



# PET PAGES

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## Obesity in Pet Birds

When we think of overweight pets we often picture obese dogs and cats but we sometimes forget to consider our feathered companions. Obesity in pet birds is a growing concern and can cause many different health problems, some of which can be fatal. Obese birds are more predisposed to developing infections, certain types of tumors, fatty liver disease (hepatic lipidosis), arthritis, and heart disease.

When it comes to obesity, prevention is the best defense we have. Obesity occurs when birds consume more calories than they burn. Birds that are fed an all seed diet are at an increased risk of becoming obese as seeds are high in fat content and lack many other components of a healthy diet. Certain species of birds such as Amazons and Parakeets are also at greater risk of

becoming obese.

Providing a balanced diet and plenty of exercise are key components in preventing obesity. Pelleted diets combined with fresh fruits and vegetables provide birds with the nutrition they need while cutting out excess calories from fatty seeds. Healthy diets can also help to prevent other diseases such as vitamin A deficiency. Plenty of exercise time and enrichment items such as toys that require birds to work to get snacks are a good way to burn calories and provide mental stimulation for our feathered friends. It is also important to schedule regular check-ups with your veterinarian so they can monitor the health of your pet bird and make sure they are maintaining a healthy weight.

**Dr. Andrew Jones**  
**Bayshore Animal Hospital**

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