

THE CARE OF BABY CHICKS

ARRIVAL DATE - FIRST DAY Instructions. Be sure you have some flexible time to pick up your birds from the post office. Sometimes they do not arrive when expected. Be sure to have your brooder area set up and heating source tested out so the birds can go straight into the brooder as soon as they arrive. Refrain from handling or playing with the birds the first 24 hours. We recommend for the 1st hour or first day to have the drinking water at 98 degrees (or very warm), because the birds are small with little weight to them on arrival. They will drink a lot of water which if too cool can rapidly decrease their body temperature and put them into shock or make them sick. Take each chick, one at a time and with your fingers hold the chick's head and do a quick dip of the chick's beak into the water and then let go of the chick. You can add 1 tablespoon of sugar to 1 quart of 98 degree water and shake well. Use this mixture for first 8 hours and then change to regular water. Normally the chicks will **NOT** start drinking or eating until the chick's body has warmed. So, at floor level the temperature needs to be 100°-101° degrees directly under the heat source. Make plenty of room so the birds can walk away from the heat source when they get too hot. A guide is one brooder lamp per 25 chicks using a 100 watt incandescent light bulb. The bottom of the bulb should be about 18 inches above the floor (check for 100° -101° degrees at floor level). Make sure the chicks have a big area to move away from the heat as needed. Lay down several layers of paper towels all around the brooder floor and sprinkle chick starter on the paper towels. Their feet will not slip on the paper towels and they will pick at all the sprinkled chick starter. Change the paper towels out as needed. Then the next day remove the paper towels and/ or sprinkled feed and use your normal feeder. You can also order from cackle hatchery a "starter kit". It should be ordered and shipped in advance of your chicks. *Read our complete "care sheet" found on our web site or the "care sheet" sent with your order for care instruction for chicks AFTER the first day of arrival. (See HEAT section on care sheet)

FEED: Use a chick starter/grower. Sprinkle feed on a paper towel in the area where the chicks will be. The chicks find the feed more easily this way at the start. Do this the first day. Then put the feed in troughs low enough so the chicks can see and reach the feed easily. Use one foot of trough feeder or one round feeder for every 25 chicks. Never let the chicks run out of feed. Adding chopped boiled egg yolk on top of the feed gets the chicks off to a good start and encourages them to start eating feed right away. It is important to remove all uneaten boiled eggs after 2-4 hours. We don't recommend adding grit because the chick starter/grower feed is formulated for what the chicks need to digest the food. Chicks should stay on a full feed ration of chick starter/grower until they are 4½ - 5 months of age. -EXCEPTION! You may want to limit feed intake on the Jumbo Cornish cross starting at the 14th day by taking the feed away at night. This seems to help slow the growth of the bird just enough to allow the skeletal structure of the bird to catch up with their fast muscular development.

WATER: Have a 1 gallon chick waterer for each 50 chicks. Do not medicate first water. For the first day you can add 1-2 tablespoons of sugar to 1 quart of 98 degree water and shake well. The second day go to regular water about 98 degrees. The third day use room temperature water. **DIP THE BEAK OF THE CHICK IN THE WATER BEFORE YOU TURN IT LOOSE.** Your chicks will be thirsty when you get them. A taste of water right away helps them to find more water soon. Most baby chick loss is caused because the chick doesn't start to eat or drink. Never let your chicks run out of water.

HEAT: We have found that using a drop light with reflector shield is a good source of heat. Use a 75 - 100 - 150 watt bulb and use as many lights as you need to keep the birds comfortable. Hang a reflector light from something secure so it does not come loose and drop down burning something or hurting a bird. The wattage of bulb you are using will determine how high you will hang the reflector over the middle of the birds. Chicks of 3-7 days of age should have an air temperature 1 inch off the floor of 95-98 degrees below the reflector light. Lower or raise the reflector to achieve this temperature allowing plenty of space for the birds to go to a cooler temperature. Regular white bulbs are fine; however, after 1-2 weeks red bulbs might work better to reduce feather picking. **The temperature may need to be slightly higher for Bantams and other small bodied birds.** A thermometer will help a lot to insure that you have the proper comfort level for the birds. **Reduce the temperature 5 degrees per week** until you reach 70 degrees. They shouldn't need much heat after that. Start with one or two bulbs per 50 chicks in cold weather. Then watch how the birds act - see diagram at bottom. The birds need a small light at night to keep them from piling up even after they don't need it for warmth. Be sure to watch the **CORNISH CROSS** as they grow faster than other birds and will overheat more quickly.

