

Bird Health Notes:



BATHING

Does my bird need a bath?

Bathing is very important to the proper maintenance of feathers. All birds do it. In the wild a bird may bathe during a rain shower, find a puddle, lake or stream to splash in or nuzzle playfully in wet grasses and vegetation. Bathing encourages healthy preening or grooming of the feathers. It keeps feathers free of dirt and will help preserve their wonderful, natural lustre.

How often should my bird bath?

Birds should be offered a bath regularly. The frequency will depend on the bird. Many birds enjoy bathing every day, while others only bath occasionally. Start by offering a bath to your bird once or twice weekly. You will quickly learn the bird's preferences.

How do I bath my bird?

The bird will actually do most of the work. You will simply supply the lukewarm water. Some birds enjoy using a dish of water. There are special bathing chambers that attach to the side of a small bird's cage and keep water from splashing about the room. A shallow sink of water is often convenient and many birds will frolic under a gentle trickle of water from the tap while dipping their head and fluttering their wings in the water. A clean spray bottle such as that used to mist plants can be utilised gently to simulate rain. Your bird may dance about excitedly with its wings in the air, tail fanned out and turning frequently to catch as much of this light "rain" as possible. Often you will tire of spraying before the bird tires of being sprayed. Your pet may take pleasure with you in the shower as water splashes off you. Care should be taken as *direct* water

pressure in the shower may frighten or even hurt the bird. Some smaller birds such as finches and canaries will wet themselves on the moisture dripping from freshly washed vegetation in the cage such as carrot tops or other greens. *Please ensure you monitor a bird's bath time to help avoid accidents such as drowning.*

Commercial bathing solutions may not offer any specific benefits over regular, natural, fresh water. Do *not* use soap on your bird. *Consult your vet for specific directions if you should have occasion to actually wash something specific off your birds feathers.*

When do I bath my bird?

Bathing in the morning may provide more opportunity to dry. A sunny, warm room, free of drafts provides a comfortable setting to dry out and preen while ensuring the bird does not get a chill and become sick. The bird should be completely dried before going to bed since most homes are cooler at night. Some birds seem to enjoy a gentle warm hair dryer but great care must be taken not to overheat the bird or use it forcibly against its wishes.