

A guide to health and happiness for pet birds



*Malcolm Green is the
company's director
responsible for product
development*

A recent American survey of pet parrot diets suggests that 98% of these birds are getting less than the recommended levels of key nutrients (see page 8). Does this mean that most bird owners don't care? Of course not. It means they haven't been given good enough advice.

In the short term many dietary imbalances lead to behavioural problems from biting to feather plucking. In the longer term they lead to illness and premature death. Most bird vets would agree that 70% -90% of their case load comes from nutritionally deficient birds.

If you want the very best for your birds this booklet will help you understand how The Birdcare Company's unique supplements and sick bird products can improve the wellbeing of your favourite and much loved feathered friends.

Malcolm Green
Technical Director



Leading the way - naturally

There is a strong connection between diet and health and a surprisingly strong link between diet and behaviour.

In this booklet we start by explaining how sophisticated, modern bird supplements use natural ingredients to help with health problems in your birds.

Then we show how other products ensure that healthy birds stay in tip-top shape and do not suffer nutrition-based behavioural problems.

The Birdcare Company nutrition system is easy to use because we

have designed the most comprehensive products we know of. And we give simple guidelines on how to use them. We even back that up with a free advisory service. It really couldn't be easier or more rewarding.

If you have any questions just ask our free advice line or visit our web page.

Tel: 0845 130 8600 (local call charge only from UK) or
Int+44 1453 835330.

E-mail: advice@BirdcareCo.com.
Web site: www.BirdcareCo.com

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Dog and cat hair problems?

Do you get fed up with your dog's or cat's hair constantly coming off on your clothes and furniture?

Using Birdcare Company know-how our sister business (Dr Squiggles) has developed a product that gets pet animals quickly through a full moult instead of having them moulting almost all the time. So most of the year there is little or no hair in your house.

Here is what dog, cat and parrot owner Candie Bradley said: "**Dr Squiggles Coat Magic** proved wonderful for my two dogs and two cats. All four showed a vast improvement in their fur and their energy levels. Their fur did not moult as frequently or in as much quantity.

My 14 year old Bearded Collie has always suffered from dry skin and, more recently, joint stiffness. These conditions improved measurably."

Order with your Birdcare products

Dietetic help for birds

Most bird vets would agree that between 70% and 90% of the cases they see are ill because their diet is less than ideal. Of course the reverse is also true - healthy diets stop disease getting a hold. For most birds just three products added to their normal seed are all that is required to maintain birds in excellent health. These are Daily Essentials3, Feast (or Flourish) and Calcivet.

An alternative to using these supplements is to use **Banquet Gold Label**, a completely supplemented seed-based food for pet birds.

However, we start this booklet with the most up-to-date way of helping your sick birds get better. And, in most circumstances, it can be done without drugs. We do this by harnessing and supporting the birds' own natural defense mechanisms.

If any of your birds are ill we would always suggest that you phone us and discuss the problem. Our advice line only costs you a local call charge from anywhere in the UK (0845 130 8600). You can also access this support by e-mail from anywhere in the world (advice@BirdcareCo.com) though if you have access to the internet it is better to use our web-based system (www.BirdcareCo.com and click the "online health advice" link). This provides a form to fill in that ensures we get all the necessary background information. *Remember - these advice services are all free!*

Bear in mind that we are clearly unable to make a diagnosis - this is a job for an experienced avian vet - but we can discuss the most likely problems with you and advise you on where to find a vet if that is the best course of action. We will also be happy to offer you the most appropriate first aid products to give your birds the best chance of recovery.

First aid

In the past we have almost always had to

advise you to buy our "sick bird" products as well as our normal vitamin and mineral products and tell you to use them together. Now, with **Guardian Angel**, we have the most sophisticated sick bird product we can design and it contains all the basic nutrients as well.

So Guardian Angel is the primary first aid product. This is the product to have in the cupboard for emergencies. It is very versatile. It can be put in the drinking water (do not use at more than the recommended level) or it can be added to eggfoods or fresh foods. If adding to food ensure that plenty of fresh water is available.

Guardian Angel is useful for so many situations because it is so comprehensive. It contains the energy and electrolytes from Spark, our revolutionary new "white cell support system" (see page 4), our comprehensive "Essentials" vitamins and Rapisorb minerals, the probiotics and herbal prebiotics from BioPlus and a powdered version of Calcivet.

Rapid weight loss

For those birds that are losing weight rapidly, **Poly-Aid** is the product of choice. Poly-Aid is a complete food in a highly bio-available form designed to stop the bird (or animal) starving. This too has been upgraded with the "white cell support system" and our Flourish herbal extracts making it a truly world leader product.

To avoid potential conflict with any antibiotics your vet may be prescribing we have not included any probiotic bacteria in Poly-Aid. If probiotics are required Poly-Aid can be used in conjunction with **BioPlus** or **Potent Brew**.

The importance of calcium

You would be amazed how many sick birds are suffering from inadequate calcium intake. Both Guardian Angel and Poly-Aid contain maintenance levels of calcium. But if any



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Supporting the immune system

The immune system consists of a very complex set of defenses that the body uses to fight infections. A whole range of vitamins and minerals are involved in its effective functioning but modern nutritional ingredients enable us to provide even better support.

Unique white cell support system

Recent Birdcare Company development work has focused on the white blood cells. These are the immune system's "Rapid Reaction Force". When invaded by an infectious germ like a virus or bacteria the immune system makes huge quantities of white blood cells that rapidly spread through the blood system and kill the invaders.

