

Bird Safety Corner

Food, Part 1



Most of us know about the major foods and drinks to avoid giving our birds. These include chocolate, avocado, caffeinated drinks (coffee, tea), regular or diet soda, alcohol, and salt, but there are others as well that have not received as much press. Many of these are also toxic to cats and dogs.

Onions and garlcs should not be fed to birds, especially raw. Remember that the onion family includes leeks, shallots, chives, and scallions. Garlic is in the same family as onions – alliums. Onions and garlic cause hemolytic anemia, a condition in which the blood cells burst. They can also cause digestive problems. While small amounts dissolved in prepared foods are probably okay, it is best to try to avoid directly feeding onions and garlcs to your birds.



Birds are lactose intolerant, so cheeses and milk products with lots of lactose in them, such as ice cream, will cause digestive upset, just like they will in humans. Cottage cheese and yogurt with live cultures are probably okay. Giving your bird Lactaid to process the lactose is definitely NOT okay! Lactaid is toxic to birds. You should also avoid feeding your bird soft cheeses, most especially string cheese, since there have been many cases of crop impaction from soft cheeses getting stuck in the crop. This can lead to major surgery, so keep your birds safe!