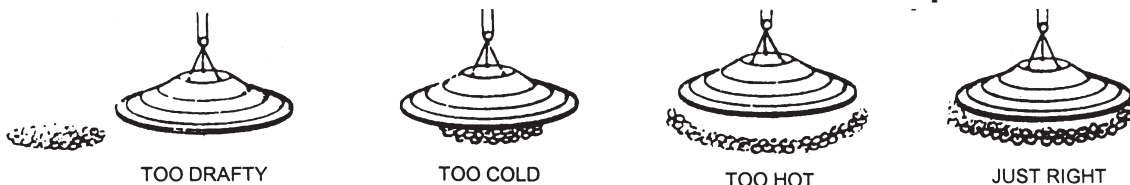
SPACE: Try to provide 1/2 square foot per chick at the start. For starting 50 chicks use a draft shield (see below) and make a circle about 5 to 6 feet across. For 100 chicks, make a circle 7 to 8 feet across.

THE DUCKS AND GEESE SHOULD BE RAISED SEPARATE FROM THE CHICKS & TURKEYS

Other Important Matters:

DRAFT SHIELD: Cardboard put in a circle about 12 inches high around the chicks helps cut down drafts on the floor. Be sure the circle is large enough to allow the chick to get away from the heat if it wants to.

Chick Behavior Best Indicator of Comfortable Temperature



LITTER: Large pine shavings make a good litter, however, do not use small shavings or sawdust because baby chicks learning to eat will eat it and possibly die. Rice hulls, straw or hay, also makes a good bedding. Do not use sand; the birds may eat it and can cause their craw to have impaction and cause health problems and death. Put the litter all over the floor at least 1 to 2 inches thick. On concrete floors use 3" - 5" of bedding. **Do not use cedar shavings, as they are highly toxic to poultry.**

PICKING: It is very common for birds to use their own beak to groom or pick themselves. The new feathers growing in are brushed with their beak and the oil gland above the tail provides the oil for their beaks to groom their feathers. New feathers are full of blood and if pulled out will bleed some and this can attract other birds to pick at this area. Baby chicks will often pick each other if they are too hot, too crowded, without fresh air, or short of room. Occasionally bright lights also cause them to pick each other and changing to a red light might help. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure when it comes to picking. Sometimes, however, they pick for no apparent reason. To stop it try putting in fresh green grass clippings several times a day and darken the room. Chunks of grass sod can also be set around for the chicks to pick at. As a last resort, try cutting off about one-third of the top beak with a very sharp knife or razor blade. Cut from top to bottom, straight down. Be careful not to crush the beak by pushing too hard on the knife or razor blade. Do not cut the lower beak, just the top one. Birds picking EACH OTHER can also be caused by stress from having lights on 24 hours a day. After you have dropped your heat temperature each week and now the birds do not require a heat source, remove the light at NOON. As the early evening comes around and it becomes darker the birds will automatically lay down by each other to go to sleep. Try not to disturb them during this time because it could make them pile up on each other and smother. It is common for them to lay part of their body across each other, you just don't want them 2-3 birds deep on each other. To treat chicks that have been picked, smear pine tar or menthol flavored ointment on the area injured and keep up the treatment until healed.

AFTER FOUR WEEKS

1. Increase floor area to 3/4 square foot per chick.
2. Increase feeders to provide 2 1/2" to 3" of space per chick.
3. Increase waterers to one 5-gallon fount per 100 chicks.
4. Install roosts at back of brooder area. Allow four inches per bird with roost poles six inches apart.
5. Open windows in day-time. Leave only partly open at night.
6. Prevent water puddles around founts. Place founts on low wire platform.
7. Chicks can range outside on warm, sunny days, but only if clean range is available.