Any of you who have worked in a factory will know that, when there is a sudden large demand for a particular product, you inevitably can't make it because you are short of stocks of at least one raw material. This can and does occur in the body as well, and limits its ability to produce those extra white blood cells.

In addition, white blood cells use large quantities of fats to power themselves as they go about attacking invaders. Fats are burned in the cells' "boiler houses" (called mitochondria) and a special vitamin-like substance is used to get the fats into the mitochondria. Again this material can be rapidly depleted in the face of a hostile enemy.

So, by adding the special nutrients most in demand for rapid white cell production and by adding the special vitamin-like substance, the bottlenecks can be prevented and the immune system can work at full power.

The new product, called **Guardian Angel**, is based around these two revolutionary new concepts. In order to make the use of this product as simple as possible we have also



included many of our other unique nutritional ingredients. So Guardian Angel incorporates the vitamins and unique Rapisorb minerals normally found in the "Essentials" products. It contains the beneficial probiotic bacteria and herbal extract from BioPlus and the highly bio-available minerals found in Maxima and ProBoost SuperMax. A maintenance level of calcium is provided and this has been developed from Calcivet.

Finally the whole package is incorporated into the electrolytes, extra vitamin C and long term energy found in Spark. Like Spark, Guardian Angel is 100% active ingredients.

So Guardian Angel, used for sick birds as a single supplement to a normal diet, should

meet all of the patient's extra nutritional needs as well as providing unprecedented immune system support. This means that Guardian Angel is both easy and economical to use. Sometimes, if calcium depletion is suspected, extra Calcivet will be recommended.

Guardian Angel is designed to be applied either in the drinking water or on suitable fresh foods and eggfoods.

The white cell support system has also been added to Poly-Aid making this the most sophisticated sick bird emergency food on the world market.

Other immune support

Many Birdcare products contain a variety of ingredients (such as our Flourish herbal extracts) that support the immune system.

Whilst the white cell support system is mostly used in sick birds the herbal extracts are mostly used to keep healthy birds fit. Flourish herbs are used in Poly-Aid, Feast eggfood, Special Needs Diet and Flourish supplement.

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symptoms of calcium depletion are evident we would advise extra Calcivet five days a week for a month.

Behavioural problems, droopy wings, fluffed appearance, poor perching and clumsy flying,

tremors and fits, fear, aggression, self mutilation and an inability to lay an egg are all indicators of calcium problems.

Calcium is the number one problem in bird keeping. If in doubt give Calcivet.

Managing stress - shows, sales, travel and trips to the vet

Birds are easily stressed and the first response of any animal to stress is to reduce the blood supply to the gut. If the stress is prolonged this can lead to diarrhoea, dehydration, starvation and death. Stressed birds don't look good, aren't happy and can develop behavioural problems or become ill.

The secrets to avoiding stress are to increase energy stores in the body (in the liver and muscles) and to provide electrolytes to maintain the body's water balance.

To achieve this give Spark or Guardian Angel for two days prior to travel. Continue for two days after.

Long distance flamingos

New Zealand has just acquired its first flamingos. Bred at the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust in Slimbridge (Glos) the twenty young birds were first driven to Prestwick airport (7 hours) and then flown to Auckland by Air New Zealand. A journey of over 48 hours in total!

On the instructions of the trust's vet, Neil Forbes, all the birds were given Guardian Angel for two days before the journey. This was repeated every 24 hours in flight and on arrival at Auckland zoo.

They all arrived in fabulous condition! All birds were eating well by themselves within 20 minutes of arrival. The comment from Mike Batty (the zoo's bird curator who accompanied them on the journey) was that they looked and behaved just as they had 48 hours earlier at WWT Slimbridge.

Thank you for your marvellous product "Poly-Aid" . I have been breeding lovebirds for nine months so I am still somewhat of a novice. I am armed with 9 books on breeding and care of lovebirds but none mention your products. It was by chance that I found it stocked at Grafty Green Pet Centre so I decided to purchase some and try to help two abandoned, almost lifeless babies.

Yes it saved their lives so I can't speak too highly of Poly-Aid.

Sue Sawyer (Kent)

Natural recovery

Neil Fisher rescued four black headed caiques from appalling conditions in a pet shop. They were sick, fluffed and soiled all over. They were making no progress when Neil rang The Birdcare Company helpline. Two days on Guardian Angel and the birds were in fabulous condition. Even their feather colour had improved and they were full of energy and vitality.

Later you will read about the unique ingredients used by The Birdcare Company in designing world leading products to maximise bird health.

Specific problems

So **Guardian Angel** and **Poly-Aid** are the first line of support for birds' natural defense mechanisms. But we also have a number of products with more specific characteristics for particular circumstances.

Breathing easily

Wheeze-Eeze can be sprayed in the birdroom for the birds to inhale and can also be added to the drinking water. The herbal blend in this product helps the bird to breathe naturally. The herbs also attack certain types of germs and support the immune system.

Some breathing problems, particularly in finches and canaries, are caused by air sac mite. Contact us or your vet for advice on this problem.

British finches are particularly prone to gape worm. We recommend you visit your avian vet if this parasite is suspected and get an appropriate wormer. Do not rely on herbal wormers.

Moulting

Sulphur and sulphur-containing amino acids are present in feathers in very large quantities. Traditional cage bird diets contain too few of these crucial nutrients. The result is slow moulting and, for some vulnerable species, death during stressful moults.

