



Backyard Biosecurity

If you are a backyard or pet bird owner, you know your birds depend on you to keep them healthy. There are some basic practices you can follow to be sure you have “backyard biosecurity.”

What is Backyard Biosecurity?

Backyard biosecurity means doing everything you can to protect your birds from disease. As a bird owner, keeping your birds healthy is a top priority. Your birds can become sick or die from exposure to just a few unseen bacteria, viruses, or parasites. In a single day, these germs can multiply and infect all of your birds. By practicing backyard biosecurity, you will help keep your birds healthy.

If you follow some basic tips and make them part of your routine, you decrease the risk of disease entering your flock and persisting in soil, droppings, and debris. Practicing biosecurity is an investment in the health of your birds.

What Can I Do To Protect My Birds?

The basic biosecurity steps are:

- 1) Keep your distance.
- 2) Keep it clean.
- 3) Don't haul disease home.
- 4) Don't borrow disease from your neighbor.
- 5) Know the warning signs of infectious bird diseases.
- 6) Report sick birds.

To learn more about each of these steps, see our “Biosecurity Tips: 6 Ways To Prevent Poultry Diseases” factsheet or visit healthybirds.aphis.usda.gov.

Cleaning and Disinfecting

Cleaning and disinfecting is one of the most important parts of backyard biosecurity. But you need to make sure you do it correctly to inactivate disease.

- 1) Thoroughly clean and scrub objects before applying disinfectants. Disinfectants cannot work on top of caked-on dirt and manure, so wash surfaces thoroughly before disinfecting them.
- 2) Apply disinfectants using brushes, sponges and spray units. Allow adequate contact time (follow manufacturer's instructions).
- 3) Dispose of used disinfectant according to local regulations.



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Below are some examples of disinfectants available on the market. Follow the directions on the label carefully for the best results.

- Roccal®: Mix one-half fluid ounce (oz) of Roccal per gallon of water.
- Nolvasan® (chlorhexidine diacetate 2 percent): Mix 3 fluid oz of Nolvasan per gallon of water.
- Household bleach (sodium hypochlorite 6 percent): Mix three-fourths of a cup of household bleach per gallon of water.
- Lysol® spray for footwear
- Purell® hand pump for hand disinfection

Making an Easy Footbath

A footbath is a handy tool to help you practice backyard biosecurity. You can easily make one yourself. You will need:

- A low plastic pan or bin, wide enough to fit an adult's foot and shallow enough to step into easily.
- A plastic doormat (the “fake grass” mats work well).
- A disinfectant that works well for most situations, such as Tek-trol™ or One Stroke Environ™.
- Water

Mix the disinfectant with water according to the label instructions. Put the doormat in the plastic pan. Add disinfectant so that the bottom of the mat is wet.

Ask visitors to walk through the footbath, wiping their feet on the mat. The mat scrubs their shoes a bit as they wipe them and applies the disinfectant.

When the liquid starts to get dirty, empty it and put in new disinfectant.

Report Sick Birds at 1-866-536-7593.

If your birds are sick or dying, call your agricultural extension agent, local veterinarian, or the State veterinarian. Or, call the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) toll-free at **1-866-536-7593**, and we'll put you in touch with a local contact.

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