



# Brighton Veterinary Surgery

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## TOY SAFETY AND ENRICHMENT FOR YOUR BIRD

There are many available toys on the market sold both online and in pet stores. It is important to know the safety limitations of these to prevent accident, illness and injury, and even death.

The most common reasons we see pet birds for toy-related mishaps include heavy metal intoxication (ingestion of metal particles), fibre obstructions (birds who have eaten rope toys or rope perches), and tangling injuries (toes, feet and legs that become entangled in cage toys).

Prevention is always better than cure! Below is a list of safe versus unsafe toys that you can provide for your bird, this list is not exclusive but gives you an idea of overall toy safety for your bird.

### SAFE

- New plastic
- Ceramic
- Stainless steel metal
- Powder coated metal
- Untreated leather
- Natural branches, wood, untreated pine
- Native seeds and flowers, gumnuts, nuts
- Cardboard, paper, newspaper, toilet rolls, cereal boxes, recycled paper cat litter

### UNSAFE

- Metal other than stainless steel or powder coated metal
- Lead clappers inside bells
- Bread ties, stationary
- Costume jewellery, fishing tackle
- Fibres / Ropes - including rope toys, rope perches, rope attached to toys, material huts, cotton, plastic rope, human hair
- Natural fibres, including sisal

In the wild, birds spend much of their day foraging for food. In captivity enrichment can be provided by encouraging natural foraging behaviour to keep your clever bird's brain busy, encouraging exercise and increasing physical activity; helping to reduce the occurrence of self-mutilation behaviour such as feather plucking. It is a great idea to incorporate materials from the 'safe' list into home-made toys, and foraging and enrichment activities for your bird. Some owners scatter food in a 'foraging tray' by scattering recycled paper cat litter in a cat litter tray to encourage the bird to spend time and brain power finding food.

Other sources of dangerous metals around the home include:

Hardware (screws, nuts, bolts) - especially a risk for free-ranging backyard chickens, batteries, seeds for planting, solder, linoleum, plaster and putty, paint in old homes, varnishes, lead pellets from firearms, foil from champagne bottles, electrician cable clips, light bulbs, car exhaust fumes, mirror backing, stained glass windows, lead lighting. Galvanised metal (used in old bird cages and aviaries) including galvanised food and water bowls, nails, clips, padlocks, especially when new, white rust on galvanised metal, and some coins, wires used as hangers for chew-sicks, shiny silver coating on cage bars.

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