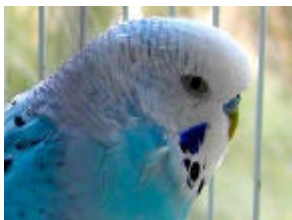


Bird Health Notes:



**CHOOSING A
CANARY**

General information

The canary (*Serinus canaria*) is the second most popular pet bird. They are known for their good nature, attractive plumage and remarkable singing ability. Canaries originate from the Canary Islands, Madeira and the Azores. They were introduced to Europe by the Portuguese in the fifteenth century. There are numerous varieties bred in captivity. Some of these birds are bred for their song while others are bred for their conformation, plumage and colour.

The canary is relatively easy to care for. It is an appropriate pet for children to learn to care for responsibly. They are also often found as companions in retirement homes and hospitals.

Purchasing a Canary

Canaries may be purchased from a pet shop or, better, a reputable breeder. When selecting a Canary, try to choose a young bird as it may be easier to tame. The female canary does not sing as well as the male. Many people are surprised to find the bird they thought was a male, turns out to be a female with less or often no song. If you want a Canary specifically for its singing ability, make sure you have actually heard it sing. Keep in mind that a canary who is under stress, moulting, in ill health or simply in a new environment, may not sing. Hand raised babies often make better pets since they have been completely socialised with humans. Young birds are easier to tame and adapt readily to new environments and situations. Your new bird should be exposed early to different events (young and old people, males and females, other pets, car trips, visits to the veterinary surgeon, etc.) to help promote a calm, well adjusted pet. The lively, alert bird that is not easily frightened is more

likely a healthy bird. After purchasing your new bird, have it examined by your vet.

Veterinary care

Canaries require regular, routine veterinary health check-ups. Your vet can perform a physical examination, grooming (beak, nail or feather trim) and laboratory tests as needed. During these annual check-ups, health, nutritional and maintenance issues can be identified and addressed. Veterinary check-ups help prevent disease and will aid in the maintenance of a long lasting, healthy relationship between you and your bird.

Colour

Mature

- the native, wild canary is greenish-yellow
- there are over 50 colour types and combinations
- common domestic colours include yellow, orange, “red factor”, olive, white, brown and black

Immature

- same colours
- often said to have a plumper “baby” face and less scale on the feet

Sexing

Mature

- both sexes look the same from a distance
- males have a more prominent “nipple” like protrusion of the vent (“anus”) evident more during breeding

- females have a vent that lays flat against the body
- males tend to be better singers

Immature

- difficult to sex

Weight: average 0.7 - 0.8 ounces (20 - 22 grams)

Size: average 5 - 5.5 inches (12.5 - 14 cm) in length

Life span: 6 - 10 years (maximum 20 years)

Diet: consult your vet or see the diet sheet in this series

Breeding: breed readily in captivity

Brood size: 3 - 6 creamy white eggs will hatch in about 14 days, babies leave the nest in 2 - 3 weeks

Cage: minimum 1 ft x 1 ft x 2 ft (30 cm x 30 cm x 60 cm)