

BREATHING EASY:

Safeguarding Your Pet Bird from Dangers in the Kitchen

*Safety Tips by
Karen Rosenthal, DVM, MS*

DID YOU KNOW?

Consumers have been using cookware with Teflon® non-stick coatings safely for over forty years.

The American Heart Association recommends cooking with non-stick cookware as part of a heart-healthy diet, and the National Stroke Association recommends using non-stick cookware for sautéing food. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has found non-stick coatings acceptable for conventional kitchen use. Also, because non-stick cookware requires less fat for cooking, it can help reduce dangers in the kitchen.



COOKING SAFETY TIPS FOR BIRD OWNERS

Many people keep their pet birds in the kitchen. It's a natural gathering place for family, friends – and pets.

But bird owners should be aware that there are dangers in the kitchen, too. Cooking fumes, smoke and odors that have little or no effect on people can seriously sicken and even kill birds, often quite quickly. Below are some simple tips to keep your feathered friends safe.

1 Always keep your pet bird **OUT** of the kitchen while cooking.

Many veterinarians urge pet owners to keep their birds in a room other than the kitchen. But if the kitchen is your bird's favorite place, always move it to another room before cooking.

2 Never leave heated cookware unattended.

Sadly, bird fatalities can result when both birds and cooking pots or pans are left unattended in the kitchen - even for just a few minutes. Cooking fumes from any type of unattended or overheated cookware, not just non-stick, can damage a bird's lungs with alarming speed. This is why you should always move your birds out of the kitchen before cooking.

3 Never preheat your cookware on high heat.

If accidentally overheated, non-stick cookware can emit fumes that may be harmful to birds, as can *any type* of cookware preheated with cooking oil, fats, margarine, and butter. This is why you should always move your birds out of the kitchen before cooking.

4 Always turn on the exhaust fan or open a window before cooking.

It's important to make sure that your kitchen is properly ventilated. In addition to cooking fumes, birds are highly sensitive to a variety of other fumes such as: aerosol sprays, non-stick sprays, perfumes, any source of smoke, pesticide sprays, glue, paints, self-cleaning ovens and cooking gas.

ADDITIONAL BIRD SAFETY TIPS

Store all cleaners, pesticides, mothballs, prescription and over-the-counter medications out of the bird's reach.

“Over the last 15 years, I have seen thousands of pet birds for a variety of illnesses. Birds have unique respiratory systems, and bird owners must take necessary steps to protect them. I advise bird owners to take the simple steps of cooking under normal conditions and keeping birds out of the kitchen to protect these precious family members.”

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For more information about the health and safety of your pet bird, please consult your local veterinarian.

The Association of Avian Veterinarians (AAV) recommends bird owners take pet birds to an avian veterinarian at least once a year for regular health examinations.

This educational brochure has been endorsed by:



Association of Avian Veterinarians
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