

## Convert Your Bird To Pellets

### **Use these tips when introducing pellets to your pet bird's diet**

Veterinarians and breeders almost universally recommend formulated or pelleted diets for pet birds because these are more nutritionally complete than the once-traditional seed menu. To convert your bird to pellets from seed, experiment with different brands of formulated food. Add increasing amounts of pellets to the existing diet each day.

If your bird is resistant to trying pellets, try moistening them with warm water or juice, and serve them in a separate dish. Remove uneaten portions from the cage after a few hours, because bacteria will grow easily on the moistened food. (According to U.S. Department of Agriculture reports, bacteria reproduce between 40 and 140 degrees Fahrenheit.)

During the conversion process, remove all food except the pellets from the cage for several hours each morning. Your pet will be more inclined to accept the pellets at this natural foraging time.

Another way to encourage pellet consumption is to place the dish high in the cage, next to the nighttime roosting perch. Birds naturally munch a bit before they go to sleep and may be more inclined to accept the pellets at this time.

Keep track of your bird's weight and droppings during this time. A scale that measures in grams as opposed to ounces will help you keep track of weight fluctuations. If your pet loses weight, or the number and size of droppings decrease, it is probably because the bird is not eating the new food. If this occurs, resume the regular diet until the bird's weight is back to normal. Consult your avian veterinarian regarding sudden weight loss or if weight loss is accompanied by other symptoms. It is normal for the color of the droppings to change from green to brownish when a bird begins eating pellets.