

Psittacosis

Definition:

Psittacosis is a type of lung infection caused by a bacteria called *Chlamydia psittaci*. The disease is also known as Ornithosis or Parrot Fever.

Signs and symptoms:

Early symptoms 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.

Transmission:

Persons or birds exposed to birds that are infected with or carrying the bacteria can get infected. Parrot-type birds are the most often infected, but pigeons and doves, turkeys, chickens, and ducks sometimes get this disease. It can be a risk for pet owners, pet shop employees, veterinary clinic staff, poultry farmers, and slaughterhouse workers. Person to person transmission is rare.

Diagnosis:

This disease is diagnosed on the basis of clinical signs and symptoms, risk history and results of laboratory tests.

Role of the School Nurse:

Prevention

- Ensure that students and staff who may care for birds as part of their academic career wear appropriate personal protective equipment
- Encourage good hand hygiene
- Work with environmental services to promote appropriate cleaning and disinfection of contaminated areas

Exclusions

- There are no exclusions necessary for students or staff with this illness.

Reporting Requirements

- Psittacosis infection is reportable to Maine CDC at 1-800-821-5821

Resources:

- CDC Psittacosis web site:
<https://www.cdc.gov/pneumonia/atypical/psittacosis.html>