



Medical Center for Birds

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Feather Care

Efforts to enhance, modify and guide of feather care has very solid influence on your bird's daily maintenance activity schedule. For those birds that are not preening normally, (either too much or too little), there are some ways that feather care can be enhanced and guided more toward normalcy:

- ❑ Mist your bird lightly every day and sometimes even multiple times each day. Unless your bird is sick or your house is very cold (less than 55°F), you do not need to be concerned about cold-stress, particularly if it is just lightly misted. A light merely superficially dampens the feathers of the bird enough to guide its feather care towards more normal preening activity for a short time period.
- ❑ Misting can be combined with time that is shared with your bird out on a training perch. This combines flock interaction with feather care, and the combination of these two behavioral groups can enhance the lifestyle of your parrot, if not help to modify undesired behaviors.
- ❑ Offer materials for your bird to “groom” that can be destroyed if the bird so-desires. These may include a straw whisk broom, a feather duster or other similar materials that can be located in the cage or on the side of your bird's cage. Take some time and groom or preen these while your bird observes. These types of items may provide something other than the bird's own feathers to preen and groom (or damage), and can have great value as a part of or adjunct to behavioral modification for some feather damaging behaviors.
- ❑ Over the Counter products: There are considerable numbers of products marketed to enhanced the feather appearance of your bird – some of which have ingredients that are far from “natural” to be applied to feathers. Some of these products are realistically appropriate for mammals only – not birds. Overall, most of these products will not help, and some can actually cause harm. In general, we recommend tap water as your misting agent, and the money that you save by not purchasing some of these commercially offered sprays can be better applied toward toys or other environmental enriching products.