

Newcastle disease

Newcastle disease has been reported in Australia for the first time in 1998. It was found in poultry flocks in NSW. There are four main presentations:

- (1)** Marked depression, loss of appetite, increased respiration and progressive prostration. Profuse green diarrhea is common. Oedema of the head and cyanosis of comb/wattle. Mortality of 90%, those surviving may develop nervous symptoms.
- (2)** Acute respiratory and nervous symptoms. Sudden depression, loss of appetite with coughing, rasping and other signs of respiratory disease. Head tremors, wing and leg paralysis with torticollis. Mortality in adults 10-20%, higher in juveniles.
- (3)** Acute respiratory disease with coughing but not gasping. Depression, weight loss. Nervous signs may develop as the disease progresses. Prolonged disease process over several weeks with 10% mortality.
- (4)** Subclinical form with possible mild respiratory signs and reduced appetite. Low mortality rate.

Newcastle disease (Paramyxovirus)

Newcastle disease is a highly contagious viral disease which can infect all domestic and wild birds. Poultry, including fowls, turkeys, pigeons and pheasants are most susceptible. Transmission amongst birds is by infected droplets. Symptoms in birds include eye irritation, respiratory difficulties, gastric and general illness, fits and nervous disorders. The virus varies considerably in potency. The biggest source of danger to our wildlife is through illegally imported parrots.

It is transmitted to humans as an air-borne disease. Symptoms in humans include severe headaches, and conjunctivitis and mild respiratory disease. The incubation period is 1 or 2 days and recovery with treatment is spontaneous. It does not appear to be highly contagious in humans.