



Exotic Animal Hospital of Philadelphia



You got a new Dove? Congratulations!

Please refer to this handout in helping you setting your new dove up for success as most of the diseases and emergency presentations to the veterinary hospital stem from improper husbandry and could be avoided

Did you know?

- Their average life span is up to 10 yrs. However with great husbandry some doves have been known to live up to 30 yrs.
- Doves reach sexual maturity between 6 to 8 months.
- Every species of Dove has its own distinct cooing sound.
- Doves and Pigeons are not two separate species of birds. Dove usually refers to a smaller bird while pigeon is usually used in reference to a larger bird.
- Doves are found all over the world but only a handful of dove species are commonly available as pets. The most common species are the Diamond Dove - native to Australia and the Ring-Necked Dove native to Africa.
- Be prepared for constant cooing! While they cannot screech like a parrot their cooing is fairly constant.
- Doves are susceptible to red mites which hide during the day and come out at night to feed on the birds blood.
- Doves housed outdoors are susceptible to roundworms, tapeworms, and other worm species.
- Doves are unable to climb up the cage bars like parrots; they move about by flying back and forth, which makes a wide cage an important feature. Offer a variety of perch styles to promote good foot health.
- Doves need opportunities for bathing, try introducing a bowl of room temperature water to the bird's cage once weekly.
- Wash your hands after handling, feeding, or cleaning the doves enclosure because doves can transfer Chlamydia and Salmonella to people.
- Avocado is highly toxic for your pet bird.
- Smoking, lighting candles, or burning incense in your bird's air space will predispose them to have respiratory disease, distress, and sometimes cancer.

- Non-stick cookware fumes are toxic for your pet bird.

Diet

Doves are granivores, meaning their natural diet consists mostly of seeds and grains. Doves also enjoy dark leafy greens, chopped veggies, chopped fruits, cooked brown rice, and multi grain bread. Doves can also eat pellets but it is not recommended if the seeds the dove is eating are fortified. Doves swallow their seeds whole so you will need to provide several types of grit for the digestion of seeds as well as a calcium supplement. Consider sprinkling these over top of your doves food so that the bird gets a little bit daily.

TOP REASONS TO BRING YOUR DOVE TO THE VET

- Bleeding/trauma
- Seizure activity
- Changes in breathing- sitting fluffed/heavy breathing with open beak or tail bobbing
- Changes in droppings- diarrhea/decreased amount
- Decreased activity or change in vocalization
- Decreased appetite or other changes to eating habits
- Regurgitation
- Discharge from the eyes, mouth or nares/sneezing
- Overgrown beak or nails
- Unkempt feathers and/or self-mutilation

