

Birds

About Your Bird

A bird's lifespan varies by species from 15 to 80 years. Parakeets and cockatiels have an average lifespan of 15 to 20 years.

Food and Basic Care

Birds need the following basic care:

- **Fresh bird food and water daily.** Pelletized foods are particularly important in terms of nutritional content, especially for those who do not have time to prepare fresh foods daily or for birds that will not eat a balanced diet. Food should be given in wide, shallow bowls rather than deep cups.
- **Exercise.** Birds should be allowed freedom from their cages, but should have their wings clipped regularly for their safety. A comfortable perch outside the cage also allows for interaction and exercise.
- **Perches of appropriate size,** height and materials.
- **Toys and activities** to stimulate the bird and keep it emotionally and mentally healthy. Select chewable items such as branches, pine cones, rawhide dog chews, natural fiber rope, or any toy safe for human babies. Be sure no parts of the toys are small enough to be swallowed. Rotating the toys periodically will keep a bird from getting bored.
- **Quality veterinary care.**

Health Care

Given the proper environment and nutrition, birds are generally very hardy pets. The best way to monitor a bird's health is to know its healthy behavior. Any change in its regular behavior, feeding habits, or droppings might indicate a problem. Because a bird weighs only a few ounces, any loss of weight can be quite serious. If you notice anything different from your bird's regular habits, you should see your veterinarian immediately.