



PSITTACOSIS FACT SHEET

WHAT IS PSITTACOSIS?

Psittacosis is a disease caused by infection of the respiratory tract (throat, windpipe, and lungs). Psittacosis in people is most commonly associated with pet birds, like parrots and cockatiels, and poultry, like turkeys or ducks

HOW DO YOU GET PSITTACOSIS?

The bacteria can infect people who care for and clean up after infected birds. It is important to know that all infected birds do not have symptoms or seem sick. Both sick birds and birds without symptoms shed the bacteria in their urine, feces, and respiratory secretions. When these secretions dry, small dust particles (including the bacteria) can become airborne. The most common way someone gets infected is by breathing in the dust from these dried secretions. Less commonly, birds infect people through bites and beak-to-mouth contact.

SYMPTOMS

Symptoms usually appear 5 to 14 days after exposure to the bacteria. The most common symptoms in humans include:

- Fever
- Chills
- Headache
- Muscle aches
- Dry cough

TREATMENT

Psittacosis can be treated with antibiotics. Depending on the timing of treatment and severity of illness, recovery may take a few weeks to several months. Discuss treatment options with your doctor.

PREVENTION

- Buy pet birds only from a well-known pet store.
- follow good precautions when handling and cleaning birds and cages

DGHD EFFORTS

Reports of suspected and confirmed cases of disease are made to the Delaware General Health District (DGHD). The DGHD investigates potential sources of illness, conducts surveillance for the spread of disease, and engages in community outreach and education.