

## Pellet Conversion

A pelleted diet contains vital nutrients such as vitamins, minerals, and protein which is mostly deficient in a seed only diet. Seed only diets are very fatty and poor in nutritional value, which will have severe negative affects on your birds health, therefore feeding a pelleted diet is essential to maintaining a healthy pet bird. However pellets are not a complete diet on their own, birds also require access to greens such as spinach, silverbeet, snow pea sprouts, peas, seeding grasses, green seeding millet and other fruits and vegetables that are brightly coloured. Fruit eating birds such as Conures, Eclectus, Ringneck's, Lorikeets and Macaws need to eat a variety of fruit and vegetables everyday which can make up to 50% of their daily food intake. We advise not to feed avocado, onion, garlic or rhubarb as they are poisonous as well as grape seeds and skin which can lead to kidney issues.

Your bird will likely choose not to eat pellets willingly as they are not as palatable as seeds. Due to this converting birds from seeds to pellets can take time as you will need to slowly reduce their access to seeds.

- Offer your bird 1 heaped teaspoon of seed per day in a bowl they are familiar with and place this bowl at the lowest perch in the cage.
- Then offer your bird a full bowl of pellets in another familiar bowl and place this at the highest perch where your bird spends most of their time.
- When your bird is eating pellets you will notice their droppings change colour and consistency, when this happens you can gradually reduce the amount of seed offered.
- As long as your bird continues to maintain weight you can stop the seed completely within a few weeks.
- Seed can still be used as a treat for training purposes or to stimulate breeding in larger birds.
- Weigh your bird once daily to ensure they are not losing excessive amounts of weight during this conversion.
- A bird can only afford to lose 10% of their body weight in total over a whole conversion period, however if your bird loses more than 10% of its total body weight you will need to increase the amount of seed offered to 2 teaspoons per day.
- Ways to encourage your bird to eat the pellet diet include sprinkling pellets onto the surface of a bird mirror on the bottom of the cage, adding apple juice to the pellets to flavour them or mixing fruit or veggies through the pellets making sure to discard this after 12 hours.

Good luck with the task of converting your bird to a pelleted diet. Persistence and observation is the key and you can feel confident that your bird will have a longer, healthier life as a result.