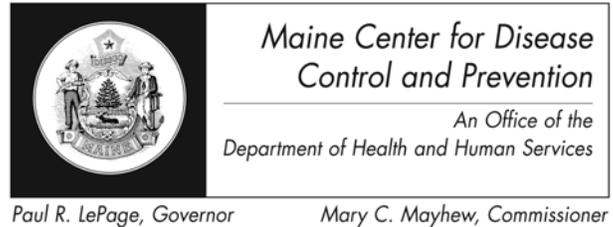


Psittacosis

(Parrot Fever/Ornithosis)

Fact Sheet



What is Psittacosis?

Psittacosis is from Greek word for parrot. It is a type of lungs infection caused by a bacteria called *Chlamydophila psittaci* (*C. psittaci*; formerly known as *Chlamydia psittaci*). The disease is also known as *Ornithosis* and Parrot Fever. Many different bird species can be infected with *C. psittaci* and spread the disease.

Who can get Psittacosis?

Persons or birds exposed to birds that are infected with or carrying the *C. psittaci* can get infected. Infection can be a risk for pet owners, pet shop employees, veterinary clinic staff, poultry farmers, and slaughterhouse workers.

What are the symptoms of Psittacosis?

Early symptoms are flu like and include abrupt onset of fever, sore throat, headache, swollen glands, and muscle and joint pains. Later there may be more severe illness with pneumonia, dry cough, and trouble breathing.

Are there complications of Psittacosis?

Occasionally other organ systems such as the heart or liver may become involved.

How soon do symptoms appear?

Individuals can become ill 5 to 14 days after exposed to infected birds, but longer periods have been reported.

How is Psittacosis spread?

Birds transmit the infection through their feces and nasal discharge, although, some infected birds may be asymptomatic. People usually become infected after exposure to infected birds or bird droppings. However, some patients reported no exposure to birds.

How long is an infected person able to spread the disease?

Person to person transmission is rare and therefore it is *unnecessary* to isolate patients or to give antibiotics to contacts.

What is the treatment for Psittacosis?

Antibiotics are used to treat psittacosis. Your doctor will decide which medication is best for you.

How do I protect my family and myself?

Isolate newly acquired birds from all other birds for 30 days and observe for illness. Isolate and treat ill birds according to the veterinarian's plan. Caretakers should wear protective clothing, such as, gloves and masks when handling, feeding, or cleaning cages of infected birds. Use wet cleaning methods and disinfection when cleaning waste material.

Psittacosis in Maine:

Psittacosis is uncommon in Maine. The last case that was reported was in 2004.

Where can I get more information?

For more information contact your healthcare provider or local health center. You can also contact the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention by calling 1-800-821-5821. The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (<http://www.cdc.gov>) and the National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians (<http://www.nasphv.com>) websites are excellent sources of health information.