

It is best to provide the largest habitat that you can afford. A minimum size for one canary is 60cmW x 35cmD x 45cmH. The bars on the cage should be no wider than 0.75cm.

Perches need to be a variety of textures, widths and lengths. This variety will exercise your bird's feet, aid in the prevention of arthritis and assist with nail and beak trimming. It also more closely simulates life in the outdoors.

A metal grate over the bottom of the cage will help to keep the bird off its droppings.

Canaries that have stopped singing can be encouraged by recorded canary song, television, radio or even the sound of the vacuum cleaner.

Cage placement

Try to avoid dramatic changes in temperature. A cage that heats up too much in the sun or is in a drafty area will not be healthy for your bird.

Kitchens or hallways are not suitable places, but a living room or family room are ideal. Keep your bird in the part of the house that is lived in and include your bird in your family. It is a good idea to place the cage near a wall to give your canary a sense of security.

A quiet introduction into the family is a good idea until they get used to all the sounds and movements of your home and your family.

Covering your bird's cage with a light cover at night or in times of stress can also increase his sense of security and lessen his distress.

Cage care

Follow these simple rules to ensure the best possible care for your canary:

- Don't place food or water containers underneath the perches – this will prevent possible contamination
- Avoid cooking near your bird with non-stick cookware as these can release harmful fumes
- Clean the cage and perches regularly
- Replace food and water daily
- Remove vegetables after 24 hours
- Replace perches, dishes and toys once worn or damaged
- Rotate toys and treats regularly to avoid boredom
- Make sure there are no parts/toys in your bird's cage that are lead, lead-base painted, zinc or galvanised metal.

Behaviour and exercise

Female canaries can and do whistle (more of a chirp) but male canaries sing to establish and defend their territory and of course to attract a mate.

Male canaries should not be housed together and canaries in small cages should not be housed with other types of birds.

Grooming and health

Canaries are very sensitive to chemicals and the slightest exposure can cause them to become quite ill.

Nails should be trimmed by a qualified person.

You should worm your indoor bird every six months or every three months for your outdoor aviary birds. A vitamin supplement will keep your canary in tip top shape. It is also essential during the moulting period.

The signs of a healthy canary are:

- Active, alert and sociable
- Dry nostrils and bright eyes
- Beak, legs and feet should look normal
- Eats and drinks regularly
- Has smooth, well groomed feathers.

The signs of an unhealthy canary are:

- Beak swelling
- Sitting on the floor of the cage or low on the perch
- Wheezing or coughing
- Eye or nasal discharge
- Fluffed, plucked or dirty feathers
- Diarrhoea or discoloured stools
- Red or swollen eyes
- Favouring one foot
- White deposits around the eyes, beak, legs or feet
- Appetite loss
- Face scabs.

If you notice any of these signs please contact your veterinarian immediately.

Recommended supplies

- Good sized flight cage
- Grooming spray
- Cage cover
- Millet spray
- Seed or pelleted food
- Books about care
- Variety of toys
- Cage liners
- Treats
- Bird bath
- Egg based conditioning food
- Vitamin supplement
- Food and water dishes
- Variety of perches
- Cuttlefish or mineral block.

Canary care guide



Animates

For the love of pets.

Canaries are well known for their pretty song with the male of the species being the best performers. They do well kept singly or in pairs (male and female or female and female). Like all pets they require daily attention.



Feeding

High quality bird seed or pelleted diets should make up about 70% of your canary's diet. The remainder should consist of fresh vegetables and fruits (see the safe food list) and the occasional treat.

Water needs to be chlorine free, always available and changed daily. A canary cannot survive for 24 hours without water.

Fresh vegetables and fruits should be given daily and discarded when not eaten within 24 hours; like us, canaries appreciate quality and variety in their food. Millet spray and honey bells are a great treat and entertaining for your canary as well.

Canaries also need protein, this can be supplied once a week in the form of a soft egg based formula or a small amount of boiled egg. They also need a calcium supplement such as a cuttlefish or a mineral block.

Treats and toys

Birds need a wide variety of treats and toys to alleviate boredom, help them to work for their food and exercise their minds.

Treats should consist of no more than 10% of your bird's diet.

The following is a collection of fruit and vegetables you can feed your bird. Fresh food should be thoroughly rinsed first.

Apples (no pips)	Cauliflower
Apricots	Corn
Broccoli	Oranges
Brussel sprouts	Peaches
Cabbage	Pears (no pips)
Carrots	Silverbeet

DO NOT FEED lettuce, avocado, rhubarb, chocolate, alcohol, fruit seeds or caffeine as these can make your bird very ill. If in doubt about a food, don't feed it!

Moulting

It is natural for your canary to moult and this can occur once or twice a year. This will be a miserable time for your bird. It is important during this time that you feed a high protein diet and offer this daily. This is also a time when your canary will feel more susceptible to changes in temperature so make sure the environmental temperature is stable. Your canary will stop singing during this moulting period.

Bathing

Canaries love to bathe. External bird baths are available to clip onto the cage door for this purpose. Cold to tepid water should be added to this bath, about 2cm deep. Too hot and the natural oils may be stripped. Too cold can cause chills. This should be provided in the morning so your canary has time to dry off during the day.

A bath should be provided two to three times per week for about an hour and removed once your canary has finished. This is especially important when your canary is moulting and you should increase this to once a day during this period.

Housing

A canary is reliant on their cage to provide an environment for everything; exercise, rest, entertainment and dining. It is important that this cage has a flight area and at least two perches. A long cage is an ideal shape; a high cage that is narrow is not suitable for a canary. They need to fly from perch to perch. Don't overcrowd the cage, your canary will need space to move around. A single toy and treat are a good rule of thumb and you should rotate these to relieve boredom.

Use this checklist to make sure that a canary is right for you and your family

- I have the appropriate location and housing for this pet
- I will provide a safe environment for this pet
- I understand that this pet does not require handling or time outside a cage although does require a flight area in its cage
- I am aware that birds can be vocal and this is acceptable for my family and my neighbours
- An adult can provide primary care for this pet.

Average size: 7.5cm to 10cm

Life span: 10 years



Alleviate boredom with a variety of treats and toys.

