

# TOXIC FOODS

**ALCOHOL:** Alcohol should NOT, under any circumstances, be offered to a bird. It can be fatal even in small amounts. Access to it on a regular basis depresses their organ systems.

**APPLE SEEDS AND OTHER FRUIT "PITS":** If chewed or crushed they release cyanide, and if consumed in high amounts, can cause death.

**ASPARAGUS:** Has been reported to cause digestive upsets.

**AVOCADO:** Skin, pit, and fruit has been reported to cause cardiac distress and eventual heart failure in pet birds.

**BEANS:** Never offer dry soup type beans as they can be extremely harmful to your bird. Uncooked beans contain a toxin called phytohaemagglutinin or kidney bean lectin which is very toxic to birds. This is a sugar-based protein which is found in many types of beans. Soaking and cooking beans will remove the toxin, however will not provide any significant nutrition to your bird. Also avoid tin soup type beans, as they often contain excess sodium and preservatives.

**CAFFEINE:** Caffeinated beverages such as coffee, soda, and certain herbal teas can be extremely hazardous. Caffeine causes cardiac malfunction in birds and is associated with increased heartbeat, arrhythmia, hyper activity, and cardiac arrest.

**CARBONATED BEVERAGES:** Carbonated beverages contain carbon dioxide gas and are likely to contain additives, sugars, preservatives, caffeine, and colorings. These should never be offered to birds.

**CHOCOLATE:** Chocolate is not designed for birds' complex digestive systems. It contains theobromine which speeds up the metabolism. Chocolate poisoning causes vomiting and diarrhea and affects a bird's central nervous system causing seizures and eventually death.

**DRIED FRUIT:** Most commercially produced dried fruits contain sulfides or sulphates and have nutritional loss due to the dehydrating process. Home dehydrated fruits are preferable and have some nutritional benefits, but they are still high in sugar.

**EGG PLANT:** Stems and leaves are part of the nightshade family and are toxic for birds.

**FOOD HIGH IN FAT, SUGAR AND SALT:** Avoid any "human snacks" such as chips, French fries, bread, or other highly salted foods. High fat diets lead to obesity and can result in fatty liver disease. Avoid greasy, oily, or fast-food type foods, meat, butter, fried chicken, bones, sweets and any other processed foods.

**GARLIC & ONIONS:** Can cause vomiting, diarrhea, and digestive problems. Prolonged exposure can lead to a blood condition called hemolytic anemia, which is followed by respiratory distress and eventual death.

**MILK (DAIRY PRODUCTS):** Birds are highly lactose intolerant species and can't process any dairy foods as they have never evolved to produce lactase, the enzyme necessary to help digest lactose.

**MUSHROOMS:** Mushrooms are a type of fungus and have been reported to cause digestive upset.

**OLIVES:** Contain high levels of sodium and are reported as toxic.

**PEANUTS:** Peanuts are susceptible to contamination during growth and storage. This can lead to an infection by the mold fungus *Aspergillus Flavus*, releasing toxic substance aflatoxins. Parrots are said to be up to 200 times more sensitive to aflatoxins than humans. It can cause breathing difficulties, decrease or loss of appetite, frequent drinking and urination, cyanosis, and even sudden death. Peanuts have no nutritional value to birds and are high in fat.

**RAW HONEY:** Should not be fed to birds due to high levels of botulism.

**RHUBARB:** Has very high levels of oxalic acid, especially in the leaves that are toxic to birds.

**TOMATO:** The stems, vines and leaves are highly toxic to birds. The tomato itself can be fed, however due to its acidity it is to be avoided as it could potentially cause ulcers.

**TOBACCO (CIGARETTES):** Smoking around your bird is never safe due to birds' very sensitive and intricate respiratory systems. Second-hand smoke contains over 4000 chemicals. Anyone breathing in second-hand smoke is breathing in formaldehyde, ammonia, cyanide, arsenic, Carbon monoxide, methane and thousands of other chemicals. Nicotine poisoning can occur if your parrot chews a cigarette, or is absorbed through their feet. Reported to causing panting, salivation, vomiting, increased heart rate, collapse, coma and cardiac arrest.

