

## Working Safely With Birds

This information is provided to assist you in understanding the potential occupational hazards when working with birds and the need in some instances to take precautions to minimize the potential for animal-to-human zoonotic disease.

### **Possible risks when working with birds**

Potential illnesses associated with birds include Campylobacteriosis, *Chlamydia psittaci*, *Histoplasma capsulatum*, *Cryptococcus neoformans* and *Mycobacterium avium*, an avian form of tuberculosis. Only inspected and properly quarantined birds should be used in research studies or teaching demonstrations.

Transmission of these diseases to humans occurs by exposure via the inhalation route for the fungal infections (*Histoplasma*, *Cryptococcus*) due to inhaling spores. Contact with tissues through cuts or scratches may also pose a risk. Another route of exposure may be surface contact while handling avian fecal specimens.

Scratches or cuts involving birds or injuries from objects contaminated with body fluids or feces from birds require immediate first aid and medical attention.

### **Recommended personnel protective equipment (PPE)**

Gloves, masks and a laboratory coat (or other dedicated protective clothing such as a scrub suit) must be worn when working with birds. In some cases protective eye wear is also indicated. Do not eat, drink, or apply cosmetics while working or handling birds and always wash your hands after handling birds. Remember that body fluids and other materials derived from birds may also pose a risk. Guano (feces), hair and feathers may also exacerbate allergies.

### **Cleaning and sanitization recommendations**

Please contact LAMS Husbandry staff at (513) 558-5171.

Contact Environmental Health & Safety at (513) 556-4968 for any concerns or questions you have about working with birds or any vertebrate animal and occupational risks. Help with training personnel in specific work practices to minimize risk can be obtained by contacting the LAMS Husbandry Staff at (513) 558-5171.