

# Converting Seed Junkies



Confirm your bird's health with your avian veterinarian before making any dietary changes.

**Below are some strategies that can help to convert your seed junkie:**

## **Remove Seed:**

Offer new foods at the first morning feeding, when your bird is hungriest. Leave the diet until mid afternoon. Then offer the birds previous diet for the rest of the day. At bedtime, once again remove the seeds. Repeat the process for several days or until your pet is eating the new diet. Feed the new diet exclusively once the bird has made the transformation.

## **Reduce Seed:**

Offer 50% of the seed diet and 50% of the new diet in the same dish. Only fill the bowl ¼ full, so your bird won't fill up on the seed. Refill the dish several times a day with the same portions. Continue this method of feeding for 2-4 weeks and then reduce the percentage of seeds slowly over time.

## **Interval Feeding:**

Offer the 50/50 mixture in 20-30 minute interval, feeding three times a day. Remove all uneaten food after each feeding and monitor what has been eaten. Gradually reduce the seeds as your bird eats the new diet. This process could take several days or weeks.

## **Alternating:**

At bedtime, remove all food from the cage. In the morning, put the new diet in for 1 hour. After 1 hour, return the former diet to the cage and remove the new diet. After several days, extend the length of time the new diet is in the cage until you have eliminated the old diet altogether.

## **Mixing:**

Grind the pellets in a coffee grinder and mix with the bird's favorite soft food, like mashed potatoes or applesauce. This technique introduces the taste of the pellets to the bird. As the mixture is accepted, gradually reduce the soft food while increasing the pellets.

## **Flavoring:**

Try soaking the pellets in a favorite fruit juice. As the bird accepts the new taste, gradually reduce the fruit juice until only the pellets are available.

## Observation:

Birds learn by watching. If you have another bird already eating pellets, let your seed junkie watch them eat. Your bird can also watch you eat. They usually want whatever you are eating. So at meal times, put them in a place where they can observe you eating, while putting their new diet in the food dish. You may also pretend to eat the pellet then offer it to the bird.

## IMPORTANT POINTS TO REMEMBER:

- Consider purchasing an accurate gram scale. While changes are being made, weigh your bird at the same time each morning before feeding. Weight loss of 10% or more should be reported to your veterinarian.
- Birds can starve to death, so watch them closely. Monitor their droppings and check their weight.
- The conversion to a healthy diet can take time, so be patient and don't give up quickly. The rewards of a healthy bird will be worth the time and effort.
- Please call your veterinarian with any questions.