – a good quality budgie mixture should be available from your pet shop. Check the seed dishes daily, removing any empty husks, and refill as necessary. Both the food and water pots will need washing regularly.

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



## 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.

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[www.justgiving.com/thepetcharity](http://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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# GUIDE TO CARING FOR BUDGERIGARS

the  
**pet**  
**charity**  
*For joy, health & companionship*



Budgerigars are friendly, cheerful companions and are ideal for all age groups. They are available in attractive and sometimes unusual colours, and live for around 7 – 8 years.



## THE PET CHARITY GUIDE TO CARING FOR BUDGERIGARS

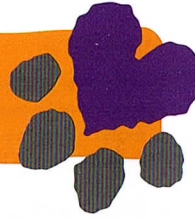
The budgerigar is a member of the parrot family and originates from Australia. It is a relatively simple and inexpensive pet to keep.

### GENERAL CARE

- **Feathers:** should not be allowed to become too dry. 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 budgies 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. Discharge may be seen coming from the nostrils. Keep him warm, do not bath and consult with your vet immediately.
- **Diarrhoea:** this is commonly caused by an excess of green, 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:** 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 bird's beak trim. If you suspect your budgie's nails and beak 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 budgie and provide it with toys for exercise and entertainment. If the condition persists consult your vet.

### DID YOU KNOW?

Properly cared for, your budgerigar can live for around 7 – 8 years.



### CHOOSING YOUR BUDGERIGAR

A healthy budgerigar 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

It is not possible to correctly sex very young budgies until they are at least three months old, however you can buy one at around 6 – 7 weeks old. A younger budgie is easier to train than an older one.



### HOUSING

Budgerigars can be kept in flocks in aviaries or in cages as pairs. A roomy cage is advisable and should be large enough for your budgie to stretch their wings and fly from perch to perch.

Budgies are climbing birds so it is preferable to choose a cage with horizontal bars. 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 budgie 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 YOUR BUDGIE TO THEIR NEW HOME

Always take your birds home in a carry box, not in a cage. Before introducing your budgie 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 budgie 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 Budgerigar Society website at:

[www.budgerigarsociety.com](http://www.budgerigarsociety.com)

Telephone: 01828 633030

Or you can write to them at:

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