SPECIAL SITUATIONS AFTER THE CHICKS ARRIVE

IF THE CHICKS HAD A HARD TRIP: Instead of using the standard feed and water suggestions listed above, try this: Put 2 tablespoons of sugar in 1 quart of 100 degree water and shake well. Add a little of this water mixture to a small amount of feed, stir and sprinkle it around the chicks. Mix only right before you are ready to feed. Do a small amount at a time. As they eat it, mix some more and sprinkle it around them to get their attention. Never leave this mixture for more than a couple of hours; it will sour and cause illness.

REAR END "PASTING UP": Sometimes the stress of shipping causes the manure to stick to the back of the chick. It is important to remove this daily. Pull off gently or, better yet, wash off with a cloth and warm water. It will disappear in a few days as the chick starts to grow. If chicks appear droopy add a sulfa type drug to their drinking water as directed on package.

BABY TURKEYS AND PEAFOWL

Use the basic instructions above, but watch more carefully as turkeys and peafowl tend to chill quicker than chicks. Baby turkeys and peafowl are known to be somewhat dumb -- therefore you have to make sure they know where the feed is. It is helpful sometimes to put colored marbles in the water fountains and to sprinkle some feed on cardboard the first few days. If they do not get started eating and drinking properly you might have "starve outs". If the turkeys or peafowl show any sign of diarrhea, add a sulfa type (Sulmet, etc.) drug to their drinking water as directed on package. Do not use any slick paper for bedding for turkeys and peafowl. Baby turkeys and peafowl easily slide on slick surfaces and lack the muscle in the leg area to keep their legs from spreading apart resulting in sprattle-legged poults. We also recommend a few standard size baby chicks to be raised with the turkeys and peafowl in the beginning. The chicks help teach the turkeys and peafowl how to eat and drink. Peafowl are very difficult to raise and we do not offer any guarantee or refunds.

DUCKS AND GOSLINGS

Follow the same care as for baby chicks except ducks and goslings do not need the extra heat as long as baby chicks because of their size and rapid growth rate. They will require more care, in that they are messier with water fountains. They can be turned outside at an earlier age depending on the weather. Goslings love to eat grass and weeds and will begin grazing as soon as they are turned out. Do not let baby ducks and goslings out on a pond as they will drown, since they don't have a mother to get them off the pond. Their down absorbs water. Once they have feathered out, they can go on the pond. **DO NOT MEDICATE WATER FOR DUCKS AND GEESE!!!** Ducks and geese can be raised together. However, do not raise with any other chickens, turkey or other birds. Since the ducks and geese are messier with the water, they will cause your other birds to get sick and die. Once they are fully grown they can be together providing they have plenty of room. On arrival we recommend allowing the ducks, **ESPECIALLY** the Mallards to have only 4 drinks and then take away the water for 30 minutes, then allow another 4 drinks and take the water away for 30 minutes. Do this for a couple of hours before leaving the water in full time. This will prevent the ducks from drinking too much at the beginning and going into shock and dying. Also make sure the water fountain and base are sturdy, you do not want it knocked over into the litter.

QUAIL, PHEASANTS, AND GUINEAS

Use the basic instructions for chicks, however, watch them more carefully for piling up. The temperature may need to be slightly higher for the smaller bodied birds. It must be regulated closely. Special water founts can be purchased or if using regular chick founts, add clean gravel or marbles to take up space so they can't get in the water and drown or get chilled. It is recommended you use a colored bulb to help control cannibalism. We do not recommend wire flooring at a young age because there is too much of a chance for their legs to catch in the wire.

SAFE HANDLING OF POULTRY

Live animals and pets can be a source of potentially harmful micro-organisms; therefore, precautions must be taken when handling and caring for them to prevent fecal/oral transmission among people. Children should be supervised as they handle animals and pets to make sure they don't put their hands or fingers in their mouth. Always wash your hands with soap and warm water after handling any animal or pet. For **INFORMATION** and **FREE MATERIALS** contact "United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service" at : <http://healthybirds.aphis.usda.gov>