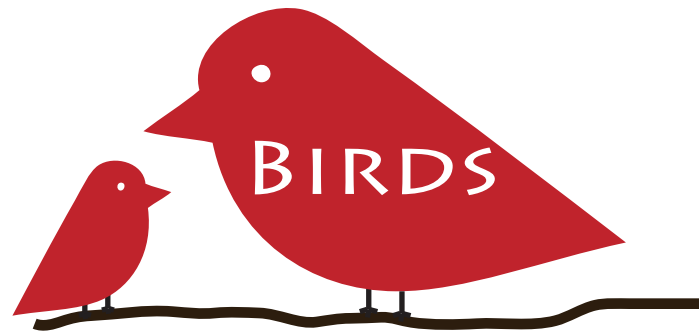




# pets in the classroom



## Recommendations for Preventing the Transmission of Infectious Diseases

Companion animals can carry diseases, from *Chlamydia psittaci* (psittacosis) to salmonella to tapeworms. Salmonella is a bacterium commonly acquired through oral contact with an animal's fecal matter. Infected birds may display signs of illness, such as wetness around the tail region. 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 tendency to put fingers in their mouths.

Taking these simple precautions can keep you from becoming infected:

- Always wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water or use a sanitizer or antibacterial gel after handling your pet bird or cleaning up after 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 classroom or in an area that lacks proper washing facilities.
- Keep bird habitat, water and food bowls, decor and other surfaces as clean as possible and free of soiled bedding.
- Clean habitat in a well-ventilated area or outside. Wear rubber, latex, vinyl or nitrile gloves and wash hands thoroughly when you are done. Never use a vacuum to clean a bird habitat. Once the habitat is cleaned of organic material, disinfect it with a 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, etc. for ten minutes and then thoroughly rinse with warm water; allow to completely dry before placing the animal and the content in the habitat.

By following safe animal handling practices, you ensure your safety and that of your animal.

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

*Additional information can be found at the Center for Disease Control at [cdc.gov/healthypets/](http://cdc.gov/healthypets/) or contact your local veterinarian or family physician.*