

**The University of Tennessee
Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee
Occupational Health Program**

CHLAMYDIOSIS (PSITTACOSIS)

Risk: This reportable disease is caused by the bacteria *chlamydia psittaci*. It can be highly contagious and includes psittacosis in both parrots and orinthosis in mammals. The most common means of transmission to people is by contact with an infected bird. Transmission from mammals is less common.

Transmission: People contract the disease by exposure to exudates, secretions, fecal material, direct contact and aerosolization from an infected bird.

Symptoms: Signs in people include fever, headache, muscle pain, chills, and other signs related to respiratory tract disease. The signs are typical of influenza and untreated cases may reoccur. Any person working with birds who has signs similar to the flu should mention chlamydiosis to their physician.

Diagnosis and Prevention:

Cytology and blood tests are used to diagnose chlamydiosis. However, these tests can be difficult to interpret. Anyone working with any animal known to have chlamydiosis should wear special protective equipment to prevent spread to people (respiratory protection, gloves, protective clothing, etc.)