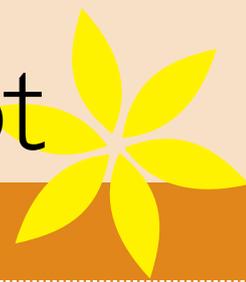




The Holistic Parrot

by Leslie Moran



Last month we explored ways of being **more successful** in keeping any New Year's resolutions you may be making and how easy it is to **have your flock help you succeed**. We also learned that one of the **top three goals** at the beginning of the year is **making healthier food choices**. Hitting this target benefits you and your flock!

Defining healthier foods

As we begin laying the foundation for feeding our birds more nutritious foods, and helping you improve your food choices too, let's define how we classify high-quality nutritious foods. The foods we feed our birds, and eat ourselves, fall into one of three categories, they are either highly processed, wholesome processed or whole foods.

Highly processed

These products use manufacturing methods to transform raw ingredients into neatly packaged commodities that often have a long shelf life, but lack any health supporting nutritional value. These highly processed foods also contain unhealthy ingredients that are high in poor quality carbohydrates (white flour, denatured enriched flours), unhealthy fats (hydrogenated oils) and processed white refined sugar. Artificial additives commonly include MSG (monosodium glutamate), synthetic flavours, chemical preservatives, fillers, or artificial sweeteners.

These packaged foods are designed to be inexpensive with quick cooking or preparation times. Examples of processed foods include sodas, boxed dry cereals, crackers, all white bread products, pastries and desserts made with white flour and white sugar, white flour pasta or macaroni and cheese, boxed dinner mixes, potato or corn crisps (chips), other crisps (chips) and a long list of highly processed packaged bird snacks, treats and dry seed mixtures.



This Blue-headed Pionus LOVES his chickpea sprouts!
Photo: Roz Paterson

CHOOSE AND SWITCH HIT LIST	
Unhealthy Treats	Healthy Choice Treats Choose Organic When Possible
Peanuts, because of possible mold contamination, must be organic, raw, unsalted	Raw, unsalted walnut pieces
Millet (high in omega-6 EFAs)	Tiny pieces raw walnut
Sunflower seeds (high in omega-6 EFAs)	Soak them over night in water, they begin sprouting, nutrition increases
Fried eggs, scrambled eggs (unhealthy fats, salt, seasonings)	Hard boiled egg, chopped or cut into beak-size pieces
Pasta, made from enriched flour (unhealthy carbohydrates)	Pasta made from whole grains: brown rice, brown rice and quinoa, whole wheat, chickpeas (garbanzo beans)
Hemp seeds (high in omega-6 EFAs)	Tiny pieces raw walnut
Cheese - never feed cheese! Birds lack the enzymes to digest it	Homemade walnut butter (see sidebar recipe)
Pistachios (sky-high in omega-6 EFAs)	Raw walnuts
Bagels with cream cheese	Whole grain cracker with walnut butter
Pizza	Whole grain cracker with walnut butter
Bread, toast (white bread products)	Whole grain bread (sugar free)
Highly processed bird treats	Dried, sugar free, papaya dipped in yoghurt
Crackers, saltines, ritz, (enriched white flour, salt, white sugar)	Whole grain crackers, whole grain bread, whole grain dry toast
Peanut butter	Walnut butter
Seed Cookies, (sky-high omega-6 levels)	Anything on this list, apple slices with homemade rose hip jam (recipe this column, issue 215)
Ice cream (dairy, sugar, unhealthy fats)	Good quality yoghurt with blueberries

Leslie Moran uses food as medicine for creating wellness in parrots. Her natural approach is ideal for preventive healthcare, restoring health or improving behaviours. Specialising in long distance consultations, from Nevada (USA).

Website: www.BestBirdFoodEver.com

See Leslie's advert on page 2.

Wholesome processed

In this category we include whole dried grains such as brown rice, rolled or steel cut oats, barley, millet, buckwheat, corn, rye, amaranth and wheat berries. I exclude quinoa because of the high amounts of iron it contains, if to feed, only feed a small amount once or twice a week.

