



## Ask Jessi 7!

Ask Jessi

<https://youtube.com/watch?v=szxcW5HgkiQ>

<https://nerdfighteria.info/v/szxcW5HgkiQ>

Hi guys! I am a huge fan of learning new things. I think it's kind of ingrained in all of us to be intrigued by the world around us: how things work, why they do what they do, and what they are anyway. I like to ask a lot of questions, and I'm happy to report that so do you! It's great being able to share what I've learned through my experiences, which is why I love answering your questions.

Okay, first question comes from Cassidee Rose. How can I get my baby cockatiel to eat fruits and veggies? He's got no problem with seeds and pellets, but he won't really eat any fresh foods. Any help is welcome.

That's actually a pretty common problem, especially with cockatiels and other smaller birds. My best advice is to find vegetables that resemble seeds, so the tops of broccoli, that's my go-to. Boxer the lovebird, Sprinkles the parrotlet, and Agent Perry the budgie all got broccoli right after they were rescued. Since parrots don't have a very complex ability to taste, they are very attuned to texture and can be pretty sensitive about it, so taking a known food item and changing the texture just slightly might help them transition to trying new foods. Try moistening the pellets or sprout your seed mix using damp paper towels. My last tip is to cut the fruits or veggies really small, so that they mix in with the pellets better. This way, there's a better chance that they might accidentally eat some and discover it really is delicious.

Okay, my next question comes from Murphyclm. I'm totally ignorant about bird to human behavior and am amazed at how you wave your hand around these birds without fear. Do you have to break them of snapping at you? Would a bird do that naturally?

Thank you for asking and wanting to learn more. Understanding bird behavior doesn't come naturally to many people and it took me some time to learn, too. The birds that I work with are incredible and very tolerant of me. We spend a lot of time getting to know each other and either building or reinforcing our trust bond, which means that we learn to trust that we can communicate and we won't harm each other. I am totally aware that I talk a lot with my hands, but I really only do that during a presentation, not during our initial get to know each other stage. At the beginning of a relationship with a bird, I move much more slowly and I am much more sensitive to their personal bubble. As we establish trust, I'm able to move much more freely. If I were to move my hand like this around a bird that didn't know me, it could make them nervous and they might communicate that by shying away or lunging at my hand. I really appreciate when an animal communicates their preferences with me, because it allows me a chance to bond. If I listen to what they're trying to tell me and respond appropriately, that builds our relationship and it strengthens our trust in each other.

Okay, our next question was asked in regards to our hedgehog video and it comes from Bicole Zavala. If we can't get them animal food, can we just give it vegetables or fruit?

I get questions about trying to supplement the recommended diet a lot and I know it's sometimes difficult to find the specific animal's dry processed food in certain areas. The thing is, all animals require specific nutrition. Hedgehogs, sugar gliders, chinchillas, tortoises and birds are just a few of the animals that scientists have studied extensively and developed formulated diets for, and it's made a world of difference in the quality of their care in captivity. It's truly amazing that we can keep these animals happy and healthy in our homes and we owe a big thanks to all the research that nutritionists have put into studying the best diets for these animals. So to answer your question directly, no. Offering just fruits and vegetables would not give a hedgehog the proper nutrients to maintain a healthy body. They're insectivores by nature, which means they require a lot of protein and fiber in the form of insects, or for more complete nutrition, dried insectivore pellets.

And our last question comes from Matt G. from Montana. What is Bowling for Animals and is it happening again?

Thanks for asking, Matt. Bowling for Animals is Animal Wonders' annual fundraiser and yes, it is happening again. On May 25, 2016, we will be raising funds in the funnest of ways, by bowling. The event is local in Missoula, Montana but we'll also have the opportunity for those out of state to participate, too. Check out our website for more information, the link is below.

Thanks for all the great questions. Keep 'em coming. You can leave them in the comments below or message me on Twitter or Tumblr. If you'd like to continue going on adventures with us every week, subscribe to our YouTube channel AnimalWondersMontana and we'll see you next time.

(Endscreen/Credits)

This is Sydney, the brush-tailed batong and she's about three years old, which is still pretty young but that's mature for batongs.