Slow or continuously moulting birds should be supplemented with **Feather-Up** and **Calcivet**. The vital amino acids are very smelly in water so this system is for supplementing fresh fruits and veggies or eggfoods. Birds that only eat dry seed should be given **Fussy Feeder Essentials** instead - added to the drinking water with **Calcivet** and **Aviclens**. This system is not so fast but will still produce good results and reduce the nutritional stress on the birds involved.

Chronic and acute digestive problems

Acute digestive problems are very common. They often flare up with any stress or illness. Normally we recommend probiotics like **Guardian Angel**, **Potent Brew** or **BioPlus**. Birds

eating soft foods can be given extra herbal support with **Flourish**. **Poly-Aid** should be used with one of the above for critical cases.

Long term digestive disorders often require larger quantities of easily absorbed nutrition. **Special Needs Diet** is a sophisticated complete dietetic food that can be fed as anything from 10% to 100% of the diet depending on the severity of the problem.

Parasite control

There are a number of parasites that affect cage birds. Some can be treated naturally but most require a level of drug treatment.

Worms affect a very broad range of species. The bad news is that herbal wormers don't seem to work very well. So contact our advice service (0845 130 8600) or your avian vet.

Coccidia affect many species especially finches (going light), pigeons and poultry. They are less common in psittacines. In our **Feast** eggfood and our supplement **Flourish** we include herbal ingredients that help the birds' natural defenses against these germs. Birds showing symptoms of severe weight loss are unlikely to recover fully. Drug products are also available.

The flagellates (trichomonas, giardia, hexamita) all require drug treatments. Contact our advice service (0845 130 8600) or your avian vet.

Lice and mites are also common in most species. They can kill - especially babies. Deal with species that live off the bird (like red mite) with **Zodiac+** and **Blast-Off anti mite**. For other conditions contact us for advice.

**We also have a
breeding bird booklet.
If you would like to
have a copy please
contact us.**

The Birdcare Company healthy supplement system for almost all birds*

Daily Essentials³

Calcivet

Feast or Flourish

or

Banquet Gold Label (complete food)

The easy-to-use nutrition products to keep birds healthy all year round

* Contact us for advice on insectivores, nectivores, birds of prey or large collections of parrots, finches or other small birds.

Calcium - far more important than you think

We have nearly all grown up thinking that cuttlefish bone is a great calcium supplement. Confident that our birds had plenty of this important mineral, we failed to recognise the frequent symptoms we were seeing of inadequate dietary calcium. In fact it is very difficult for birds (or any other animals for that matter) to absorb calcium presented in a solid or powdered form.

In breeding birds the most common symptoms are egg-binding, weak hens and a general depression. Breeders often describe hens as too "exhausted" by breeding or they can't fly properly. No bird that is fed properly will be exhausted by breeding in captivity!

Soft shelled eggs, thin shells, dead-in-shell and smaller clutches are common. Would you recognise a smaller clutch or would it just seem normal to you?

More difficult to pick (because we probably think the behaviour is normal) is the increased level of fear and/or aggression in birds with inadequate calcium in their diet.

Poor bone formation and splayed legs in nestlings and poor co-ordination in recently fledged babies are also common symptoms.

If you consider all these symptoms carefully you will realise that many of them are explained by a lack of nerve or muscle function. These two parts of the body rely heavily on calcium to work properly.

Calcivet provides calcium in a highly bio-available form. You can avoid these problems with its routine use. Some breeders rely on grit and cuttlefish until they see a problem (like a soft egg). This is silly. If the product is used properly you will get more eggs and better hatchability so more live chicks. Calcivet pays for itself many times over just in increased chick numbers!

Nutrition for pet birds

Most owners of pet birds want nothing less than the best of health and happiness for their feathered friends. And most people understand the importance of nutrition in achieving that goal.

Unfortunately many people are sure they are doing the very best for their birds when actually it could be done much better. Remember that American survey where 98% of the birds were getting less than ideal levels of key nutrients? Had the survey looked at amino acids the chances are even that figure would have grown!

Space does not allow us to provide a full explanation here of all the different nutrients our birds need. For those with access to the Internet it is covered in detail on our web site.

But it is worth noting that your birds will be more energetic and playful and less prone to infections and slow moults if their diet is optimised.

So how do I give these nutrients to my bird?

In the UK we have two options for you when

feeding pet birds. The first option is to feed one of our **Banquet Gold Label** complete foods (one version is available for parrots and another for budgie/parakeet sized birds). The second option is to supplement a conventional seed and fresh foods

diet, or seed and egg food diet, with our world-renowned supplements.

New

Banquet Gold Label

We have recently introduced the first products in this range of complete foods.

Banquet Gold label is

a seed and biscuit based diet with a variety of nuts and dried fruits added according to the different species' mixes. For parakeets, budgies and other smaller hookbills and finches and canaries we use a different seed blend.

These products are completely supplemented foods. They contain our "Essentials" vitamins, highly bio-available "Rapisorb" minerals, limiting amino acids, our "Maxima" sulphur (for stress free moults and weight control), and our "Flourish" herbs for immune and digestive support. The protein-to-energy ratio has been balanced to avoid birds getting overweight.

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Birds love Banquet Gold Label

Common nutritional shortages

Many people still cling to the idea that supplementing cage bird diets is unnecessary. They seem to have forgotten that years ago, before supplements, we used to spend hours every week scouring the hedgerows for fresh seeding grasses and greenfoods. Now our bird diets are far too reliant on severely depleted dry seed.