MAKING HEALTHY POPCORN

For more information on 'Making Healthy Popcorn' and why to avoid certain Highly Processed avian treats and foods visit my website, www.BestBirdFoodEver.com, see Articles, under Health & Nutrition

Feeding your flock

healthier foods



Raw, organic walnuts, cut into small titbits, the ideal – healthy – training snack!

Whole dried legumes include lentils, split peas, green peas, adzuki beans, black beans, chick peas (garbanzo beans), kidney beans and lima beans. These dried whole grains and legumes must be cooked before eating and should not be fed raw. Avoid feeding soya beans, soya bean products and foods containing soya.

To determine if whole grain food products such as breads, cereals, crackers, cookies, pastries, pancakes, waffles and desserts can be considered a more wholesome processed food, you must read the labels.



A ring of whole organic walnuts, the perfect toy for bigger beaks

Look for flour made from whole grains, or gluten-free ingredients. Avoid 'enriched' flours as they have been denatured and are only enriched with one or two vitamins.

Put all packages back on the shelf that contain sugar of any type. These foods should be sweetened with either honey, maple syrup or brown rice syrup.

Some frozen fruits and vegetables can also fall into the wholesome processed group if they are free of sugar, salt and other artificial additives.



Walnut titbits wrapped in clean paper = paper toys! A fun and nourishing foraging treat for this Green-cheeked Conure



Homemade walnut butter, use in place of cheese, jam and butter or other unhealthy toppings

HOMEMADE WALNUT BUTTER

Walnuts have the ideal EFA (essential fatty acid) omega 3 to 6 ratio for parrots

- Raw, organic walnuts
- Food processor, or 'Magic Bullet' food grinder

Put raw walnuts in the freezer overnight. Make a small amount each time using about 1/4c or 1/2c walnuts. Put the desired amount of walnuts in food processor, grind until they become a thick paste. The cold temperatures add moisture to the walnuts enabling the ground walnuts to turn into a paste without adding water.

Store in a small glass jar in the refrigerator. Can last for about 4 to 8 weeks.





The Holistic Parrot



This Crimson-winged Parrot relishes a green grape



This Green-cheeked Conure savours his frozen blueberries, a favourite healthy snack

Whole foods

Instead of picking up a neatly packaged, multi-coloured box, whole foods are fresh produce that have been grown on farms, orchards, in backyard gardens or a kitchen window sill. These foods are filled with nature's goodness and flavour, have rich natural colours and are packed with superior nutritional value. Examples of whole foods includes fresh vegetables, fruits and properly grown sprouts.



For some birds 'presentation' is everything. This budgerigar tears into an apple slice attached to the wall with a wooden clothes pin

Why whole foods are always better

Whole foods contain essential nutrients such as enzymes, vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, phytonutrients and essential fatty acids. Whole foods are more filling, and nourish an individual's good health. Whole foods are also missing the poor quality ingredients and chemical additives commonly found in highly processed foods, which have been shown to compromise health and, in some cases, even contribute to disease conditions developing.

Let us know how you and your flock are doing with keeping your New Year's resolutions.

Next month,
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Do you have any questions on any aspect of parrot care that you would like to learn an holistic approach for? If so, send them to *Parrots* magazine.

Photos and charts by the author unless specified otherwise.



MORE HEALTHY SNACK IDEAS

- Snap peas
- Mangetout (snow peas)
- Raw carrot sticks
- All fresh fruits in season
- Berries, grapes
- Pomegranate seeds (plump and red)
- Melon balls (use a tiny spoon or scoop)
- Freshly grown sprouts

Do you have ideas for more healthy bird treats? Send them to us at *Parrots* magazine. Let us know your flock's favourite healthy snacks.



Soak some sunflower seeds over night, as germination begins, this simple task increases the nutritional value of these popular snacks. But just offer a few

HEALTHY FRUIT & BROCCOLI SNACKS!

Left: An orange, apples, fresh strawberries and frozen raspberries

Right: Cantaloupe, strawberries, raw broccoli flowerlets, orange slices (clip these to a wall)

