

So you want to own a bird?

Is a cockatiel the right companion animal for you?

Please read the information below and be honest with your answers.

1. I have an appropriate and safe space for this bird.
2. I know that choosing this bird can be a long-term commitment.
3. I will provide daily, supervised time for this bird outside a cage.
4. The natural sounds of this bird will be acceptable to family members and neighbors.
5. A mature person will provide responsible and primary care for this companion animal.



If you answered YES to all 5 questions, a cockatiel may be right for you.

Average Size 11 to 14 inches long Life Span Up to 25 years with proper care.

Diet Specialized pelleted diets are highly recommended and should consist of 60–70% of the diet; Use fortified seeds in moderation as they are higher in fat and less nutritious than pellets.

Fresh fruit and vegetables such as strawberries, apricots (no pits), bananas, dark green leafy vegetables (like spinach or kale), peas, carrot tops, celery, and corn.

Clean, fresh, filtered and chlorine-free water changed daily.

Do not feed birds fruit seeds, avocados, chocolate, alcohol, or caffeine; these can cause serious medical problems.

Fresh fruits and vegetables should be given daily and discarded when not eaten within 2 to 4 hours. Cockatiels appreciate quality and variety in their food.

Housing Birds acclimate well to average household temperatures; be cautious of extreme temperature change; cage should be placed off the floor in an area that is well-lit and away from drafts, A cage approximately 24" W x 14" D x 24" H, with metal bars spaced no greater than ½" apart, makes a good home for your cockatiel; as with all animals, it is best to provide the largest habitat possible; a flight cage is strongly recommended.

Perches should be at least 5" long and ½" in diameter; a variety of perch sizes to exercise feet and help prevent arthritis is recommended.

A metal grate over the droppings tray will keep the bird away from droppings; line the droppings tray with paper or appropriate substrate for easier cleaning; to avoid contamination, do not place food or water containers under perches.

Bird owners should avoid non-stick cookware and appliances as they can release fumes hazardous to your bird's health.

Behavior and Interaction: Cockatiels are known for mimicking repetitive sounds and noises. Bond easily with their human companions and will follow them everywhere.

Habitat: Clean the cage and perches regularly; replace substrate or cage liner weekly or more often if needed; replace food and water daily. Replace perches, dishes, and toys when worn or damaged; rotate new toys into the habitat regularly.

Ensure that there are no cage parts or toys with lead, zinc or lead and lead-based paints or galvanized parts as these can cause serious medical issues if ingested by your bird.

Grooming and Hygiene: Provide filtered, chlorine-free, lukewarm water regularly for bathing, and remove the water when done; as an alternative, mist the bird with water or a grooming spray. Clipping flight feathers is not necessary, but when done correctly it can help prevent injury or escape; consult an avian veterinarian on what is best for your bird. Nails should be trimmed by a qualified person to prevent injury to the bird.

Signs of a Healthy Bird:

Active, alert, and sociable – Eats and drinks throughout the day - Dry nostrils and bright, dry eyes
Legs, and feet normal in appearance - Clean, dry vent – Smooth, well-groomed feathers

Common Health Issues:

Chlamydiosis = Loss of Appetite, fluffed feathers, and nasal discharge. **Seek immediate veterinary attention.**

Conjunctivitis = Red eyes; tearing; closed, or puffy eyes. Wash eyes with warm water compress. **Seek treatment from veterinarian.**

Diarrhea = Fecal portion of stool not formed. Multiple causes, from change in diet to internal parasites. **Seek immediate veterinary attention.**

If you notice any of these signs below, please contact your avian veterinarian.

Beak swelling or accumulations - Fluffed, plucked, or soiled feathers - Sitting on floor of habitat

Wheezing or coughing – Runny or discolored stools – Favoring one foot

Eye or nasal discharge – Red or swollen eyes – Loss of appetite

It's always best to learn ahead of time where an Avian Veterinarian is located in your area. Birds are a special discipline compared to cats, dogs and horses. Once your bird is acclimated to its new surroundings it's always best to bring the bird to this veterinarian for a quick checkup. This way the veterinarian has documentation of file regarding the bird in case a health concern arises.