



Indiana State Department of Health

Epidemiology Resource Center

Quick Facts

About...Psittacosis

What is psittacosis?

Psittacosis is an infection in humans caused by the germ *Chlamydophila psittaci*. The disease can result in severe pneumonia or other serious health problems. The disease has also been referred to as parrot fever or ornithosis.

How is psittacosis spread?

Infected birds shed the germ in their feces and nasal discharge. The germ can become airborne. Humans who are near infected birds can inhale the germ and get sick from it. Most cases have occurred from exposure to psittacine birds (parrots, cockatiels, parakeets); rare cases have been from poultry (turkeys and ducks) and free ranging birds (pigeons).

Who is at risk for psittacosis?

Persons who have contact with birds or materials that have been around birds are at risk for getting psittacosis.

How do I know if I have psittacosis?

It can be difficult to diagnosis psittacosis. If you suspect you may have the disease please see a health care provider who can run laboratory tests.

How can psittacosis be treated?

A doctor can give you medicine and care until you get better.

How is psittacosis prevented?

To prevent psittacosis you should wear protective equipment and clothing when cleaning cages or handling sick birds. A fitted N95 face mask, gloves, eye wear, and

a surgical cap should be worn. All surfaces where infected birds have been should be cleaned and disinfected. People who buy, raise and sell birds should take extra precautions. Additional recommendations for individuals who buy, raise and sell birds can be found at <http://www.nasphv.org/Documents/Psittacosis.pdf>.

All information presented is intended for public use. For more information, please refer to:

http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dbmd/diseaseinfo/psittacosis_t.htm

<http://www.cfsph.iastate.edu/Factsheets/pdfs/psittacosis.pdf>

This page was last reviewed July 1, 2014.