



SEED TO PELLET CONVERSION FOR BIRDS

If your bird has been on a seed only diet it may be initially reluctant to accept a formulated one. It is important to remember that an all-seed diet can result in malnutrition and a reduction the life span of the bird. It can take some weeks to successfully convert a bird. Do not despair, with a little patience and persistence you will succeed. Please read through the following before attempting to convert your bird.

Supply adequate clean water and a variety of fresh fruit and vegetables along with the pellets. Once converted, you will find your bird will eat more human food.

Ensure your bird eats something at least every 12 hours. If you must give in, offer your bird it's seed at varied times. This avoids the bird thinking if it starves itself for the day it will be rewarded at 6pm with seed.

Never attempt to convert a sick bird. If your bird has been unwell, ask your vet about the appropriate time/weight for your bird to be converted.

Check your bird's droppings daily. If only the urates (the white component of the stool) are present this means that your bird has not digested anything. If your bird's faeces appear to be dark green or black, your bird could have a stomach upset. In all of these cases offer a readily accepted meal and try another method.

During the conversion process the following reactions are considered normal.

Birds will increase their water consumption and their urine secretion.

Droppings may increase in size and change to the colour of the pellet being consumed.

Initially your bird may appear to eat a greater volume of the pellets. This is due to the sudden decrease in fat in the bird's diet. They will appear to eat a lesser volume compared to seed over the long term, due to the absence of the husk.



There are several approaches that may be tried to ensure your bird accepts a commercially prepared diet.

- ❖ *Cold Turkey* - Simply offer a measured amount of the pellets in the bird's regular bowl in the morning (when birds are most hungry). It is important not to make a fuss.
- ❖ *Imitation* - Allow your bird to see another bird eating the new food. If the bird is bonded to a member of your family, they can pretend to snack on the pellets whilst the bird is looking on.
- ❖ *Rissoles* - Soak an even amount of pellets and seed in warm water. When all the water has been absorbed by the pellet, compact the mixture into a ball. Bake the balls to harden them; they can then be stored in the fridge for a few days. Substitute the bird's daily portion of seed for the balls. Gradually reduce the amount of seed used in the mixture.
- ❖ *Eat with Friends* - If one of your bird's favourite toys is a mirror, this method will work. Place the mirror flat on the floor of the cage and sprinkle a small amount of seed and plenty of pellets over it.
- ❖ *Higher is Better* - Place the container of pellets near the highest perch.
- ❖ *Seed Reduction* - Start with 1 - 3 containers with a 50:50 seed/pellet combination. Gradually reduce the amount of seed over three weeks. It is important to monitor the amount of pellets added and consumed in the mix as most birds will attempt to exist on the small amount of seed provided.
- ❖ *Ring the Bell* - Give your bird a bowl of seed and a bowl of pellets. Do this for one week and each time you serve the food ring a bell. The next week, only provide the container of pellets and continue to ring the bell on serving.
- ❖ *Cover* - Smear the pellets with apple sauce or peanut butter until they become familiar with them.
- ❖ *Bird Boarding* - Your bird can be boarded over the period of a week for conversion. Your bird will be offered a range of brands, weighed twice daily and crop fed as necessary. For bookings call - Nicole Arkinstall PH : 1300 556 321

