Psittacosis (Avian Chlamydiosis)

Cause: *Chlamydophila psittaci*, a bacteria.

Occurrence in Animals: Wild birds (especially parrots, but also pigeons, doves, sparrows, canaries, mynah birds, shore birds, etc), pet birds (especially parrots, parakeets, cockatiels, canaries, etc) and domestic turkeys and geese (rarely chickens).

Source of Infection in Animals: Infected birds shed the bacteria through feces and nasal discharges, which can remain infectious in the environment for several months.

Transmission: Infection is acquired by inhaling dried respiratory secretions, feces, or dander (skin flakes) of infected birds. It can also be transmitted via feathers and eggs.

Observable Signs of Infection:
Animals:
- May be asymptomatic (no outward signs), especially in parrots. Stress can induce disease.
- Lethargy, anorexia, ruffled feathers may be observed.
- Difficulty breathing.
- Inflamed eyes, ocular and nasal discharges, (green) diarrhea and death may occur.

Humans:
- Fever, chills, headache, malaise, muscle ache, dry cough.
- If not treated, can evolve into severe pneumonia (detected by chest x-ray), heart infection, and liver infection.

Precautions:
- Good personal hygiene:
  - ***WASH HANDS*** after handling animals, particularly those **giving birth**,
  - No eating, drinking, smoking, etc., around animals and their environments.
- Healthy birds can shed *C. psittaci*, and organisms can persist in the environment for several months.
- Wear gloves, safety goggles and respirator (e.g. NIOSH certified dust mask) when cleaning potentially contaminated areas.
- If employees/students develop febrile illness/cough after exposure to birds, especially if bird is newly introduced or is a sick bird in the teaching hospital, they should immediately seek medical attention.

Reference: **http://www.research.cornell.edu/care/zoonoses.html**

Additional Information:
> http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr4908a1.htm
> http://www.cfsph.iastate.edu/Factsheets/pdfs/pstitacosis.pdf
> http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/msds-ftss/msds31e.html