A recent American veterinary survey studied the diets of 135 birds and concluded that they were getting less than the ideal levels of many key nutrients.

Here is a summary of the results. The percentage is the proportion of birds in the

study getting less than the recommended levels of these nutrients in their diet:

- * Vitamin E - 27%
- * Vitamin A - 67%
- * Calcium - 97%
- * Vitamin D - 98%

Now you may think that these birds were being fed plain seed diets. In fact about half of them were getting pellets. But the pellets were being diluted with seeds, table scraps and treats. Pellets give a false sense of security to owners.

Proper supplementation makes sense

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Banquet is a real alternative to pellets for someone who wants a balanced complete food without having to add supplements. Birds love it and they will be fit and healthy eating it. And, because it contains a variety of nutritious foods, your bird is able to balance its protein and energy requirements from the selection.

Banquet Gold Label is a complete food. It should make up at least 75% of the bird's diet and the bird must be eating a broad range of its ingredients not just picking out its favourite bits.

While Banquet Gold Label is the core of the diet we encourage you to feed a variety of other foods, fruits, vegetables and some human foods as treats. Avoid dairy products, chocolate, avocado and salty processed foods.

Supplementing seed based diets

If you prefer to use your own seed mix then it will need supplementing. Supplements cannot really be mixed with plain seed as the bird removes the husk and hence the supplement. So you will need a food to carry them. This can be fresh fruits and/or vegetables, a soft food like **Feast** or a suitable human food like bread in small quantities.

Daily Essentials3 and **Flourish** (daily) and **Calcivet** once or twice a week are the supplements to use. If you use Feast then Flourish is not needed as the same herbal extracts are included in the softfood.

Daily Essentials3 also provides a good level of 14 different vitamins plus ten key trace minerals to ensure health and vitality. The bio-availability of the minerals in this product is very high due to the unique Rapisorb ingredients that we use. This means they are easily absorbed from the gut so your bird gets full benefit from them.

The amino acids and Maxima sulphur in Daily Essentials3 ensure stress free moults and help avoid over-eating and too much weight gain.

There are two reasons why we do not include calcium in our "Essentials" products. Firstly, solid calcium supplements are generally far less effective than super-saturated liquids. Secondly,

good quality calcium supplements should not be given daily while the vitamins, trace minerals and amino acids should be.

Calcivet was the first super-saturated liquid calcium supplement for birds made in Europe or America. It is still the strongest and best value available. Remember that inadequate calcium is the most common nutritional problem in bird keeping and cuttlefish bone just doesn't do the job adequately!



Effective supplementation made easy

Feast or **Flourish** are the final part of the pet supplements package. They provide the unique herbal nutrients. These have three main characteristics:

- * they help support a healthy gut flora
- * they support the birds natural defenses against digestive

parasites

- * they support the immune response

For smaller birds (finches, canaries, budgies, lovebirds and cockatiels) the most common method is to use **Feast** as your softfood. Feast is the first true "super premium" softfood and feeding it all year round is very beneficial. It is an excellent way to deliver both Daily Essentials3 and Calcivet.

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Trialists comments on Banquet

"My birds have never enjoyed a food so much. My Prince of Wales and barabands are eating more fruit now as well"

Mrs Zaheer, West Midlands

"The birds really loved banquet. New birds and even sunflower junkies took to it well. They are eating all of the mix"

Carole Stevens, Suffolk

Product recommendations for pet birds

Budgies, canaries, lovebirds, cockatiels, finches etc.

Option 1

Budgie Parakeet Banquet (80% or more of the food intake)
Calcivet* only if behavioural or co-ordination problems involved (0.5 mls twice a week)

Option 2

Feast (10-25% of diet)
Daily Essentials3 (1 pinch for 10 canaries, 5 budgies, 2 cockatiels)
Calcivet*(1-3 drops per bird twice a week)

Option 3

Feast (Minimum 50% of diet)
Calcivet* (1-3 drops per bird twice a week)

Option 4 (Fussy Feeders) (add to water)

Daily Essentials1 (2 pinches to 50 mls water daily)
Calcivet* (1 ml per 50 mls of water 2-5 times a week)
Aviclens** (1 drop per 50 mls of water daily)

** For any bird that has not been given Calcivet before, we recommend that they get Calcivet five days a week for the first month and then drop to twice a week.*

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Birds with diets high in fruits and vegetables can have Feast mixed with these fresh foods. For some birds a softfood is less appropriate, in which case the supplement **Flourish** can be used. This provides all the herbal extracts without the “food” components that make up Feast. Flourish is simply added to fresh foods or table foods like bread. You will feed Daily Essentials3 and Calcivet the same way.

What about those fussy eaters?

Unfortunately there are a few birds that will simply only eat one thing. Often this is sunflower seed. In time these birds suffer a huge range of nutritional problems. The most difficult challenge is to improve the protein-to-energy ratio of the diet. This is important for feather formation, quick moults and weight control.

Only The Birdcare Company has tackled this problem, by developing **Fussy Feeder Essentials**. This is one of the rare times we suggest you supplement through the drinking

water.

Fussy Feeder Essentials should be added to the drinking water daily. Because the germs in the water will benefit from this nutritious supplement we insist you also add **Aviclens**. Calcivet is added to this drink twice a week.

