

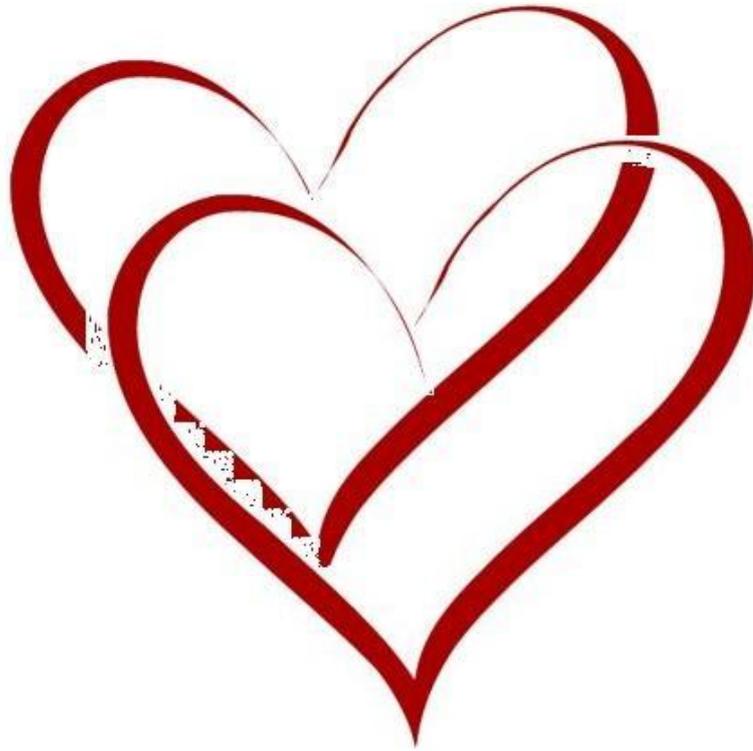
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# Welcome to Birdline UK LTD Parrot Rescue



**We have put this welcome pack  
together to help you with advice on  
caring for a bird**

These are guidelines for Birdline UK LTD members only.  
If you have any questions, please contact your Area Co-ordinator.



**In loving memory of Doddie Kent 7/4/1945 – 28/9/2017  
Your life was a blessing, your memory a treasure.  
You are loved beyond words and missed beyond measure.**

**This pack was produced by Doddie Kent and Melinda Laws on behalf of Birdline UK LTD.**

The information provided in this pack is designed to provide helpful information in the care and wellbeing of psittacines. This information is not meant to be used, nor should it be used to treat any medical condition. For diagnosis and/or treatment of any medical problem, ALWAYS consult an Avian Veterinarian. Birdline UK Parrot Rescu accepts no responsibility or liability for any damages or consequences from any treatment or actions to any animal/person following the guidance within this manual. References are provided for information only and do not constitute endorsement of any websites etc.

**Disclaimer:**

The information contained within this guidance is true and complete to the best of our knowledge. All recommendations are made without guarantee on behalf of Birdlike UK Parrot Rescue.



# BIRDLINE PARROT RESCUE

## Contents

2: NUTRITION & DIET .....	9
2.1: Cleanliness.....	9
2.2: Food Preparation.....	9
2.3: List of Suitable Foods.....	9
2.4: Feeding Leaflet.....	11
2.5: Vitamins and Minerals.....	12
2.6: Peanuts and sunflower seeds .....	14

BIRDLINE U.K. LTD.



# BIRDLINE PARROT RESCUE

## 2: NUTRITION & DIET

A varied diet largely made up of live foods will give you the healthiest bird. By live foods we mean vegetables, fruits, and whole grains. Dead foods are foods that don't spoil quickly (i.e. packaged seeds, pellets & nuts). That might seem like a simplistic description, but it is actually quite accurate. A healthy, correct diet can add DECADES to your birds' lives. Yes. Decades.

