

CACKLE HATCHERY

P.O. Box 529 Lebanon, MO 65536
www.cacklehatchery.com

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 and be home the first day and night to watch them. Sometimes they do not arrive when expected. Be sure to have your brooder area set up and heating source tested so that 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 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 teaspoon of sugar to 1 quart of very warm (98 degree) water and shake well. Use this mixture for the first 4 hours and then change back to regular very warm water. Normally the chicks will **NOT** start drinking or eating until their body has warmed. So, at floor level the temperature needs to be 100°-101°F directly under the heat source, for the **first few hours only**. Then lower the temperature to 98°F for the rest of the first day and second day. Make sure there is plenty of room for the chicks to walk away from the heat source in case they get too warm. Lay down several layers of paper towels on the brooder floor. Their feet will not slip on them. Change the paper towels out as needed and remove them after the first day. You can order a "starter kit" from Cackle Hatchery. It should be ordered and shipped in advance of your chicks' arrival date. You can find more baby chick care instructions and videos at cacklehatchery.com

HEAT: Always use brand new bulbs. We have found that using a drop light with reflector shield is a good source of heat. Use a 75, 100, or 150 watt bulb. A guide is one brooder lamp per 25 chicks. The bottom of the bulb should start out about 18 inches above the floor. Hang a reflector light from something secure to insure that it does not fall and hurt the birds or burn anything. The wattage of the bulb you are using will factor in how high or low you hang it. Make sure to use a thermometer at floor level under the light to be accurate. Again, make sure there is plenty of room for the chicks to walk away from the heat source. **WARNING!** Teflon coated light bulb fumes can be toxic to chickens. Be sure you **DO NOT** use any Teflon coated bulbs around your fowl. From days 3 through 7, the temperature in the brooder should be 95°F at floor level. Then you will reduce it **5 degrees per week** until the temperature reaches 70°-75°F.

After that, they can usually regulate their own temperature. **EXCEPTION! The temperature may need to be slightly higher for Bantams and other small bodied birds. Whereas the temperature may need to be slightly lower for Jumbo Cornish Cross as they grow faster than others and will overheat more quickly.** You can lower or raise the reflector (see diagram below) to obtain desired temperature or you can change the wattage of the bulb. Temperature is very important, therefore, a thermometer is highly recommended. Regular white bulbs are fine; however, red bulbs may work better to reduce feather picking. After two weeks, it is best to provide a heat source other than by light bulbs, such as an infrared hanging heater. It is better because the constant bright light from bulbs can stress the birds and cause health issues and picking. You will have to watch the birds for piling up during this transition.

FEED: Use a chick starter/grower feed. Sprinkle feed on the paper towel. The chicks find the feed easier in this way at the start. Do this for the first day. Then put the feed in troughs low enough so that the chicks can see and reach it easily. Use one foot of trough feeder or one round feeder for every 25 chicks. Never let the chicks run out of feed. Adding crumbled 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 do not 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 lay their first egg. **EXCEPTION!** You should 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: Start with a 1 gallon low profile chick waterer for each group of 25-50 chicks. Do not medicate water with anything on the first day. The first water given to new arrived chicks should be very warm at 98°F. The next 2 days the water should be warm and by the 3rd day it can be room temperature. Your chicks will be thirsty when they arrive in the mail. A taste of water right away will help them find more water soon. Dip the beak of each chick into the warm waterer before you turn your chicks loose. Most baby chick loss is caused by the chick not starting to eat or drink due to them being too cold to move. Never let your chicks run out of water.

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 1 teaspoon of sugar in 1 quart of 100°F 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 put it in the 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.

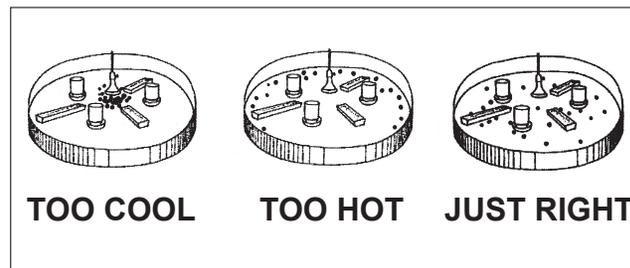
REAR END "PASTING UP": Sometimes the stress of shipping causes the manure to stick to the back of the chick. It is important to remove this daily. Pull off gently using a warm wash cloth. It will disappear in a day or so as the chick starts to grow.

