

Bird Safety Corner

Kitchen, Part 2

Time to review one of the greatest hazards to birds in our home – heated non-stick surfaces.

Non-stick surfaces have [perfluorooctanoic acid](#) (PFOA) and [polytetrafluoroethylene](#) (PTFE), two chemicals known for their toxic effects on birds when heated. I won't go into the chemistry here, but there's plenty written about them out there if you want to know more.

Common non-stick cookware trade names include Teflon and SilverStone, but remember that virtually everything labeled "non-stick" has these chemicals. PFOA/PTFE cause bird lung hemorrhage and death when heated. A common fallacy is that this can only occur if non-stick products are overheated. Instead, there is a high potential for toxicity at any temperature. PFOA is slated to be banned in 2015 in the U.S. due to its carcinogenicity, but for our birds, death occurs much more rapidly because of inhalation.



Cooking bags used to wrap meats and other foods in the oven are also hazardous, whether they are nonstick, aluminum, or plastic. All cooking bags should be avoided.

Many drip/burner pans are non-stick, and these can be even more hazardous than pans because they are closer to the heat source.



Be on the watch out for new aluminum foils labeled as "quick release". These are coated with non-stick materials which will give off fumes toxic to birds when heated.

Next month we will discuss alternatives to non-stick cookware which are safe for birds.

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