This supplementation turns junk food into a highly nutritious diet. Interestingly this system also tends to encourage most birds to be more adventurous with their food. So many end up on the three normal supplements discussed earlier. They then get the added benefits of Flourish herbs and extra limiting amino acids.

Summary

Banquet, or alternatively Daily Essentials3, Calcivet, Feast or Flourish added to their food are the mainstays of a healthy diet for cage and aviary birds. These products are both easy and economical to use.

See next page for feeding guidelines and remember to contact us if you need any guidance (see page 19).

At The Birdcare Company we are committed to maximising the welfare of pet birds through good nutrition. Despite the efforts of most owners a huge number of pet birds are not fed as well as they should be (see p 8). Please use our advice services to ensure your feathered friends are given the best possible diet.

advice@BirdcareCo.com - 0845 130 8600 (UK) - www.BirdVetOnline

We offer a number of different ways to ensure your birds get all the nutrients they require. Here is a guide. Please ring our free advice line if you want any further assistance - 0845 130 8600 (local call charge only).

Pet Parrots (greys, amazons, cockatoos etc.)

Option 1

Parrot Banquet (80% or more of the food intake)

Calcivet* only if behavioural or co-ordination problems involved (0.5 mls twice a week)

Option 2 (add to fresh foods or human foods)

Daily Essentials3 (2 pinches (0.5g) daily)

Calcivet*(0.5 mls twice a week)

Option 3 (Fussy Feeders) (add to water)

Fussy Feeder Essentials (1 level tsp to 50 mls water daily)

Calcivet* (1 ml per 50 mls of water 2-5 times a week)

Aviclens** (1 drop per 50 mls of water daily)

Option 4 (Feather mutilators) (add to fresh foods or human foods)

Feather-Up (2 pinches (0.5g) daily)

Calcivet*(0.5 mls five times a week)

Potent Brew (0.5 mls dialy)

*** It is advisable to use Aviclens in all drinking and bathing water - It is very important to use Aviclens with Fussy Feeder Essentials.*

Pet Bird Price List

Calcivet - 30ml £3.40, 100ml £6.50

Daily Essentials1 - 50g £4.40, 100g £6.00

Daily Essentials3 - 50g £3.50, 100g £4.95

Fussy Feeder Essentials - 100g £5.25, 360g £13.25

Potent Brew - 30ml £4.40, 100ml £8.95

Gold Label Feast - 1kg £5.85

Parrot or Budgie Banquet - 500g £3.70, 1.6kg £8.10, 6kg £22.05 (please select)

Guardian Angel - 40g £7.90

Feather-Up - 50g £3.90

Avisafe RTU - 500ml £4.20

Aviclens - 30ml £3.40, 100ml £5.00

Compact Bird Lamps - Bayonet £24.99, Screw £24.99

Sandy Perches - Mini 8" £11.00, Small 12" £11.75, Medium 12" £15.25, Large 12" £17.25, Jumbo 14" £21.00

Sandy Corner Perch - Medium £20.75, Large £27.50, Jumbo £34.00

DIY Toy Components - See page 18 and contact us for prices.

Order form -

or ring 0845 130 8600 (local call charge only)

Qty.	Product	Pack Size	Value £	Total £
Post & Packing				£2.50
Overall total				

Please send your order to:
The Birdcare Company,
21/22 Spring Mill Ind. Est.,
Avening Road, Nailsworth,
Glos., GL6 0BS.
0845 130 8600
sales@BirdcareCo.com



How do I know if my birds are getting enough supplement?

There are three quite common reasons why people under-supplement their birds. The first is people who put supplements in the water for birds that are eating lots of fresh fruits and vegetables. These birds get most or all of their water needs from their food so need to drink very little. As a result they don't drink their supplement. For these birds always add supplements to the food. Our on-food supplements are best anyway because they contain many ingredients we cannot put in drinking water.

The second problem is when people allow their birds to be wasteful with food. Putting a days amount of supplement on the food only to have the bird waste three quarters of it will obviously result in too little supplement being consumed. Either "over supply" the supplement or cut down

on food wastage.

The third is people who simply give too little or too infrequently. Many seem to think that giving our recommended dose rate is going to kill their birds. I cannot understand why we are supposed to want to kill your birds! In fact we calculate application rates with considerable care and are miles within the safe tolerance levels. And when we say the product is needed daily, it is! The bird cannot store many nutrients effectively so daily is best! Birds in the wild do not go on vitamins once a week!

If you're not sure how much to give try our advice service:

e-mail: advice@BirdcareCo.com
telephone: 0845 130 8600

(local call charge only from UK phones)

Order Form

Name:.....

Address:

Post Code:

Tel:

Signed:

Date:

Enclose a UK cheque payable to The Birdcare Company or credit card (visa, Mastercard, Switch) details below:

Name as it appears on the card

Card Number:

Expiry Date:

Valid From (Switch only):

Issue No (Switch only):

You can also place orders through our website, by e-mail or by phone. The website address is www.BirdcareCo.com. Send e-mail orders to sales@BirdcareCo.com. Telephone order direct on 0845 130 8600 (lo-call number).

Your name and address will go on our computer so you may get newsletters and updates from us. Your address will not be given or sold to third parties. If you would like your details deleted from this database please tick this box

Dear Malcolm,

Before I knew of the existence of Feast eggfood I was losing several young Border and Yorkshire canary chicks going light (breastbone sticking out like a razor). As soon as I saw Feast advertised in the Cage & Aviary I sent for 10 kilos. Within a few days the deaths ceased and, touch wood, I did not lose one second round youngster.