### 2.1: Cleanliness

Food bowls, water, cages, and the surrounding environment need to be kept clean. One of the leading causes of bacterial infections in parrots is soiled water. Many birds like to make "bird soup" by dropping food in their water bowl. Sometimes changing the location of the bowl will remedy this, but some birds will carry dehydrated carrots all the way across the cage to the water bowl. Water bottles do not solve the problem of unclean water. Food gets trapped in the tube the first time the bird drinks from it. Frankly, they are actually harder to clean properly. The best way to have fresh water is to have a ton of extra clean bowls. You can dump the old bowl out and put the new one in when you're in a hurry and don't have time to thoroughly clean the water bowl. The hotter the weather the higher the risk that bird soup will turn into a dangerous bacterial cocktail.

### 2.2: Food Preparation

Use the same precautions you use for your human family members. Salmonella, Escherichia coli, Listeria, and other food-borne pathogens can and do affect parrots.

### 2.3: List of Suitable Foods

**Vegetables:** Carrots (cooked slightly for better assimilation of beta carotene), string beans, corn, squash, peas, broccoli, courgettes, snow peas (Mange Tout), sunflower sprouts, pea shoots, sprouted seeds and beans (excellent for protein) are all favourites. If your bird is reluctant to try these things, try sprouting their seed mix. It will be familiar to them and seeds are much healthier when sprouting (lower in fat, higher in amino acids for instance). Please note: all beans must be cooked.

**Grains:** You can sprout many grains at home. Millet and quinoa are two nice grains to sprout. Also, cooked brown rice and cooked quinoa are relished by many parrots. Quinoa is a South American grain so parrots from this region probably ate it in the wild. Any food you can duplicate from their natural environment is an excellent choice.



## BIRDLINE PARROT RESCUE

**Fruits:** High in sugar, don't substitute Fruit for Veg. Vegetables always should make up the largest portion of the diet. Fruits do not really need to make up a significant part of the diet. Grapes are relished by most parrots.

**Seeds:** Get a good, fresh seed mix. If you aren't sure it's good and fresh, try sprouting it. If the seeds don't sprout in a few days, the seeds are dead. They have no nutritional value. Give a daily supply of seeds, but never so much that the birds ignore their veggies. Allow free access to seeds because they don't spoil and can be left in the cage all day. If you are buying a seed mix, choose one with low sunflower seeds, and clean (not dusty), with NO MONKEY NUTS.

**Pellets:** There are many pellets on the market. Not all birds will eat them. If you decide to try to change the diet from seed to pellets, it should be done gradually. You can add a few pellets or Nutriberries to the fruit/veg every day.

**People Food:** Pasta, whole wheat breads, bits of very well cooked chicken, and various other "people foods" are fine as long as they are not the majority of the diet. Don't feed the bird food from your mouth and don't bite off a piece for them. There's too much bacteria in your mouth and you can make your bird sick. Make sure chicken is very well cooked and don't leave any food like this in the cage for more than an hour.

**Junk Food:** Many parrots cannot excrete large amounts of salt efficiently, so the potato chips and french fries are not a good idea. Same thing for table foods you've added salt too (hey, it's not good for you either). A tiny crumb from a muffins, cookie, or other fatty baked goods once in a blue moon might be okay, but don't get your parrot addicted to these treats. You want to encourage them to eat the best foods and not hold out for garbage foods. Sugar in general is not good for parrots as it can cause hyperactivity.

**Chocolate, cocoa, coffee, and tea:** contain theobromine, which can cause over excitability, cardiopathy, and death. Absolutely positively do NOT give your bird wine, beer, or other alcoholic beverages. Their livers cannot handle it. It is not funny to see a bird drunk and anyone who thinks it is should find their birds a more appropriate home.

**AVOCADO, MUSHROOMS, AND ONIONS ARE POISONOUS TO PARROTS.**



# BIRDLINE PARROT RESCUE

## 2.4: Feeding Leaflet

As well as the normal seed/pellet diet, a parrot needs variety in its daily food. These are some of the things you can feed to your parrot on a daily basis, preferably as its first meal of the day. The food should be replaced daily, and the dish thoroughly washed. It is also an excellent idea to vary things so that the bird doesn't get bored with the same assortment. Please ensure all fruit is washed and pips/seeds are removed as some are toxic to birds.

