

# BREATHING EASY

## Safeguarding Your Pet Bird from Dangers in the Kitchen

*Safety Tips by Karen Rosenthal, DVM, MS*



## ! COOKING SAFETY TIPS FOR BIRD OWNERS

**Pets are an extremely important part of our lives and wherever we are in the house they join us.**

This allows for social activity and bonding but the kitchen poses real dangers for our pet birds and here are some safety tips to keep them out of danger while maintaining the important bond.

The kitchen can be a dangerous place for pet birds. 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** Just say “no” to pet birds in the kitchen while cooking, using aerosol sprays or using the self-cleaning feature of the oven.

A bird’s extremely efficient respiratory tract makes it sensitive to air particles that do not affect people in the same way. Since you cannot detect these deadly particles, prevent any heart-breaking problems by removing your bird from the kitchen when you are cooking or cleaning in that area.

**2** Never leave any brand of heated cookware unattended.

Any type of cookware and cooking oils can release particles that make breathing impossible for birds and in seconds, a bird may be fatally affected by these fumes. As a precaution, when you cook, no matter what you are cooking or brand you are using, **make a point of always moving your birds out of the kitchen before cooking.**

**3** Never preheat your cookware on high heat.

If accidentally overheated, nonstick 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 we do not let birds into the kitchen even before we start cooking!

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

Some activities can create air particles. These particles can destroy a bird’s complex respiratory tract. Dangerous particles are generated by aerosol sprays, nonstick sprays, perfumes, smoke, pesticide sprays, glue, paint, self-cleaning ovens and space heaters. If any of these products are used, turn on an exhaust fan or open a window. Never turn on a ceiling fan if your bird can fly, even if your bird is safely in a cage. Accidents happen and someone may open the cage door without knowing a ceiling fan is on.

**Additional Bird Safety Tips...**  
store all cleaners, pesticides, mothballs, prescription and over-the-counter medications out of the bird’s reach.

*“Over the last thirty 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. Don’t let your bird become my emergency patient! I advise bird owners to take the simple steps of cooking under normal conditions and keeping birds out of the kitchen, while cooking, to protect these precious family members.”*

**Karen Rosenthal, DVM, MS**  
Vice President, Medical Education  
Professor of Exotic Animal Medicine  
Veterinary Emergency Group



**This educational brochure has been endorsed by:**

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.



Association of Avian Veterinarians — [www.aav.org](http://www.aav.org)



Veterinary Emergency Group — [www.veg.com](http://www.veg.com)  
*Helping people and pets when they need it the most.*



**This educational brochure is sponsored by:**

