

Introduce Healthy Foods To Pet Birds

Try these tricks to get your pet bird to try nutritious foods.

By Nikki Moustaki

Can't get your pet bird to eat nutritious foods? You're not alone. A lot of pet bird owners fret about their bird's lack of interest in healthy foods. Fortunately, there are a few tricks of the trade that you can use to entice a picky parrot:

Courtesy Kelley Liesinger, Oregon

Your pet bird may be more likely to try a new food if it sees you eating it first.

Introduce Healthy Food Trick #1

"Put a dish next to the highest perch and put the new food you are introducing into this dish," suggested Greg Burkett, DVM, ABVP, owner of The Birdie Boutique in Durham, North Carolina. "Birds prefer to eat up high in the cage where they feel the most secure.

Introduce Healthy Food Trick #2

"It helps to introduce the food several times before expecting a bird to try something new," he also said. "The first hurdle is to have them understand that it is edible. A good way to do this is to eat it yourself in front of your bird and offer it to someone else in the bird's presence. When they see a flock member eat it, then they will be more likely to try it."

Introduce Healthy Food Trick #3

Encouraging a bird to forage for food as it would in the wild is a great way of getting it interested. Weave greens between the cage bars and hide goodies beneath tissue paper. "In the wild they spend 90 percent of their waking hours searching for food," said Burkett. "Having it available in an abundance could contribute to boredom. Hide their food under paper or cardboard, or inside of a toy that requires effort to get the food out."

Introduce Healthy Food Trick #4

Try offering the same nutritious foods in different forms. For example, offer cooked sweet potatoes as whole chunks, grated, sliced or mashed with other foods (peas, carrots, beans, nuts). Keep offering the new food for at least a month. Seeing the food repeatedly is important. Remember, however, that pet birds have likes and dislikes just like we do. If your bird doesn't like bananas, it might never eat them. Just don't assume that your pet bird doesn't like something if it doesn't bite on the first attempt.