

## Can Birds Eat Tomatoes?

**Find out what veterinarians say about feeding tomatoes to birds.**

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Tomatoes are a fruit that are high in acid and are a food that avian vets advise not to offer to your birds.

With the recent outbreak of salmonella on tomatoes, the editors of BirdChannel.com decided to take a look at this particular fruit and how it affects your birds.

"Tomatoes are an acidic fruit," said Larry Nemetz, DVM, of the Bird Clinic in Orange County, Calif. He does not recommend, at any time, feeding birds raw tomatoes (including cherry tomatoes) because of their acidity.

He once had a case that a cockatoo was hyper-sensitive to the acid in tomatoes and would, after a few days after eating one, vomit up blood. The bird had stomach ulcers and, after careful review of its diet, the tomato turned out to be the cause. Once the tomato was removed, the bird no longer became ill.

Nemetz said fresh tomatoes are the only thing for owners to worry about. Items such as dried tomatoes and spaghetti sauce are fine. For dried tomatoes, it's because only a little of the acid is left over from the drying process. The tomatoes in spaghetti sauce are cooked, removing the acid and also, there isn't a lot used in the sauce.

Jill Patt, DVM of Alta Mesa Animal Hospital in Arizona, usually doesn't recommend feeding tomatoes to birds. "There are other foods out there that are more nutritious, such as leafy greens, which birds can tear up and eat, providing mental stimulation," she said.

What if you do feed your birds tomatoes? "It's a one in a million chance," Nemetz said, on there being major problems feeding your birds tomatoes, "But I'd rather not risk it when there are better foods out there."