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. 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 chicks are very warm at 98°F. The next 2 days 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 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.

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.

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.

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.
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 poulties. 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.

THE DUCKS & GEESE
DO NOT MEDICATE WATER FOR DUCKS OR GEESE!!!

Medicate Water for Ducks or Geese

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

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