

recommendations for preventing the transmission of infectious diseases in birds



Companion animals can carry diseases, from *Chlamydia psittaci* (psittacosis) to *Salmonella*.

Salmonella is a bacterium commonly acquired through oral contact with an animal's fecal matter. Infected birds may not display any signs of illness. Human infection can take place by not washing hands after having contact with a bird, the bird's habitat or habitat items.

Salmonella is of greatest concern for children due to their immature immune systems.



Taking these simple precautions can help keep you from becoming infected:

- ❑ Always wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water or use a sanitizer or anti-bacterial gel after handling your pet bird or cleaning up their droppings, habitat or areas where the bird has been.
- ❑ Always carry some kind of disinfectant product with you if you will be handling any bird outside your home or in an area that lacks proper washing facilities.
- ❑ If transporting your bird to a classroom, make sure there are proper hand-washing and cleaning facilities. Do not take a bird to any classroom or daycare with children under the age of five.
- ❑ Keep your bird habitat, water and food bowls, décor and other surfaces as clean as possible and free of feces.
- ❑ Clean habitat in a well-ventilated area or outside. Never clean habitats in or around food preparation areas. Wear rubber, latex, vinyl or nitrile gloves and wash hands thoroughly when you are done. Never use a vacuum to clean a bird habitat, and always try to keep their dust and dander to a minimum. Once the habitat is cleaned of organic material, disinfect it with a diluted bleach solution (one-half cup of bleach to one gallon of warm water). Let the bleach solution remain on the habitat and all food bowls, water dishes, hide huts, etc. for ten minutes and then thoroughly rinse with warm water; allow to completely dry before placing the animal and the contents in the habitat.
- ❑ Closely supervise young children when cleaning habitats and ensure they wash their hands immediately after handling a pet bird, habitat or accessories. Children under five years of age should not help clean habitats or their contents.
- ❑ Do not handle your bird or habitat

furnishings with open sores or cuts on your hands. Wear rubber gloves.

- ❑ Never let your mouth come into contact with your bird. For example, some people like to give their bird an occasional affectionate kiss. This is a practice we do not recommend as it can transmit a disease to the person kissing the animal.
- ❑ To clean your bird's habitat and accessories, you may use your bathtub, but you should thoroughly disinfect it with a diluted bleach solution afterwards.
- ❑ Pet birds should not be allowed to roam freely throughout the home or living area.

Note: The information on this Care Sheet is not a substitute for medical diagnosis. If you suspect you or a family member may be infected, seek medical attention.

Go to cdc.gov/healthypets and petco.com/caresheet for more information about birds and disease.