Thanks a million, forever indebted to you.

Yours sincerely

John A Hutchinson (Leeds)

Behaviour and diet

Carole Stevens is a qualified pet behaviourist currently studying for a Masters degree in avian behaviour. She also runs a small rescue centre. We regularly encourage customers to contact her for advice. A few years ago we asked Carole to help us evaluate *Fussy Feeder Essentials* during its trials. One of her rescues was Holly. This is her story.

Holly is an umbrella cockatoo. She had been beaten by her former owner and had only ever eaten sunflower, chocolate and chips before reaching Carole, who immediately improved her diet.

But Holly was a typical rescue bird and would not eat a broad-based diet.

Fear and Aggression

Even after twelve months at the rescue centre Holly rushed to the back of her cage whenever anyone entered her room. She was very aggressive and could not be handled! Carole had never been able to get her out of her cage.

Within two weeks of starting Holly on *Fussy Feeder Essentials*, *Aviclenz* and *Calcivet* she was calming down significantly. She came to the front of the cage when Carole entered the room, her appetite improved and she was beginning to be tempted by fruit. For the first time Carole was able to take her out of her cage. Another two weeks later and she was full of energy and playing with toys!

As you can see from the photo, Holly is now a normal pet cockatoo. In the spring, when her hormones are most active, she even loves to be carried around in Carole's fleece pocket!

Behaviour, lethargy and feather plucking

Holly is an extreme example of diet affecting behaviour. But there are many more. In fact we regard any behavioural problem as an alarm bell ringing for insufficient calcium in the diet.

Even lethargy and depression may have this

as its simple cause. How many birds are treated with anti-depressants or drugs *before* trying calcium supplementation?

Blood tests may indicate a problem. But a normal calcium blood test tells us very little about the calcium level in the nerves or brain.

Another reason for lethargy and depression can be a simple B group vitamin deficiency (the energy vitamins). These vitamins are water

soluble and so are flushed out of the body very quickly after being eaten. Owners who supplement less than daily are not doing the job properly. In the long term problems can occur.

Insufficient dietary Vitamin A can cause skin problems. Irritations like these can contribute to feather plucking.

Interestingly some nutritional problems are not only related to the food but also to a poorly functioning digestive system. A probiotic is often helpful.

So for plucking birds we always recommend *Calcivet*, **Feather-Up** (a comprehensive vitamin, mineral, amino acid and protein supplement designed for feather problems) and *Potent Brew* (or **BioPlus**). If there is no response to this we recommend you go to an experienced avian vet and get all the tests done!

Training for good behaviour

At The Birdcare Company we are only competent to discuss the nutritional aspects of bird behaviour. For training issues we always recommend you contact competent bird behaviourists. We regularly recommend two who will answer your queries by phone or e-mail. They both understand the importance of nutrition to good behaviour. They can be contacted at:

Candie Bradley

E-mail: candie.bradley@btinternet.com

Tel: 01332 780406 (UK)



Before Birdcare supplements Holly was impossible to handle. Now she loves a cuddle!

Hygiene and lighting

Full spectrum lighting has been a feature of American birdrooms for many years. But only very recently has it become readily available in Europe. And it really does seem to have benefits.

My explanation is this. Because birds see in the ultra-violet wavelengths (a range of colours we humans cannot see) there are markings on many birds we don't know anything about. If the birds are kept in environments with low levels of UV light they can't see these markings properly.



Seeing the opposite sex

I have seen pictures of budgerigars and blue tits taken with special equipment that shows these markings in a form that we can see. This may be particularly important for some species where this is the main way of distinguishing between the sexes. Certainly the blue tits show clear differences between the sexes that are not otherwise evident to our eyes.

However this is certainly not the only effect. Ian Hinze believes UV lighting helped him to breed his Mali firefinches - a species where the sexes are totally different in colour. So there is even more to it than colour.

Certain wavelengths of UV light have a positive effect on all of us. We now have "bird lights" in our offices and we found the long winter months far more tolerable and productive. So there is a positive benefit that is difficult to describe.

Customers who have bought a few **Arcadia** lights have been delighted enough with the effect on their birds to come back and buy more!

Arcadia lights are available as fluorescent tubes and as bayonet or screw-in long life bulbs.

In the end the real proof is in their use.

Reducing the infection risk

You have already read a great deal in this booklet about supporting the immune system. But the immune system won't work at full capacity if it is not exercised. So that means that your birds

should be exposed to a *low* level of germs regularly. The lesson from this is that too much hygiene in daily life is not a good thing. In fact birds kept in exceedingly clean conditions are vulnerable to infection when they come into contact with more normal birds.

But unclean conditions are just as bad. Birds that are constantly fighting germs are less able to put their energies into fun things like playing. And their chicks (with poorly developed immune systems) are even more vulnerable.

There are two areas of hygiene to consider. These are cage and toy hygiene, and food and water hygiene.

Weight control

Fat birds are not healthy birds. They are particularly prone to liver damage. Unfortunately many people don't realise their birds are fat. They seem normal to the inexperienced owner.

Our birds get fat because we feed them foods with too much energy and not enough protein. So they eat plenty of food to satisfy their protein requirements. This provides too much starch or fats and so they put on weight.

