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**BUDGIES:**

Budgerigars ("budgies") are small, colorful birds that are found in large numbers in the desert interiors of Australia. Because free-ranging birds are accustomed to going days without water, it is not appropriate in captivity to use drinking water as a vehicle for administering vitamins or medications. The normal free-ranging budgie is green; other colors have resulted from selective breeding, which has actually produced undesirable characteristics, such as a significant increase in body mass and unusual feathering that interferes with normal body functions. Budgerigars are very easy to breed in captivity. Green birds are the most disease-resistant and probably have the longest life expectancy in captivity. Avoid purchasing a bird mill budgie sold in most chain pet stores. Contact a breeder with references to get a healthy bird.

*Vital Statistics*

- Body length: 7 in
- Body weight: 30 g
- Age of sexual maturity: 4 mo
- Average lifespan: 4 years
- Maximum life span: 18 yr

**WHAT TO EXPECT FROM YOUR BUDGIE:**

Budgerigars (commonly referred to as "parakeets" or "budgies") are quiet, intelligent, nondestructive birds that are easy to care for. They are the most popular and numerous companion birds because of their relatively gentle, gregarious and entertaining personalities. They do not tend to bond with an individual person, and frequently interact with all family members. Budgerigars are capable of developing a large vocabulary (perhaps 200-300 words) but some effort must be made to accomplish this, and their voice is not as clear as other pet bird species. Some individuals are also good at whistling. Not talking at all is not unusual.

**IS YOUR BUDGIE MALE OR FEMALE?**

Generally, in the normal green budgie, the cere (plump tissue above the beak) is blue in the male and pinkish brown in the female. This gender

differentiation is not 100% accurate, nor does it apply to color mutations. Hormonal changes may affect the cere color.

### **WHAT DO BUDGIES DO ALL DAY?**

Budgies are playful and easily amused with simple toys. Because they (especially females) love to chew, toys must be free of toxic metals, hooks, sharp objects or small, easily consumed components. Providing small diameter, fresh-cut branches from nontoxic, pesticide-free trees is suggested for budgerigars. Check with your veterinarian for recommendations on locally available safe trees.

### **ARE BUDGIES TAME?**

Young, hand-raised budgerigars adapt readily to new surroundings and handling procedures. They should be exposed early in life to novel situations (car travel, hospital visits, multiple visitors in the household, other household pets) so that they are well adjusted to these events. They are easily tamed; therefore, it is better to allow the parents to raise offspring in the nest and remove the young for taming at weaning. Young budgies can be identified by their large black eyes and stripes over the forehead.

### **WHAT YOUR VETERINARIAN LOOKS FOR IN A HEALTHY BUDGIE:**

Dry, open nares  
Clear, bright eyes (no discharge)  
Smooth, bright feathers without color breaks, transparency or ragged edges  
Smooth beak  
Alert, erect posture  
Body free of lumps and bumps  
Even, reptilian pattern on the feet, and nails of appropriate length.

### **HOW TO IDENTIFY YOUR BIRD:**

Two methods used to permanently mark companion birds for identification purposes are tattoos and microchips (both are injected under the skin). Although individually numbered leg bands or rings may be applied, this method is unreliable. However, each bird has a unique scale pattern on the feet. Photographs of the feet, which are periodically updated as the bird ages, can be maintained in the bird's record to confirm its identity and to prevent fraud that can occur with other techniques.

### **WHY THE WINGS SHOULD BE CLIPPED:**

Budgerigars that are allowed unrestricted freedom in the home often become less tame and can encounter numerous physical dangers or toxins; therefore, wing clipping is recommended. The goal of clipping the wings is NOT to make the bird incapable of flight, but to prevent it from developing rapid and sustained flight and to prevent escape. Additional trimming may be required 8-12 weeks after the start of a molt cycle.

### **HOW TO KEEP YOUR BUDGIE HEALTHY, HAPPY AND SAFE:**

Give lots of attention. Feed a fresh, high quality, toxin-free formulated diet, such as Harrison's Fine Grind formulas with daily supplementation of small amounts of chopped vegetables and fruit according to the instructions on the back of the bag. Do not feed grit, as it is not necessary with modern captive diets. Provide clean, fresh uncontaminated water. Remove and replace food and water containers twice daily to maximize activity in a healthy bird. Provide an occasional opportunity for bath, shower or misting (at least weekly). Avoid spraying house with insecticides.

### **HOUSING FOR YOUR BIRD:**

be as large as possible.  
be clean, secure, safe and easy to service.  
be

constructed of durable, nontoxic material (avoid zinc).contain variable-sized perches made of clean, nontoxic, pesticide-free tree branches.have food and water containers placed at opposite ends of the enclosure.avoid having perches located directly over food containers.offer occasional opportunity for protected outdoor exposure to fresh air, sunlight and exercise.

**IT IS IMPORTANT TO RESTRICT THIER ACCESS TO:**

ceiling fans hot cooking oil Teflon®-coated items (overheated) leg chains sandpaper-covered perches tobacco and cigarette smoke chocolate, avocado, salt, alcohol toxic houseplants pesticides toxic fumes easily dismantled toys.

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