

Home Hazards

Birds by nature are inquisitive animals. Our commonly kept Psittacines are often much like children in their behavior and curiosity. Likewise, we often allow them "free reign of the house." This can be dangerous to your pet. You would never leave a baby who could walk unsupervised for an instant. Your bird could get in just as much trouble or danger as a baby.

Some common house-hold hazards your pet could encounter include (but are not limited to!):

Plants--Many popular plants are toxic and can cause a range of symptoms. Try to verify if your plants are toxic or not. Try also to keep a list of scientific names of your plants available in case of emergency. There are many botanical gardens that can help you identify them.

The "Old Standards"--Electrical cords, small toys, fittings, jewelry (or pieces), other pets, chocolate, etc.

Gases and Fumes--Non-stick cookware can produce toxic fumes if overheated. Smokes, perfumes, pine oils, hairsprays, and basically any strong smelling fumes, aerosols, or other gases can lead to problems. In the winter, things like gas or kerosene heaters can be dangerous to your birds before you are aware of a problem. Remember, that's what canaries were carried into mines for-to detect gases before the miners!

Lead poisonings are still all too common in our pet birds. Beware of things like antiques, lead frames of stained glass, ornaments, weights for curtains, fishing gear, batteries, welding solder such as is found on fencing, bullets, paint, and many more than can be listed here. There are other metals that are considered "heavy metals". These will produce symptoms similar to lead poisoning.

Mycotoxins are compounds produced by fungi that is commonly found on old grains and foodstuffs. Birds can commonly encounter mycotoxins from old peanut shells, brazil nuts, and other old seeds. Aspergillus species produce at least one of these mycotoxins. Store seed and grains in cool, dry places in air tight containers. Feed only fresh foodstuffs.

Insecticides--Most household pesticides have pyrethrins, organophosphates, and carbamates listed as ingredients. High concentration exposure can lead to toxicity. Foods such as fruits and vegetables are often sprayed with pesticides. Wash all food

thoroughly!!!

Toys--There are many articles on toy safety and things to watch for on toys. To mention just a few: Clips for hanging toys can often be a great place to catch toes, beaks, or wings. C-clamps that are screwed shut are usually safe. Beware of rope toys if you are not there to supervise. String can constrict legs and toes and lead to their loss. Use common sense when making or choosing toys. Toys meant for cockatiels will not withstand an Amazon's or African grey's curiosity. Always supervise play with a new toy so you can monitor potentially dangerous situations. Replace toys as they wear or develop cracks, loose areas, etc.

These are just a few of the dangers that can lurk in your house. There are many more. Try to "bird-proof" your home as much as possible. If you cannot supervise your pet, his/her cage is probably the safest place. "Better safe than sorry!"

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