This problem does not arise with birds supplemented with Daily Essentials³ or eating Banquet Gold Label. The amino acids in these products balance the proteins in the diet. This almost doubles the amount of useable protein they get from the same food.

So the birds eat less to get the same protein value. Less food means less energy - so they don't get fat!

Simple and safe - what could be easier?

Cage and toy hygiene

Bacteria are the cause of about half the infectious diseases our birds can get. As many disinfectants only kill bacteria they are only protecting your birds half as well as they should.

Avisafe disinfectant/ cleaner is effective against viruses, fungi, yeasts and bacteria - yet it is very safe for you and your birds. Under a different name this product is very widely used by many veterinary clinics.

Avisafe is very economical as it remains active in water for six months after dilution. This means that it can be stored in a spray bottle and, unlike most disinfectants, you don't throw large quantities away.

Use Avisafe in cages and nest boxes, on perches, toys and for food and water containers. It is even ideal for hand rearing utensils, brooders and incubators.

You will find it has a pleasant aroma and is non-corrosive, non-toxic and is a very low allergy product.

Food and water hygiene

It seems strange to think that something so vital to life as water can actually be one of the major killers of our birds.

The reason that water can be so dangerous is that it can be a perfect medium for germs to spread and infect previously healthy birds. You don't want your birds to suffer.

Wherever your water comes from, town supply, well or a supermarket bottle, it is bound to contain a few germs. As soon as your birds put their beaks in it they contaminate it even further. Many birds bathe, deposit food or defecate in their water. This adds even more to the brew!

Adding nutritional supplements to this water makes matters even worse as they feed the germs even more. The germs love it!

Fortunately there is a simple and safe solution to this problem. Adding tiny amounts of **Aviclens**

to your birds' water prevents the germs from multiplying so keeping it totally safe and crystal clear.

Some people recommend using Colloidal Silver for this job. We do not, despite making and selling Colloidal Silver.

Colloidal Silver is *not* destroyed by its

disinfectant action. And, as the body finds it very difficult to remove silver, it builds up in the organs. Humans taking daily Colloidal Silver have been reported to turn grey as the silver is deposited into their skin. This cannot be a good thing in the long term.



Totally safe

In contrast Aviclens is destroyed immediately it gets into the bird's gut. So it does not do any damage to the beneficial bacteria that are vital for the bird's health. It doesn't build up in the body either.

Soaking seeds and pulses can also present a germ problem. Many germs (particularly yeasts on and under the husk) multiply rapidly as soon as they are soaked. This can lead to major infections in chicks and even adult bird deaths.

Simply adding Aviclens to the water in which the seed is soaked ensures fresh smelling sprouted seeds every time.

*Free advice from experts
in bird health and nutrition:
advice@BirdcareCo.com
www.BirdcareCo.com
0845 130 8600*

For information about how to buy these fabulous products from
The Birdcare Company or their distributors turn to page 19

Pellets or seed and supplements?

Much has been written about the benefits of pellets over seed diets. And it is true that, in America, bird health improved with the introduction of manufactured complete foods.

In Europe (starting with the UK) pellets have failed to become widely established with bird breeders as they simply get better results with supplemented seed diets.

While some vets still promote the idea of pellets, supplemented seed diets still reign supreme not only in Europe but even in USA.

We believe that manufactured diets are less than ideal because they cannot contain good quality calcium. Many have chemical anti-oxidants and colourings.

Pellets only provide very limited choice for the birds. So birds cannot select to control their protein-to-energy intake. Because needs vary from bird to bird and season to season it is impossible for the nutritionist to get this balance absolutely right so the bird should be given a choice.

We believe that supplemented seed diets, such as Banquet, with fresh foods are best for pets.

We are always interested to hear about your birds.

Have you transformed their behaviour, health or plumage with Birdcare products?

If you have, drop us a line, ring us up or send an e-mail. You never know your story may end up in print!

You want the best for your birds - so do we

We have searched the world for the best ingredients to make the best supplements for your birds. We believe no other company makes such comprehensive products with such innovative ingredients for your birds' health and breeding performance.

We have carefully designed products so that they work together to make an effective and economical nutrition system. Have you ever read about products as well designed and co-ordinated as these?

Of course you can buy cheaper vitamin supplements. But do they contain minerals with the bio-availability of Daily Essentials? Do they have enough amino acids to allow your birds a quick, stress free moult? Do they have enough of the expensive vitamins?

You may find another herb enriched eggfood in Europe but does it contain properly balanced protein or is just a wheat biscuit with a few extra vitamins?

How well does your probiotic survive on the way to the lower gut? Is your calcium supplement really bio-available? Is it super-saturated or just a weak imitation?

Despite being one of the newest firms in the business we hold a 62% share of the UK cage & aviary bird supplements market (research carried out by The Birdcare Company at The National Exhibition of Cage & Aviary Birds 2000). A dozen other firms fight over the remaining 38%. Clearly we have customers who keep coming back because of the results they get.

Our products are receiving rave reviews in Germany, Holland, Belgium, the United States, The Philippines and many other countries around the world.

You and your birds deserve the best.

The stress of moulting

Pet birds often live in air conditioned and centrally heated houses. They are exposed to unnatural patterns of light that don't follow the seasons. So some of their moulting signals are confusing.

Then we feed them inadequate diets and it is hardly surprising that some have terrible trouble completing a moult. Moults should be completed in four to six weeks for most pet species. Many actually take months!

