

Cage hygiene for birds

Introduction

Quite a few of the health problems we see in birds here at the clinic derive from poor hygiene in their day to day lives. Bacteria and some fungi make the most of the build up of faeces, old food and discarded items to divide and conquer in your pet's accommodation. The problems stem from organic debris – most of which is from the birds themselves – defecating in their feed and water dishes, dropping food and leaving mess on the ground regularly. It becomes our job as owners to clean up after them and make sure our little feathered friends have the best living quarters we can give them

Daily

- *Feed and water dishes should be emptied and cleaned. The dishes should be scrubbed thoroughly with detergent, rinsed and then left to dry. Having two sets of dishes for each cage makes this a time-efficient tool – the second set is filled and placed back in the cage while the first set of dishes is drying.*
- *Only feed what your bird will eat in a day. Food left for extended periods of time becomes stale and can become a breeding ground for organisms that are detrimental to your bird's health.*
- *The cage base lining should be changed daily. This collects faecal matter, discarded food and anything else your bird decides to throw on the ground. We recommend newspaper or other paper product on the floor of the cage – it is cost effective and easy to manage.*

Weekly

- *The cage sides and tray in the bottom of the cage should be removed and scrubbed clean to remove any materials not caught by the newspaper. The cage should be scrubbed thoroughly with detergent, rinsed and dried.*
- *Get into the habit of inspecting all toys for wear and tear or rust. If a particular item looks to be 'past its' use by date' then remove it. Some toys can be dangerous if partially broken or worn. This applies specifically to metal toys, rope toys and toys in which the birds can catch their legs or head.*

Monthly

- *Remove the birds completely, dismantle the cage as much as required/possible and scrub it. Again, a minimum of hot soapy water and some 'elbow grease' will do a fantastic job at getting that cage as good as new. Rinse with water to remove any traces of detergent, air dry and reassemble.*
- *Clean toys and perches at the same time.*

Cleaning - What to Use

Regular cleaning:

The purpose of regular cleaning is to remove organic debris, and to reduce the number of bacteria and fungi in the bird's environment. Hot soapy water combined with energetic cleaning using a cloth or scour pad should be sufficient. Rinse the cage well with water, and leave to dry before returning your bird to the cage.

Cleaning after disease:

If there has been a problem with contagious disease, then the following protocol is recommended.

Wash with hot soapy water, using a scour pad to remove any caked organic debris

Rinse with clean water and leave to dry

Disinfect according to our Caresheet – Effective Cleaning.

Take precautions for your own safety when using strong disinfectants.

Rinse well after disinfection, using clean water and leave to dry.

Your birds will appreciate the effort you put into keeping their home sparkling clean for them!

