

# PET BIRDS AND SAFE TOYS



Bird toys are great! Providing your feathered friends with activities that stimulate their brain and beak may prevent some serious behavioural issues and prolong their life.

It's good to offer your bird a variety of toys, so they can spend their day exercising, chewing and foraging. Don't cram your bird's cage with toys, remember space is good too, your bird needs to be able to move!

You need to be aware NOT all toys are safe and many (even those sold in some pet stores) can actually lead to either a serious injury or death. There are no 100% safe bird toys, somewhere out there is a bird that will find a way to get into trouble, no matter how safe the toy (birds are exceptionally inquisitive creatures).

## ROPE AND METAL

### MOST UNWANTED LIST

#### BIRD ENEMY NUMBER ONE

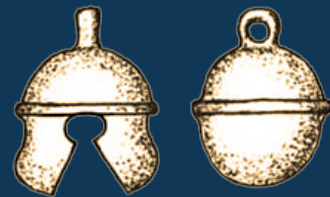
Why? Because rope toys have **small fibres**, and when these fibres are chewed and swallowed they may lead to blockages in the proventriculus, which is part of the bird's intestine.

Parrots are habitual chewers and these **blockages are very serious**. The blockages will require surgery to remove and without intervention are fatal. Birds can also get **tangled** in rope or string causing severe injury. If the rope gets caught around a leg, wing or the bird's neck they can do **major damage** or even hang themselves!

#### UNWANTED DEAD OR ALIVE



**Quick tip:** Be aware of items around the house that your parrot can access - particularly metal or soldered electrical connections. These are shiny and bright, just inviting a parrot to chew.



#### USE WITH CAUTION

Heavy Metal Poisoning is a common condition in birds. The main culprits are **lead** and **zinc**. Galvanising contains zinc, which when ingested accumulates to cause poisoning. The quality of the galvanising is critical, new cages and toys that are galvanised are **hazardous**. If the galvanised product looks "whitish" or has a white powder on it then it should be considered suspect. Lead is very **toxic** and can be found in fishing sinkers and tin solder.

The body stores these toxins and they cause a variety of symptoms. Clear indications that your bird is sick include ruffled feathers, weakness or unbalanced, seizures, head tilt, weight loss, regurgitation, vomiting and change in the faeces.

If you think your pet is suffering from **ANY** of these symptoms contact your vet immediately.

These days paint doesn't contain lead so painted toys are perfectly safe. Powder coated cages, toys and bowls are quite safe, as is chrome plated metal.

#### Things that are okay:

- Vegetable tanned leather.
- Untreated paper & wood.
- Non-toxic plastic.
- Food-safe vegetable dye (for coloured toy parts).
- Stainless steel hardware.
- Native Branches.

#### What to stay away from:

- Rope & toys with indigestible fibres.
- Galvanised metal toys.
- Treated pine or MDF as these are toxic.
- Branches sprayed with pesticides.
- Many exotic plants.
- Soft rubber, latex & plastic. These run the risk of being chewed and swallowed - not commonly dangerous, but best avoided.

#### Get Native!

Natural toys are great and by far the safest option. Gum branches, gum nuts/flowers or any of the native Australian trees and bushes make great chewies for birds.

You should never give exotic plants to your bird unless you are **VERY** sure they are safe. As there are so many different exotic plants available it is impossible to list the ones safe for you bird.

Other great natural toys you can use are coloured pebbles, sea shells (clean and dry), pieces of untreated wood (stay clear from treated pine!), lumps of charcoal or nuts still in the shell (walnuts, almonds). These are all excellent things to keep your birds occupied.

