

CONVERTING YOUR BIRD TO PELLETS

There are many ways to try converting parrots from seeds onto a pelleted diet. The main thing to remember is to be patient. Many birds take 3 to 6 months to learn to eat pellets and a certain amount of food will be wasted during the conversion process. The different conversion techniques can be simplified into 3 basic methods.

1. Method #1

Mix seeds with pellets in the same bowl in 50:50 ratio. The total amount of seeds in the bowl should be less than what your bird normally eats in a day. Every day make up a new mixture of an even amount of seeds and pellets. After 10 days, give your bird only pellets without seeds for 24 hours (medium and large parrots) or 12 hours (budgies, cockatiels, and small parrots). If your bird is not eating the pellets by the end of the 12 or 24 hour period, start from the beginning. Keep repeating until your bird converts to the pellets. Once your bird eats pellets, discontinue feeding seed.

2. Method #2

Allow your bird free access to pellets at all times but limit seed intake to 30 minutes in the morning and 30 minutes in the evening. Make sure your bird is actually eating during the 30 minute time period to ensure adequate calorie intake. Once your bird eats pellets discontinue feeding seed.

3. Method #3

This method is for overweight small birds such as cockatiels and budgies. Feed your bird a mixture of seeds and pellets while gradually reducing the proportion of seeds to pellets. Make sure to do frequent “weigh-ins” to make sure your bird is not losing weight. As long as your bird is maintaining its weight you can continue decreasing the amount of seeds in the mixture. After a period of around 20 days, give your bird only pellets for 12 hours. If your bird eats pellets during this time, continue feeding just pellets. However, if your bird does not eat the pellets by the end of the 12 hours, start over from the beginning.

Example:

# Teaspoons Seeds	# Teaspoons Pellets	# Days
1	1	4
$\frac{3}{4}$	1 $\frac{1}{4}$	4
$\frac{1}{2}$	1 $\frac{1}{2}$	4
Recheck weight; if no weight loss, continue...		
$\frac{1}{4}$	1 $\frac{3}{4}$	4
$\frac{1}{8}$	1 $\frac{7}{8}$	4
Recheck weight; if no weight loss, give only pellets for 12 hours. If the bird does not eat pellets within 12 hours, start over again.		

4. Additional Feeding Tips

- Pretend to eat pellets while making “yummy-yummy” lip smacking sounds to the bird. Then hand a pellet to your bird.
- Try moistening pellets with pasteurized unsweetened apple juice.
- Offer your bird pellets from the dinner table during family meal times.
- House your bird near another bird that is already eating pellets.
- Move the bird into an empty aquarium or box and offer pellets off of the floor. You can also place the bird onto an empty countertop with just pellets to play with.
- If your bird is very stubborn, you may consider leaving your bird with your veterinarian for conversion.