

Common Budgie Ailments

Consult your vet if you think your budgerigar may be ill. Act without delay.

Injuries of any kind: Seek urgent treatment.

Gasping for breath: Take straight to the vet.

Diarrhoea and vomiting: Needs urgent veterinarian treatment.

Scaly face: A parasitic infection, needs treatment.

Psittacosis: Cold-like symptoms and sneezing, needs urgent treatment by the vet.

Feather plucking: Needs investigation, could be boredom or lack of vitamins or minerals.

French Molt: Stunted feather growth in young birds caused by a virus.

Overgrown claws: Needs clipping by an experienced bird keeper.

Overgrown beak: Needs trimming by a vet.



Budgerigar Facts

The most common pet bird is the budgerigar. They are hardy creatures that are very adaptable and friendly. They are sociable and like to have a companion. Two cocks are less likely to quarrel than two hens, and the males are said to be easier to tame and to teach to talk.

Hatched-Fledgling:
35 days

Incubation:
18 days

Sexual Maturity:
4-5 months

Life Span:
7-10 years

Adult Size:
7" in length

Clutch size:
4-6 eggs

Body temperature:
40-42°C

Moult:
Annual loss of feathers

The Environmental Animal Sanctuary & Education (EASE) is a registered charity (no. 1089160) which promotes aspects of the human/companion animal relationship. Our services include providing a Preparing for Pet Loss programme and education in animal welfare. For more information about our work, contact:

EASE
PO Box 292 Hatfield
Hertfordshire
AL9 6ZJ

Email: info@ease-animals.org.uk
Website: www.ease-animals.org.uk

Cartoons by
landers
www.landers.co.uk
cartoons@landers.co.uk



**Environmental Animal
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The EASE Guide to Caring for BUDGERIGARS



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Budgerigars are long-lived birds with a life-span of 7-10 years. The low purchase cost must be considered in relation to the time commitment, equipment needed and vet fees for any treatment required.

A Home for your Budgerigar

To keep your budgie indoors you will need a large cage to ensure it has plenty of room to spread its wings and flutter about easily. A rectangular wire-topped cage with a plastic base and slide-out tray is best for cleaning purposes. At least two sides need horizontal bars for climbing. You will also need to buy food, water and grit containers. Budgies prefer natural perches so that they can gnaw the wood (except cherry). Makes sure they are suitable for its small feet. You will need to provide cuttlefish bones and an iodine block and special bird grit. Bird cage sandpaper is best for the base.

Buy a good quality bird seed mix and a millet spray along with several toys e.g. a mirror, a ladder and a bell, to keep the bird happy and prevent boredom. Secure the perches so as to avoid droppings getting into food and water containers. Place the cage in a temperature of 17-24°C in a light, draught-free place at about shoulder height, avoiding direct sunlight or heat. Budgies are very sociable creatures and can be kept in pairs or very small groups. Single birds will need a lot of human companionship to prevent loneliness and boredom. Make sure that cats and other pets cannot reach the cage. It is best to cover the cage at night to exclude light, so that the budgie can rest more soundly.

Caring for your Budgerigar

Budgies enjoy a tepid bath once or twice a week from a tip-proof saucer on the floor of the cage or a special bird bath. Make sure the room temperature is warm enough and that it is early in the day so that the budgie doesn't catch cold. Cleanliness is important to a bird's health so the sandpaper needs changing daily. The cage and toys must be cleaned once a week with a mild disinfectant. Keep the food and water containers meticulously clean to prevent illness.



Food and Drink for your Budgerigar

You will need to give your bird fresh food and water at least once or twice a day. It needs water in a clean container and budgie seed mix, together with some fresh food such as apple, carrot, grapes, berries, chickweed, spinach, dandelion, sprouting seeds and seeding grasses. Fresh foods need to be washed first. Cuttlefish is necessary for strong bones and millet spray can be given as a treat once or twice a week.



Handling your Budgerigar

Your budgie will probably be frightened at first, so on arrival home quietly place it in the new cage, secure the cage door and leave the bird relatively undisturbed for the first 24 hours. Talk quietly and calmly, especially when cleaning or feeding, and do not make any sudden sharp movements that will startle it. Budgies can nip when they are frightened, so you need to become friends. Young birds can soon learn to become tame and to perch on your hand. Begin with a dowel or perch and nudge its chest lightly until it steps onto it. When it is happy doing this, nudge its chest gently with your finger until it climbs on. The best way to hold a budgie is to gently close the palm of your hand over the bird's back and wings, while holding the head between your thumb and middle and index fingers. Once your bird is tame you can allow it supervised time out of the cage but keep it safe by:

- Closing all the windows and doors and blocking up chimneys etc
- Screening glass windows and doors to avoid crash injuries
- Ensuring there is no direct heat source or fluid it could land on or in
- Removing any toxic or prickly plants
- Removing other pets from the room

Leave the cage door open, with a perch sticking out to help the budgie go back in. Leave its food inside the cage to encourage it back, or get it to land on your hand so you can place it back in the cage. If you have to catch the bird, use a fine mesh net or a cloth. Exercising outside of the cage will help to keep it happy and healthy.

Budgerigars

Domesticated budgerigars come in a large range of colours whilst wild ones are always green with a yellow head area and live in huge flocks. They originate from Australia and were discovered by a British ornithologist who brought them back to England, where they quickly became popular. Their name means 'song parrot.' The females are called hens and have a brown or white cere (the part just above the bill) and the male's cere is blue. They can learn to mimic sounds and it can be great fun teaching them to say simple words like 'hello.'

For more information visit www.budgerigarworld.com.



Budgerigar Body Language

Panting with the beak open: Stressed, leave the bird alone.

Chattering & bobbing up and down: Happy and socialising.

Feathers tightly drawn down and wary: Frightened.

Eye flaring, constricting of pupil and raised head feathers: Playing or pleased to see you or its mate.

Head tucked under its wing and perching on one leg: Sleeping.

Feathers fluffed up; listless, dull eyes: First sign of illness – seek veterinarian advice immediately.