

## Is My Bird Susceptible To The Cold Or The Flu?

### **Can a bird catch a virus from a human or from another source?**

Q: Our family adopted a white-bellied caique about six months ago. Her name is Maya, but she likes to be called Baby Bird. Is it possible for Maya to be susceptible to colds or the flu that we may contract? Is it possible for her to catch something herself even if we are healthy? With the cold and flu season approaching, we want to make sure to stay healthy.

Margrethe Warden explains:

Most human diseases, including those that cause the common cold and the flu, are not transmittable to our companion birds. If exposed to certain viruses or bacterial infections known to afflict parrots, your bird could develop an infection on her own even if her human family is healthy. These risks can be minimized by practicing good hygiene yourself, including limiting your exposure to other birds at stores, bird marts and club meetings and cleaning your hands thoroughly before feeding or touching your own bird. Also, avoid allowing your bird to come into contact with your saliva through sharing food or kissing her on the beak. A healthy parrot with a strong immune system should be able to fight most viral or bacterial infections.