

#FEEDSMART

PREVENTING SALMONELLOSIS AT BIRD FEEDERS



WHAT IS SALMONELLOSIS?

Salmonellosis is a disease caused by the bacterium *Salmonella enterica*, which naturally occurs in the digestive tracts of a broad range of animals, including cattle, pigs, poultry, and wild birds. Outbreaks typically occur during the cold winter months within gregarious, flocking songbird species.

Our own actions can help curb the spread of Salmonellosis. Like with any human disease outbreak, our own actions can help spread the spread of this disease. If you have observed birds with symptoms of Salmonellosis near your feeders, immediately clean your feeders. Infected birds may appear lethargic, have swollen eyes and puffy feathers, and may exhibit rapid breathing.

IF YOU LIVE IN AN AREA WITH A REPORTED OUTBREAK, BE SURE TO:

TIP
1

CLEAN YOUR FEEDERS WEEKLY

A recent study found that the most effective way to clean birdfeeders was a combination of soaking them in a 9:1 bleach solution (i.e., 9 quarts of water to 1 quart of bleach) for at least fifteen minutes paired with washing them with general dish soap and water. Be sure to clean feeders away from where you prepare food and thoroughly wash your hands afterwards. You can also opt to spray empty feeders with the same 9:1 bleach solution. Allow the feeders to completely dry before re-filling, as damp bird seed promotes mold growth.



PRO TIP: To make this process easier, switch out feeders as you clean them so there is always a backup feeder(s) while the others are being cleaned.

TIP
2

CLEAN YOUR BIRD BATHS

Clean your bird baths with the same solution as noted above—feces congregate in these areas too! Water in bird baths should be replaced daily, year-round, to prohibit algal and bacterial growth in standing water.



TIP
3

TEMPORARILY REMOVE FEEDERS

Temporarily remove feeders that allow contact with bird waste and food. For example, tube feeders collect less feces than a platform feeder.



TIP
4

KEEP CATS INDOORS

Cats, just like humans, can transmit *Salmonella* and bring its infection into your home. Regardless of disease outbreaks, cats should always be kept indoors; there are many studies that have documented the negative impact of free-ranging domestic cats on wild bird populations. It is safer for your cat, for you, and for the birds to keep cats inside.

TIP
5

DO NOT TOUCH OR HAND FEED BIRDS

If you find a sick bird, call your state wildlife agency or wildlife rehabilitator. If your local officials instruct you to dispose of the remains, wear gloves or place a plastic bag over your hand to pick it up. Place the bird in a plastic bag, tie the bag up, and throw it away, following your local officials' instructions. Wash your hands with soap and water when you are finished.