Birds & Diseases

Birds can spread germs to people, but illness caused by touching or owning birds is rare. Protect yourself from getting sick. Wash your hands thoroughly with running water and soap after handling birds or their droppings. Different types of birds can carry different diseases.

Parents and day-care workers should be aware that children under 5 years old should not touch baby chicks and ducklings. These baby birds can pass Salmonella bacteria to children and make them very sick. This germ causes salmonellosis. Parakeets and parrots can carry the germ Chlamydia psittaci. This germ causes the disease psittacosis. Pigeon droppings also have germs that make people sick.

Some people are more likely than others to get diseases from birds. A person's age and health status may damage the immune system. This increases the chances of getting sick. People who are more likely to get diseases from birds include infants, children younger than 5 years old, organ transplant patients, people with HIV/AIDS, and people being treated for cancer.
is available for people who are at greater risk than others of getting diseases from animals.

HEALTH BENEFITS OF PETS

There are many reasons why people have pets. Some of the health benefits of pets are listed below.

Pets can decrease your:

- Blood pressure
- Cholesterol levels
- Triglyceride levels
- Feelings of loneliness

Pets can increase your:

- Opportunities for exercise and outdoor activities
- Opportunities for socialization

Many groups support the health benefits of pet ownership and groups can provide information on how pets can help people be healthy.

Most of this information is courtesy of the CDC.
More information is available from the link http:www.cdc.gov/healthypets/health_benefits.htm.

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