MEDICATION: You should always have Amprol medication on hand when raising baby chicks. Do not give them medication unless there is an obvious reason to do so. Also, never give medication right away upon arrival. The chicks are too thirsty and can easily overmedicate themselves. If they appear weak, droopy, have diarrhea, or continue to have pasty bottom then you can give them medication (**Only after the first 8 hours and never mix it with the sugar water or any other meds**). We recommend the use of Amprol for medication of these symptoms. You should be able to find it at your local feed store or at cacklehatchery.com. Please view our website for videos regarding the use of medication.

SPACE: Try to provide ½ square foot per chick at the start. For starting 50 chicks, use a draft shield and make a circle about 5 to 6 feet across. For 100 chicks, make a circle 7 to 8 feet across.

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

Chick Behavior Best Indicator of Comfortable Temperature



LITTER: Large pine shavings make a good litter. Rice hulls, dry straw, or hay can also make good bedding. Do not use small shavings or sawdust because baby chicks that are learning to eat; will eat it and possibly die. Do not use sand because it can also be eaten by the birds and can cause their craw to have impaction, which may cause health problems and/or death. Put the litter all over the floor at least 1 to 2 inches thick. On concrete floors, use 3-5 inches of bedding. **Do not use cedar or cypress 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 oil gland above the tail provides oil for their beak 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, and even when they are bored.** Occasionally, bright lights can cause them to pick and having lights on 24 hours a day can cause stress; changing to a red light will help. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure when it comes to picking. When the birds are picking for no apparent reason, you can put fresh green grass clippings in several times a day and darken the room. Chunks of grass sod can also be set out for them to pick at. As a last resort, try cutting off about one-third of the top beak with a very sharp knife or box knife. Cut from top to bottom; straight down. Be careful not to crush the beak by pushing too hard on the knife. Do not cut the lower beak. To treat chicks that have been picked, smear some type of menthol ointment on the area that has been injured and keep up the treatment until healed.

AFTER FOUR WEEKS

1. Increase floor area to 3-4 square feet per bird.
2. Increase feeders to provide 2 ½ to 3 inches of space per bird.
3. Increase waterers to one 5-gallon fount per 100 chicks or install a nipple system.
4. Install roosts at back of brooder area. Start roost poles low and gradually raise from floor. Allow 4 inches width per bird and 6 inches apart.
5. Open windows during the day. Leave only partly open at night.
6. Prevent water puddles around founts. Place founts on low wire platform. Move founts periodically to new locations to keep area dry so you can prevent bacteria from forming.
7. Birds can range outside on warm, sunny days but only if a clean range is available.
BEWARE OF PREDATORS!

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 to put colored marbles in the water founts and to sprinkle some feed on paper towels for 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 the package. **DO NOT** use any slick paper for bedding for turkeys and peafowl. They can easily slide on slick surfaces (they lack the muscle in the leg area that keep their legs from spreading apart) which can result in spraddle-legged poults. We also recommend a few standard size baby chicks to be raised with the turkeys and peafowl in the beginning. The chicks will 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; however we will be happy to help with any questions if you call us.

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 rapid rate of growth. They will require more care in that they are messier with water founts. **DO NOT MEDICATE WATER FOR DUCKS OR GEESE!!!** Make sure the water fount and base are sturdy as you do not want it knocked over into the litter. In extreme shipping situations, water may need to be restricted for a short time upon arrival. Never offer food without water. Ducks and geese can be turned outside at an earlier age than other birds 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 do not have a mother to help them. Their down absorbs water. Once they have feathered out, (2-3 months depending on the breed) they can go on the pond. Ducks and geese can be raised together; however, do not raise them with any other chickens, turkeys or other birds. The ducks and geese are messier with water so they can cause your other birds to get sick and possibly die. Once they are grown, ducks and geese can free range with other birds as long as there is a big enough area.



QUAIL, PHEASANTS, AND GUINEAS

Use the basic instructions for chicks; however, watch them more carefully for pilling up. The temperature may need to be slightly higher for the smaller bodied birds. Usually 99°-100°F for the first week, then lower it 5 degrees per week until about 70°F. The temperature must be closely monitored. A thermometer is highly recommended. Special game bird water founts can be purchased. If you are using regular chick founts, add clean gravel or marbles to take up space so they do not drown or get chilled. You should use a colored bulb to help control cannibalism. We do not recommend wire flooring at a young age because it is a good possibility that their legs will get caught in the wire.

SAFE HANDLING OF POULTRY

Live animals and pets can be a source of potentially harmful microorganisms (germs including salmonella and bacteria). 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 do not put their hands or fingers in their mouth. **Always** wash your hands with soap and warm water after handling animals.

For information and free materials, contact “United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service” at <http://healthybirds.aphis.usda.gov>

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

To view many helpful videos, visit us at
www.cacklehatchery.com

If you have any questions or concerns,
please do not hesitate to call us at
417-532-4581