

What Can Harm My Bird?

There are many things that cause potential harm or even death to your pet birds. Some are obvious, others, not so easy to spot. Obvious to most are the harm that can be caused by other animals. Cats carry a bacteria in their mouths and claws that is deadly to birds. If you suspect your bird has had a cat bite or scratch, you must get it to your veterinarian immediately. Unfortunately, this is not a wait and see situation. Clean the area immediately if you can find it. *Pasteurella multocida* bacteria can be deadly and quick. Once you notice your bird not acting right, it may be too late to do anything about it. Most birds survive if treated ASAP.

Dogs may be fine with birds one minute and decide they have had enough the next. It all happens so fast. Why take chances? Ferrets actually eat birds. Again, don't assume that animals raised together will be ok. These are some of the more obvious dangers to your bird.

Some things in your house are not safe. Windows, mirrors, toilets, sinks with water left in them, ceiling fans, and floors all pose dangers. Fully flighted birds can get themselves killed by flying into mirrors and windows. Concussions happen and sometimes broken necks. Concussions can be treated but generally lead to a seizure condition later on. Flying into ceiling fans is not good for birds. Drowning is a thing. That's why bird baths are shallow. Keep sinks empty and toilet lids down. Don't leave buckets of water or cleaning products around. Be on the lookout around your house. Birds on the floor are in a lot of danger. Accidents happen. Birds in sofas and recliners are just not safe. Accidents can be prevented with a little forethought.

Other things you may not consider are foods and airborne toxic chemicals that may be safe for humans but deadly for birds. Food and beverage items that could be dangerous to birds include a lot of items you may not consider unsafe. Onions, garlic, chocolate, coffee, tea, yeast dough, salt, chips, tomato leaves and stems (green parts), potato leaves and stems (green parts), rhubarb leaves, avocados, cigarettes and other tobacco products, alcoholic drinks, moldy foods and milk are just a few. Caffeine in any amount is not safe for their hearts that already beat over 400 times a minute. The salt from eating one regular potato chip, to a bird, is equivalent to you eating the whole bag. Airborne chemicals are the hardest to detect. Some, like from cleaning supplies, hair products, scented candles, etc. you may notice. Others, you will not. One of the most common toxins is polytetrafluoroethylene (PTFE) or teflon. When heated, this substance releases toxic fumes that will kill birds. PTFE is in a LOT of stuff. When checking for this in your home, consider non stick oven liners, baking pans, new heating elements in fryers, heaters, furnace repair parts, etc. Those of us with multiple birds will usually have our toaster ovens, air fryers, etc. in the garage. I also recommend running new heaters of any kind for a few hours outside before bringing them in around your birds. Accidents can be prevented. Be informed.

For more good and informative articles about cockatiels visit this fabulous Lefebvre website: <https://lafeber.com/pet-birds/questions/cat-bites/>

For more good information and an opportunity to really learn the fundamentals of aviculture, visit the AFA website: https://afabirds.org/2018_WordPress/about-afa/

