

# This is the June 2004 newsletter from The Birdcare Company

The topic this month is cage and aviary hygiene. For our Northern hemisphere customers the summer is the most critical period for hygiene. We are definitely getting increased numbers of reports of fungal and yeast infections in particular.

This newsletter is produced in two versions depending on where you live:

UK and Europe

North America and the rest of the world

# Hygiene

One of the biggest causes of the spread of infectious diseases is through the drinking and bathing water. It doesn't matter how clean your water starts out it will get infected. Fungal and yeast spores are all around in the air and our birds will contaminate water with their beaks or their whole bodies. many will defecate in the water first and drink it later!

Once in the water these germs often multiply rapidly (particularly in hot weather).

From here they manage to infect a large number of different organs. Birds of prey are very susceptible to pseudomonas (a bacterium) infections that get into wounds in the legs, pious parrots frequently get aspergillus infections in the respiratory tract, cockatiels are particularly prone to candida infections in the crop and many species get digestive tract infections.

Not surprisingly baby birds are even more vulnerable than their parents.

The solution to this problem is to stop the germs growing in the water. We achieve this by adding tiny quantities of Aviclens to the water. Just 0.5 mls per litre of water is all that is required. At this applied dose the product stops germ growth but doesn't necessarily actually kill germs but it does stop them from multiplying. When the water is drunk by the birds the Aviclens is completely neutralised by all the food and bacteria naturally occurring in the crop so it does no damage at all to the

natural gut flora of the bird.

For obvious reasons Aviclens is not compatible with the beneficial bacteria in products such as Potent Brew and Bioplus. However they can still be used together so long as the probiotics are added to food (softfood, fresh fruits, sprouted seeds etc). This works exceedingly well.

## Soaking seeds

This brings us nicely to the subject of soaked and sprouted seeds. Many breeders feed these foods and they are very useful for chick rearing. However they can be very dangerous. All seeds are covered in the spores of many different



Some water was contaminated with a budgerigar dropping. One sample was treated with Aviclens and the other was untreated. The samples were then cultured in petrie dishes. The Aviclens sample (left) grew no germs. The untreated sample (right) was covered in bacterial!

germs. No amount of washing can remove the spores from between the husk and the kernel so germs will grow during the germination process. Aviclens will stop this from happening making this food source much safer to use. Simply use Aviclens at the same dilution as used for drinking water. Rinse the seeds every 24 hours (with more Aviclens) until they have reached the stage you desire for your birds.

Seed soaked this way will smell fresh. A vast improvement on the nasty smell of some conventionally sprouted seeds.

All the above is great prevention. But what can we do if birds are infected? Read on.

## Helping sick birds

It almost goes without saying that birds with infections need the best immune system support they can get. For this reason we would always recommend the use of Guardian Angel, Feast, Flourish and Poly-Aid may also have their place.

Many respiratory infections respond well to misting the air with Avisafe. This stronger disinfectant can actually kill germs in the lungs and air sacs. The finer the mist the better so the ultimate delivery method is to put diluted Avisafe into a nebuliser and nebulise the air around the bird for half an hour two or three times a day.

Some parrot and raptor breeders are now using this approach as a routine (once or twice a week) preventative measure. This follows the poultry industry. For large scale misting like this an industrial fogger is necessary.

The 'poor man's' option is to set the nozzle on a spray bottle to the finest possible setting and spray around the bird.

Candida infections should be treated with Potent Brew. Yeasts don't like acid environments so Potent Brew works by adding an acidic liquid directly into the crop. The bacteria in the Potent Brew produce lactic acid so keeping the candida at bay. Often we use Potent Brew neat and as the only 'food' for up to a day. Impacted crops may need to be massaged to loosen them up and allow the food to flow through to the lower gut.

Digestive bacterial infections are also best dealt with using Potent Brew. Depending on the severity of the case Potent Brew may be added to moist foods, drinking water or given neat directly into the beak or crop.

## Cage hygiene

Keeping cages clean is a balance between exposing your birds to lots of germs and contaminating their environment with nasty chemicals.

Products like bleach give off toxic fumes of chlorine. These can be very damaging to the respiratory system of birds - not too good for you either!

Many other disinfectants only kill bacteria leaving your birds exposed to viruses, yeasts and moulds.

Avisafe has the benefit of being a broad spectrum disinfectant (it kills all the above germs), is safe to inhale and totally biodegradable. It has a pleasant smell so your bird room doesn't smell like a hospital!

When diluted in water Avisafe remains active for six months. So the most

economical way to use it is to mix it in a spray bottle and spray it on. Its detergent contents also make it fantastic at cleaning off bird droppings. Use it as a washing up liquid for cleaning feeding and water utensils and store hand rearing implements in it. It also makes a great disinfectant/cleaner for household use - so use it in the kitchen and bathroom!

## Free advice service

Please remember to use our free advisory services. We are happy to help with problems related to health, hygiene, breeding and nutrition.

Tel (UK) 0845 130 8600 (local charge only)

Int + 44 1453 835330

Français/Deutsch/Nederlands/Español/

Italiano Int + 44 1453 834302

E-mail [advice@BirdcareCo.com](mailto:advice@BirdcareCo.com)

Web site [www.BirdcareCo.com](http://www.BirdcareCo.com)



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Many respiratory infections respond well to misting the air with Enviroclens. This stronger disinfectant can actually kill germs in the lungs and air sacs. The finer the mist the better so the ultimate delivery method is to put diluted Enviroclens into a nebuliser and nebulise the air around the bird for half an hour two or three times a day.

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Web site [www.BirdcareCo.com/usa](http://www.BirdcareCo.com/usa)



## New bird mart in Texas

Our retailer Cindy Beasen of B5 Texas Feathers is going into the Bird Mart business. Here is what she sent me:

I am HOSTING my own All Pet Fair & Expo in San Angelo Texas on Saturday August 28th. I just decided to jump out there and see what happened so I rented the Colliseum and placed an ad in the papers in several surrounding cities and voila... I have had a tremendous response from vendors and public already. I am donating the proceeds from the raffle table to the 2 non-profit no-kill facilities (Pet Guardian Angel and Paws4Life) in San Angelo so I will get free television ads, free radio ads, free newspaper ads and more. I think it is going to be quite a success (at least I hope it will).

The Colliseum will hold 120 vendors with 8x10 booths. If you know of anyone in the Texas/Oklahoma area that would like a booth please send them my way and also any members of the public. We will have birds, rabbits, dogs, reptiles there - breeders, suppliers and more. Of course I will have the front booth with the BirdCare Products displayed and my banner with your logo will be right in the front!!

So, if you are anywhere near San Angelo in late August go and give Cindy your support!