



# Budgie



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# Budgie

Budgies are often underestimated by many people. They can do many of the things that larger parrots can, just on a smaller scale. They can be exceptionally good talkers, although not as clear as many of the larger parrots.

## *Origin*

The budgerigar is native to Australia and their original colour is green. All of the many colour and feather patterns seen today have come from the two basic colours: green and blue. Then there are the other mutations such as harlequins, clear bodies, clearwings, peds, greywings, opalines, yellow faces and spangles. In addition, you can find budgies with crests or tufts. They are 7 inches in length and have an average lifespan of 7 years. Males have bright blue ceres (the area directly above the beak) and females have a light blue, buff or brown cere when mature. It is difficult to sex some of the fancy coloured or young budgies.

## *General Personality*

With personalities as individual as the birds themselves, they offer great pet potential. They are extremely active and energetic. They'll hang upside down, twist themselves into various positions and enjoy chewing, climbing and swinging from their favourite toys. In addition both male and females have the ability to talk, however, males seem to talk the most.

## *Food*

Quality parrot food in the form of crumbles is available at pet stores. This should be offered daily with clean water, fruits, vegetables and cuttlefish bone. Budgies also enjoy having small samples of whatever you are eating. Sunflower seeds are high in fat and should be offered only as a treat. Grit or gravel is not necessary for most caged birds.

## *Housing*

Budgies fly back and forth, not up and down. Look for a cage that is longer than it is high and avoid tall, narrow or round cages. Natural branches that vary in thickness make good perches inside the cage. These branches

relieve stress on the foot that can occur from standing on the same size of perch. Do not use sandpaper perches. Toys are an important part of a bird's life as they provide entertainment while inside their cage. Make sure you give your bird a variety of safe toys suited for its size. Clean droppings from the cage bottom and perches daily.

## *Health Care*

Wing trimming is essential for your bird's safety. The loss of a pet bird flying out an open door is devastating. Nail trimming is also necessary for proper grip on perches and a comfortable grip on arms and fingers. Most birds love to bathe whether it be in a dish of warm water, spritzed with a pump sprayer, under a dripping faucet or in the shower with its owner. Budgies should have a bath or shower at least weekly.

**THE PARROT CLUB OF MANITOBA** meets the 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday of each month at 7:30 pm at St. Alban's Anglican Church, basement level, 486 Rathgar (off Osborne). Check community announcements or contact the club in case of changes. Several members of the Parrot Club of Manitoba have budgies as pets and would be able to tell you how these birds are in the home environment.

Winnipeg veterinarians with an interest in avian medicine are:

Dr. Heather McDonald of Centennial Animal Hospital  
Dr. Nancy McQuade of Winrose Animal Hospital  
Dr. Carolyn Eickhorn of Winrose Animal Hospital  
Dr. Birte Klug of Winrose Animal Hospital  
Dr. Andrew Davidson of Corydon Animal Hospital  
Dr. C. Skavinsky of Anderson Animal Hospital  
Dr. Lisa Sawka of Charleswood Veterinary Clinic