



# COCKATIEL CARE

## BACKGROUND

**Average Size:** 12 inches

**Average Lifespan:** 15 – 20 years

- Very intelligent and curious
- Love to be doted on by their human families
- Once trained they will enjoy perching on your hand
- Can be taught to mimic words and household noises

## COST

When you first get your bird, you'll need to spend about \$75 for a cage. Food runs about \$75 a year, plus \$30 annually for toys and treats.

## DIET

- A high-quality pelleted food that's formulated for your bird's species should be available to your pet at all times.
- Seed mixes can also be provided for variety.
- Fresh, cold water should be available at all times. Make sure to provide both an open water dish and a side hanging water bottle. Change it at least once a day, preferably twice.
- Offer fresh veggies and fruits to your bird every day.
  - **Recommended:** Dark, leafy greens, carrots, broccoli, apples, pears, melon and kiwi. *Take care to remove any uneaten food after a couple of hours.*
  - **Avoid:** avocado, cherry pits, rhubarb and apple seeds and anything that's old or spoiled

## DAILY CARE

- Remove and replace the paper lining the bottom of the cage every day.
- Clean and refill the water bottle and water bowl every day.
- Clean cage completely once a week by replacing dirty bedding and scrubbing down the cage with warm, soapy water.

## GENERAL CARE

- A thorough cleaning of your pet's cage is required once weekly. Remove and wash the cage tray and perches, and wash the area around the cage. Make sure all toys are clean and damage-free, without loose or broken parts that could hurt your pet. You'll want to clean the entire cage with a disinfectant solution. Rinse well, and dry everything before returning your bird to his cage.
- You can help keep your pet's plumage looking perfect with a bath as often as he likes it. You can use a spray bottle filled with water and give your bird a shower or you can put a shallow dish at the bottom of the cage and see what happens.

## CAGE & ENVIRONMENT

- Your bird will need a cage that's large enough for her to stretch her wings and fly short distances.
- A single cockatiel's cage should be no smaller than 25" wide, 25" deep and 25" tall. However it's always recommended to get the largest cage you can afford.
- A good cage should have horizontal bars on 2 sides since cockatiels love to climb.
- To prevent escape or injury, the bars on the cage should be no more than .25 inches apart—a little larger than the tips of your fingers.
- Line the bottom of the cage with plain paper, newspaper, paper towels or paper bags cut to size.
- Offer both high and low perching locations – making sure that one is level with the food dishes.
- Make sure to place the cage off the floor in a warm, bright part of the house, close to where the action is but away from all drafts and direct sunlight.
  - *Avoid setting up the cage in or near the kitchen at all costs - Birds are extremely sensitive to fumes and those from self-cleaning ovens and Teflon-coated cookware, if overheated, can be fatal.*

## EXERCISE & TOYS

- If your cockatiel has been properly tamed and trained, she'll need at least an hour of exercise out of the cage in a safe, enclosed room every day. She may just want to hang out on your shoulder, or enjoy the time to explore.
- Be sure to always secure the room first by shutting all windows and doors, and cover any windows or mirrors so your bird cannot accidentally fly into them.
- Small birds may enjoy ladders, swings and mirrors with bells, and wooden chew toys are great for keeping beaks trimmed.
- Check out what's available at the pet supply store, and just make sure that the toys you select are safe and appropriate for your bird's size and species. They should be labeled accordingly, but don't hesitate to ask if you are unsure.
  - *Be sure the toys you get/hang up do not obstruct your cockatiel's flight.*

## SIGNS OF ILLNESS

- Take your birds to the veterinarian annually for check-ups. Please don't wait to schedule an appointment if you think your pet is sick. A bird who is not feeling well may fluff out his feathers or sit quietly on the floor of his cage with his eyes closed. Other symptoms that something's not right with your pet include a change in the consistency, frequency or color of droppings, weight loss or gain, sneezing, coughing, blocked nostrils, labored breathing and a crusty beak or eyes.





# COCKATIEL SUPPLY CHECKLIST

- Well-constructed cage, at least 25" wide, 25" deep and 25" tall, with several perches
- High-quality cockatiel pellet food
- Plain paper, newspaper, paper towels or paper bags cut to size
- Species-appropriate safe toys (lots of 'em!)
- Attachable water bottle
- Water bowl for cage floor

