



BIRD AND EXOTIC ANIMAL CLINIC
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Owners of feather picking parrots should do the following at home:

- Increase humidity by allowing birds into the bathroom while showering, especially in the dry Highveld winters. Also mist spray daily with decalcified water (ensure the environment is warm). Misting just before leaving keeps the birds busy for the first half hour after the owner has left, and reduces allergen load on the feathers
- Correct dietary deficiencies. Converting the bird to a complete pelleted diet, supplemented with fresh fruit and vegetables, is recommended.
- Eliminate broad allergic irritants from the environment (cigarette smoke, perfumes, incense, cleaning products, wash hands before handling birds as oily residues from hand creams etc can initiate picking). Remove birds from the kitchen as aerosolised oil droplets and overheated Teflon can be harmful.
- Ensure daily access to direct sunlight, unfiltered by a glass window (15 minutes at least).
- Ensure birds are getting enough sleep – they need at least 10 hours darkness per night. Remember that birds often wake at the crack of dawn, and will stay awake till the whole family has gone to bed if kept in the family room.
- Ignore picking behaviour (prevent reinforcement of behaviour), reward the bird for alternative behaviours.
- Treat all wounds (never apply oil based products or products containing corticosteroids)
- Keep daily records – amount of picking, time of day, food eaten that day, activities surrounding picking.