**FORBIDDEN FOODS: AVOCADO, CHOCOLATE, MUSHROOMS, ONIONS, NUTMEG, MONKEY NUTS, ALCOHOL AND CAFFEINE**

<b>PLEASE NOTE: This is a guideline only. Check anything not on this list before feeding to birds.</b>			
<b>Fruit</b>		<b>Vegetables</b>	
Apples	Watermelon/other	Carrots	Spinach Green Beans
Pears	melons	Celery (cut finely to remove string)	(cooked)
Oranges	Pomegranates	Winter Radish	Beetroot
Bananas	Mangoes	Corn on the Cob	Parsnip (cooked)
Plums	Strawberries	Endive	Peas in the pod
Apricots	Raspberries	Cress	Peppers and Chillies
Grapes	Blueberries		Sweet Potato (cooked)
<b>Pulses</b>	<b>Soaked Seeds (sprouted)</b>		<b>NUTS</b>
Pulses should be soaked for 24 hrs before feeding	Soak 24 hrs, rinse & spread on a saucer covered with a damp cloth for 24 hrs		Cashew
Soya	Clipped Oats		Walnuts
Black-eyed Peas	Pumpkin Seeds		Brazil
Maize	Mung Beans		Hazelnuts
Peas	Green Lentils		Pistachios
Pearl Barley	Wheat		Macadamia
Field Beans	Sunflower		Pine nuts
	Chick Peas		NOT MONKEY NUTS
<b>Dried Fruit</b>	<b>Meat/Fish (cooked)</b>		<b>Extras</b>
Sultanas / Raisins	Tuna		Wholemeal bread
Coconut	Cuttlefish		Kelp
Bananas	Chicken/Rabbit		Honey



## BIRDLINE PARROT RESCUE

### 2.5: Vitamins and Minerals

Most birds in their natural environment would only eat seed in quantity during the late summer and early autumn time when it is naturally available. The rest of the time their diet is made of plant matter, fruits, berries, insects and even occasional carrion. Sometimes chalk will be taken for its calcium content as can limestone and snail shells.

***What can you do to increase your bird's intake of key nutrients? Let's have a look at the vitamins and minerals your bird needs.***

**Calcium** is needed for the maintenance of bones, muscle and nerve function, the production of eggs during the breeding season and essential for the correct development of chicks. Now here's a thing – to be absorbed properly, calcium needs a little help from a vitamin called D3 (cholecalciferol).

**Vit D3** is normally made within the body from ultraviolet light which is absorbed by the feathers, but if you have a pet bird, putting the cage outside all day is risky for security reasons. So no direct UV light = reduced calcium absorption. Most, if not all, vitamin supplements will have D3 in them. ALL AFRICAN GREYS SHOULD HAVE CALCIUM TWICE A WEEK. We recommend Zolcal-D as a calcium supplement.

**UVAB Light** Another idea which is now becoming popular is to place the special UV light tubes above your birds. They can be switched on for a few hours each day. They need to be changed annually as they do wear out. It is thought these lights help with absorption of Calcium and Vitamin D3.

**Vitamin C.** Birds don't need vitamin C supplementation in their diet, because they manufacture their own. You don't need to worry any more if your parrot doesn't like oranges. However, if your bird is sick, your avian vet may recommend vitamin C supplementation.

**B Vitamins** are also required for growth, particularly when young, when there are huge stresses on the avian body. Not enough can lead to nervous disorders such as feather plucking in African Greys, fits, seizures and reduced appetite.

**Vitamin A** is stored within the liver. Vitamin A deficiency is difficult to spot until it is quite often too late when the store is depleted. This can lead to lowered breeding results, eye and gut infections, and eye troubles. Vitamin A is especially low in seed only diets.

