

How to Protect Your Pets From Bird Flu, and Protect Yourself From Bird Flu From Your Pets

Several months ago, a cat in Germany caught bird flu -- and pet owners throughout Europe dumped their poor dogs and cats.

I trust you have more concern for the animals under your care than that, and there are ways to reduce the risk that they catch bird flu even during a serious pandemic.

The current A/H5N1 bird flu virus is unprecedented in the way it's proven it can infect not only birds and pigs (which can normally catch the flu from both chickens and people), but in how it's infected other mammals.

The cat in Germany. Allegedly lions and tigers in the Bangkok Zoo, and so on.

You must also remember this -- YOU can catch bird flu from your pets.

And your pets can catch bird flu from other animals and from other people.

So protecting them from bird flu is one way you must also protect yourself and your family.

I'm writing this article before bird flu has become contagious between people. There is no pandemic yet, but you should be concerned about transmission of A/H5N1 between animals. The virus has been found in Europe, though it's not yet in North America.

You should keep all your pet birds such as parakeets and canaries inside. That should shelter them from the virus.

If you're in Europe, Asia or Africa, I must say that it's risky to let your dogs and cats run free, especially if you're in a rural or wooded area frequented by wild birds. If you're in North or South America, this is not yet a problem.

Once a contagious bird flu pandemic starts, your options are more limited.

Pets should NOT leave your house or yard. I realize that dogs and cats used to running around free will not like being confined to home. They should remain on a leash or behind a fence that holds them in.

By the way, electronic fences don't count, because during the pandemic you cannot depend on electricity. I have a friend who delivers pizza. One night after an electrical storm, she had to stop her car in a very wealthy area to chase a bunch of peacocks off the road. I'm sure that they had been confined to the yard of one of the surrounding mansions behind an electrical fence -- until the power outage turned that fence off.

If you let your pets escape you will have to make a difficult decision -- because during a bird flu pandemic dogs and cats that have been running around loose should NOT be allowed back into your house or yard. I realize some of you will ignore this advice, but you'll be taking a big risk.

Since dogs and cats can catch bird flu, it's likely that some bird flu patients will transmit the virus to their pets. Who will then escape or be homeless because their owner died from that bird flu.

You don't want your pets exposed to those dogs and animals that'll be running loose through the streets.

You don't want your dogs and cats sniffing or eating dead birds.

You don't want your dogs and cats petted by strangers who may not even know they have bird flu.

If you let them out of your house or yard, they may well do some or all of those things before returning home to you -- bringing bird flu with them.

Therefore, the best way to protect your pets during a bird flu pandemic is to keep them away from everybody outside your family. Keep them inside your house as much as possible or at least in your yard.

They must stay isolated -- just as you should.

The best way to beat the bird flu is to avoid the virus.

Source: <http://www.articlecircle.com>

About the Author

© 2006 by Richard Stoker. Richard Stoker is the author of How to Protect Yourself and Your Family From Bird Flu
<http://www.BirdFluProtectionHome.com/> <http://chinabirdflu.blogspot.com/>