

**Executive Summary:**

September 2014, an anonymous survey was administered to pet stores throughout Maricopa County to explore the risks of infectious diseases of pocket pets and to collaborate on ideas for reducing risk.

An electronic survey consisting of 10 questions was distributed to pet and feed stores. Surveys were distributed to a total of 99 stores and 45 completed the survey. A majority of the respondents (62%) were store managers and 67% had more than 5 years of pet-related work experience.

**Key Findings:**

- 1) The majority of respondents believed reptiles, amphibians, rodents, rabbits and birds posed low risk to human health. (Figure 1.)
- 2) Most (53%) of respondents were “not concerned” about infectious diseases of pocket pets.
- 3) Infectious diseases identified as potential risks were *Salmonella* bacteria (40%), ringworm (40%), psittacosis (16%), and rat bite fever (7%).
- 4) Hand-washing was identified as the most effective precaution in preventing disease.
- 5) Point of purchase education (PPEd) was indicated as important by 98% of respondents.
- 6) The most effective method of PPEd was identified as verbal education, with other respondents indicating that a combination of two or more methods could also be effective. (Figure 2.)

Figure 1. Animal type vs. risk to human health

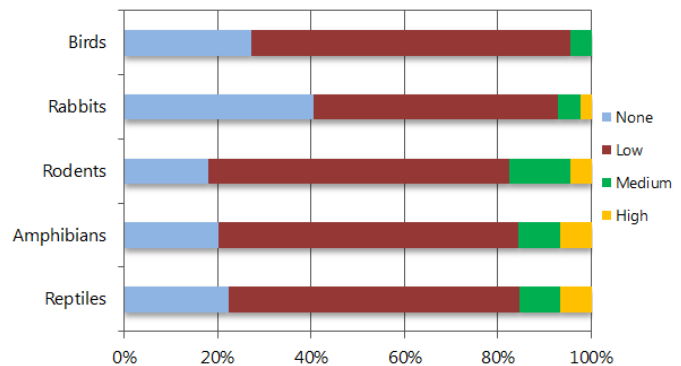
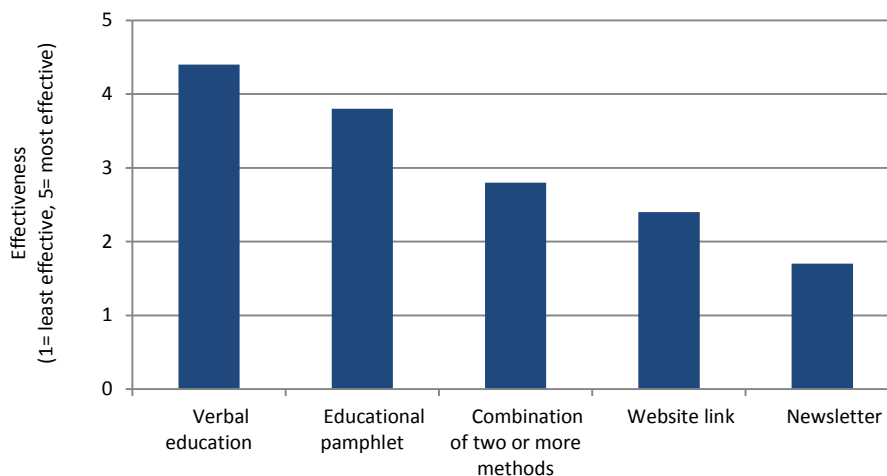


Figure 2. Most effective forms of PPEd



**Acknowledgements:**

We would like to express our gratitude to the pet stores and their staff who participated in the survey. Your valuable feedback was critical in creating the educational handout for customers within this envelope. This resource is also located on our website ([www.wearepublichealth.org](http://www.wearepublichealth.org)). Please distribute this resource to your customers at the time of purchase as this is an ideal opportunity for education.