Slow moults are dangerous

Birds that are stressed by a slow moult are far more susceptible to other diseases. Some species, such as gouldian finches, are well recognised for their high mortality rates during the moult. This is totally unnecessary with good nutrition.

The most critical nutrients for moulting birds are the sulphur-containing amino acids (SCAs). There are two reasons for this. Firstly, 70% of the SCAs in the body are found in the feathers. So it is obvious that a moulting bird needs lots of them. Secondly, these amino acids are the very ones in short supply in plant food sources!

Very few other supplement suppliers use SCAs in significant quantities but we regard them as absolutely fundamental to a good cage bird

diet. We incorporate them into **Banquet Gold Label** (complete food) and our on-food supplement **Daily Essentials3**. They are not incorporated in our in-water supplements because SCAs tend to be very smelly in tap water. This is just one key reason for supplementing via food whenever possible.

A good moult also requires plenty of calcium so **Calcivet** is essential at this time.

Previously unsupplemented birds

Often we get calls from pet owners whose birds are struggling to moult or are suffering other feather related problems from poor feather quality to plucking. These birds often require extra special help. For them we have developed **Feather-Up**. This is used every day instead of Daily Essentials3 and in conjunction with Calcivet (five times a week).

Feather-Up contains everything you find in Daily Essentials3 plus extra high value protein and highly bio-available sulphur. It is the Rolls Royce of moulting supplements.

Feather-Up can be used all year round but most people switch back to Daily Essentials3 when their Feather-Up has run out.

Pets laying eggs

One of the most common enquiries we get from pet bird owners is how to stop their pet bird from laying eggs. This is particularly common with cockatiels but many other species are also involved.

Firstly it should be remembered that egg laying is perfectly natural for a hen. If she is fed properly she is unlikely to suffer any problems. If the diet is not adequate then there are risks. So good diet is very important.

The key nutritional issue is to ensure they have a good vitamin supplement and plenty of bio-available calcium. This is achieved by giving **Daily Essentials** (daily) and **Calcivet** once a week (twice a week for greys and eclectus). When she

is laying increase the Calcivet to five times a week. Calcium will not stimulate egg laying but it will make it much safer.

If you really wish to stop your pet hen from laying follow these guidelines:

- * Reduce her daylength to 10 hours by putting her in a dark room or covering the cage
- * Leave the eggs for her to sit on, for weeks if she will, until she gets bored
- * Remove high protein foods from her diet
- * Stop making a fuss of her. If she thinks you are a mate she will continue to want to breed!

If these ideas fail consider talking to one of the behaviourists listed on page 12 or visit an experienced avian vet.

Toys and healthy perches

Those of you who have ever spent all day on your feet will know the value of a comfortable pair of shoes. It is the same for our birds.

Sandy Perches are excellent for your bird's feet and nails and they last almost forever. Look at this comparison between Sandy perches and conventional concrete pedicure perches:

Concrete Perch

- *Cold on birds' feet
- *Dries out feet
- *Can cause burns if wet
- *Unnatural shapes
- *Heavy
- *May break if dropped
- *Trims feet well
- *Wears out

Sandy Perch

- *Natural wood insulation
- *Leaves feet soft
- *Safe wet or dry
- *Shape of natural wood
- *1/3rd the weight
- *Really tough
- *Trims better
- *Lasts virtually forever



**THE FIRST TRULY COMFORTABLE
CONDITIONING PERCH**

Sandy perches come in a number of forms and sizes. The normal perches are single ended. Corner perches have attachment fittings at both ends and swings are chain mounted.

Sizes cater for everything from finches to macaws.



Birdcare Company DIY toy components are ideal to repair and rejuvenate toys that you would otherwise have to throw away. They are made from safe, natural materials and are non-toxic.

- Chain & Links
- Thick Leather Thongs
- Large Wooden Balls
- Large Wooden Wheels
- Large Wooden Spools
- Large Wooden Cubes
- Large Bells
- 4" Cactus Tubes
- 2" Fuzz Balls
- Wood Slats
- Small Plastic Rings
- Cactus Slices
- Wooden Hearts
- Thin Leather Thongs
- Small Bells
- Small Wooden Spools
- Small Wooden Balls
- Small Wooden Wheels



Complete recovery

**Much feather plucking
is nutritional in origin**

Daily Essentials3
Calcivet
Potent Brew



This improvement in just two weeks

Buying Birdcare Company products is easy!

You can purchase Birdcare Company products anywhere in the world. In some countries we have distributors and retailers. For others we can supply by mail order.

United Kingdom

We have over 240 retailers selling our products in the UK. Please visit our web site for an up-to-date listing by county. Or ring 0845 130 8600 (local call charge only). A full mail order service is available for customers who prefer to buy direct. Order by 2.30 pm and your goods will normally be despatched the same day.

You can pay by credit card or cheque. Our web site shopping trolley is secure.

www.BirdcareCo.com

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These pictures clearly illustrate the impact of prolonged poor nutrition and the equally dramatic benefits of good nutrition. This bird was one of fifty fed just seed and water for twelve months. The first picture was taken six weeks **after** its rescue. By this time it had been on Laraine McGinnis' best diet all that time - and it still looked awful. It was lethargic and ill as well as poorly feathered.

Six weeks on Calcivet and Feather-Up and it, and the other 49 birds, all looked magnificent!

These birds are living proof that basic vitamin and mineral supplements are not enough. But more sophisticated products can have a dramatic impact.

See more of these birds on Laraine's web site: www.ladygouldianfinch.com.

