

Psittacosis

FACTSHEET

Parrot Fever
Ornithosis

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What is Psittacosis?

Psittacosis is an acute bacterial disease with generalized symptoms usually transmitted to humans from birds in the parrot family, turkeys, and pigeons.

Who gets Cat Scratch Disease?

Since this disease is spread by birds in the parrot family, it is occasionally found in pet store workers and people who have recently purchased an infected bird, people who work in zoological bird houses, and pigeon lofts. It may also be found in farmers and slaughterhouse workers who process turkeys.

What are the symptoms of Psittacosis?

The symptoms of psittacosis include fever, headache, chills, rash, body aches, and sometimes pneumonia.

How is Psittacosis spread?

Psittacosis is usually spread by inhaling dust from dried bird droppings from birdcages and by handling infected birds in slaughterhouses. The disease is not spread from person to person.

How soon do symptoms appear?

Symptoms usually occur in 1 to 4 weeks after exposure to the bacteria.

Is a person with Psittacosis contagious?

No, the disease is not spread from person-to-person.

How is Psittacosis treated?

There are several antibiotics that can be used in the treatment of Psittacosis.

Should a person with Psittacosis be excluded from work or school?

It is not necessary to exclude a person with psittacosis from work or school.

How can Psittacosis be prevented?

Psittacosis can be prevented by making sure that all birdcages are cleaned often so that fecal material does not accumulate, dry up and become airborne. Current laws require birds that are members of the parrot family that are imported from foreign countries be kept in a bird quarantine station for 30 days prior to sale.

Want more information?

Additional information about psittacosis and other related health topics can be found at the website www.cdc.gov. The DC Department of Health promotes the health and safety of the District residents. For additional information, please call 202-442-9143.

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