

Avoiding Disease at Your Backyard Bird Feeder

There are several diseases that can be transmitted to humans by birds feeding from backyard bird feeders. One of the most common is Salmonellosis. This is caused by bacteria that can be spread by contact with the feces of infected birds. Please follow these tips to make sure your backyard bird feeding environment is safe for both you and your feathered friends.



Blue Jay

1. Keep feeders clean

Clean your bird feeder weekly with a solution of 1 part liquid household bleach to 10 parts water. Wear disposable gloves and clean the feeder outdoors in a bucket, rather than in the kitchen sink. Let the feeder air dry, and do not refill with food until it is completely dry.

2. Keep pets away from bird carcasses and from the debris under the feeder.

To reduce spillage under the feeder, avoid using mixed seed. Many birds will knock out the filler seed to get to the sunflower seeds. Instead, you may want to use black-oil sunflower seeds or sunflower hearts in your feeders.

3. Remove feeders for 2 weeks if you see sick birds.

This will allow the birds time to disperse and will prevent the transmission of disease to other birds.

4. Wash your hands with soap and water after contact with your bird feeder or bird bath.

Keeping your hands clean is an excellent way to prevent transmission of any disease.

5. Do not handle any ill or dead birds.

If you do handle an ill or dead bird, wear gloves and wash your hands immediately afterward. Do not touch your eyes or mouth, eat, or smoke until after you have removed your gloves and washed your hands. Report all wild bird deaths to www.MyFWC.com/bird.