**Vitamin K.** Most birds at one time or another will injure themselves. Be it a bang on the side of the cage or something more serious. In these cases Vitamin K is the guy to help. Normally produced within the body by intestinal bacteria, it can also be ingested via food. Vitamin K helps your injured bird by clotting the blood, preventing haemorrhaging and speeding up the time it takes for a wound to heal.

**NB. Vitamins often need minerals to help them work. Vitamin E for example may boost your bird's libido, but unless you have Selenium to help out, much of the Vitamin E will be wasted.**



# BIRDLINE PARROT RESCUE

**NB: It is possible for birds to get too many vitamins and supplements should only be considered after consultation with your avian vet. It is dangerous to overdose a bird on any vitamin or mineral, so always follow the instructions on the pack.**

## *Foods that Provide Vitamins and Minerals:*

Fruits	Vegetables	Nuts
Apricots (vit A) Bananas (vit B-6) Citrus (vit C) Elderberries (vit C) (Berries only) Figs (calcium) Kiwifruit (vit C) Papaya (vit C & A) Peaches (vit A) Peppers (vit C & A) Rose Hips (vit C) Tomatoes (vit A) Watermelon (vit C)	Asparagus (vit B1) Beans/Peas (vit B1, Folic Acid) Beetroot (Iron) Broccoli (vit C,K, calcium) good detox Brussel Sprouts (vit C) Cabbage (vit C) Carrots (vit A) Kale (vit A,C,K) Parsley (vit A,C) Spinach (vit C, K) Swiss Chard (high Iron, calcium, potassium, sodium) Turnip leaves (vit C,K, calcium) Watercress (vit C, calcium)	Almond (vit B2, E, calcium, selenium) Brazil (vit B1, E, calcium, selenium) Cashews (cooked) (Protein) Hazelnuts (vit B1,B6, E, selenium) Pecan (vit B1, B5, Protein, selenium) Pine nuts (vit B1, Protein)

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# BIRDLINE PARROT RESCUE

## 2.6: Peanuts and sunflower seeds

Many pet shops recommend monkey nuts as part of a parrot diet. However, we can't stress enough how inadvisable that is. Peanuts are not tree nuts. They grow underground in the dirt and are susceptible to a ground based fungi called *Aspergillus flavus*. These fungi can produce a toxin called Aflatoxin, which is a potent liver toxin. It can cause illness and death in humans and animals, and birds are extremely susceptible to its toxic effects.

This fungi can develop not only whilst nuts are in the ground, but after harvest to if the drying process is delayed and the moisture level is allowed to exceed what is required for mould growth. If you have a warm temperature, insects or rodents hanging around, as many farms do, this just exacerbates the situation.

For a safer way to go with your flock, simply replace peanuts with other nuts such as almonds or cashews and replace that occasional peanut butter bribe with almond butter instead. There are so many good things in the world that are safe for them to eat. Simply avoiding the questionable items is probably the best way to go in keeping your birds healthy and well-fed.

### *Sunflower Seeds*

***Too many sunflower seeds can eventually kill your parrot!!*** It is widely believed that feeding birds a diet consisting of only sunflower seeds is healthy – This isn't true. Although sunflower seeds are a good option for a treat, a bird shouldn't have too many. Unfortunately this belief has been rooted over many years, and to this day the pet food industry still offers this as a suitable diet. If one looks at the natural diet of a bird, it doesn't consist exclusively of dry seeds.

### **Feeding a bird on sunflower seeds is not good for its health.**

- Not only are they very high in fat, they lack the necessary nutrients, vitamins and amino acids that a bird requires for optimum health.
- There is also a possibility of fungal infections with dry seed should the necessary precautions not be taken, and this could negatively affect the bird's health.
- Birds on a dry sunflower seed diet are more likely to pluck their feathers due to the psychological influence of high fat content in sunflower seeds, and the lack of nutrients in this type of diet.
- The high fat content can also lead to Lipomas and fatty liver syndrome. Lipomas, are a fatty tumour, and are most common in Amazons and Galah Cockatoos, but can affect any species of bird. With fatty liver syndrome, the functioning of the liver is affected and this leads to dry skin and makes the bird more susceptible to other diseases.