



Bird Flu and Pets

Facts not Fears

Can pet birds get bird flu?

Yes. However, there is no risk to pet birds at this time. The H5N1 (bird flu) virus has not yet been detected in the United States.

Is it risky to own pet birds like canaries or parakeets?

Having a pet bird that stays inside all the time is not likely to pose any risk. Remember, it is illegal to import pet birds into the United States from any of the regions that the H5N1 virus has been found. For more information, visit www.cdc.gov/flu/avian/outbreaks/embargo.htm.

Is it safe to hang wild birdfeeders and have a bird bath in the yard?

Yes. At the present time the H5N1 virus has not been detected in the United States. But remember, it is always best to use protective gloves when cleaning birdfeeders and bird baths to avoid contact with bird droppings or contaminated water. Wash your hands with soap and water after doing these chores.

Can my pet dog and cat be infected with the bird flu viruses?

To date, there is no evidence that bird flu is a risk to dogs – this includes hunting dogs. Recently there have been reports that cats are able to catch the virus but there is currently no cause for concern because the virus is not present in the United States.



Is it safe to feed the ducks at the lake in my neighborhood?

Yes. But as a general rule, you should always observe any wildlife from a distance and avoid direct or close contact. If you do feed ducks or geese at a neighborhood lake or pond, avoid feeding them from your hand.

We have a small flock of chickens in our backyard. Is it safe?

You should always practice good sanitation and preventive measures, such as keeping chickens away from wild birds. Be aware of sick chickens. If any chickens die unexpectedly, contact Texas Animal Health Commission at 1.800.550.8242. Testing for bird flu may be recommended as part of the state's monitoring program.

What should I do if I find a dead wild bird?

Avoid contact with dead birds. Do not pick up any diseased or dead wild birds. If you must handle them, use protective gloves to properly dispose of it in the trash and wash your hands with soap and water afterward.