

## Converting To A Pelleted Diet

Proper nutrition is a vital key to the health of a pet bird and can add significantly to the quality and quantity of a bird's life. Diet is probably the single most important issue concerning the health of a bird. A diet composed of seed and "people food" is lacking a great deal nutritionally. 's Bird Diets are made from organically grown plants and contain no artificial colors, flavors, or preservatives. It is the most "natural" diet available for birds and contains necessary vitamins and minerals for maintaining good health.

Converting a "seed addict" or "people food addict" over to a quality pelleted diet sometimes requires a great deal of patience on the part of the human foodgiver. This process can be aided by following a few simple suggestions.

Start off by offering the bird his / her "regular" diet for 15 to 20 minutes twice daily and then remove the food. **Leave the pellets in the cage at all times.** Then, once the bird is eating the pellets, gradually eliminate the "old diet" by cutting out one of the feedings at a time over a period of 1 to 2 weeks.

Your bird may be more inclined to eat the pellets if he / she first sees YOU pretending to eat them. You may also want to try soaking some of the pellets in some fruit juice during the conversion process. This may entice the more finicky eaters to try the pellets.

**HAVE PATIENCE!!** It is **EXTREMELY** rare for a bird **NOT** to convert to a pelleted diet. The process may take anywhere from overnight to a few months but the benefits of a quality diet are well worth the effort. As a general rule, the smaller the bird the more difficult the conversion process. For example, Budgies and Cockatiels are usually much harder to convert than Amazons and Macaws.

For small birds such as Budgies it is sometimes helpful to place a mirror at the bottom of the cage and place some pellets on it. This will sometimes entice the bird to look at the "other bird" in the mirror and then start exploring the pellets.

Once opened, keep the pellets sealed in a container (or their original zipped bag) and store them in a cool **DARK** place. This allows the coolness to help keep the pellets fresh and also keeps light from degrading the nutritional content of the food. If using from a large bag of pellets you can refrigerate part of the bag in an airtight container.

If you have any questions please call **Quality Care Animal Hospital** at 618-997-4272. And remember to schedule annual examinations for your feathered companion in order to maintain optimum health.