

Feed & Water

Chicks must have access to feed and water as soon as they arrive. Provide day-old chicks with Chick Starter feed. Once chicks reach 8 weeks of age, transition them to a grower feed until they are ready for laying feed.

Keep feeders and waterers close to the heat source. Chicks will not travel far from warmth to eat and drink, especially during their first few days.

A good guideline is:

- One 24-inch feeder for every 25 chicks
- One 1-gallon chick waterer for every 25 chicks

Provide warm (not hot) water during the first week. Change water daily and keep feeders clean. Clean feed and water are essential for healthy chicks.

Waterers and feeders should “grow” with your birds. As chicks get larger, their water and feed consumption increases and you will need to upgrade to larger waterers and feeders.

For newborn chicks:

- Use a small, shallow water base (such as a chick or quail waterer)
- Add clean marbles or small stones if needed to prevent chicks from stepping into the water
- Wet chicks chill quickly and can die from exposure

Adding vitamins and electrolytes to the water for the first 1–2 weeks can help reduce stress, support hydration, and may help prevent pasting up as their digestive systems begin working properly.

As chicks grow, provide more space, additional feeders and waterers. This helps reduce cannibalism and bullying, encourage healthy exercise and movement, and lower the risk of disease caused by crowding.

Important Health Notes

Pasting Up - As you move your chicks to their new home, check them for pasting up. Pasting up occurs when droppings dry and stick to the vent, blocking the chick from passing waste. This is a serious condition and can be fatal if not corrected quickly. It is usually easy to see. The dried droppings will be stuck to the outside of the chick and may partially or completely cover the vent.

To treat:

- Soften the area with a warm, wet paper towel or cloth
- Gently loosen and remove the droppings
- A soft toothbrush can help in stubborn areas
- If needed, carefully trim feathers around the vent
- Never pull hard or cut the skin

After cleaning, dry the chick completely and return it to warmth. Check affected chicks at least twice daily, as pasting up often returns during the first week or two of life.

It is most common in:

- Day old chicks
- Bantams
- Cochins
- Chicks with feathered legs



Pasting up is usually caused by stress, dehydration, temperature issues, or digestive adjustment. Proper heat, clean water, and good hydration help prevent it.

Handling Chicks - Chicks are fragile, especially during their first two weeks. Too much handling can cause stress and slow their growth. Always supervise children and set clear boundaries for gentle, limited handling. If a chick shows signs of distress or has recently had pasting up, return it to the brooder and allow it to rest and recover.



CHICK CARE GUIDE

Essential Care for Healthy Chicks



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Chick Care Guide



Raising chicks is an exciting and rewarding experience, but it also requires proper care and attention. To help you succeed, we have provided this simple guide with essential information to keep your chicks healthy and thriving.

Before Your Chicks Arrive

Choose a location for your brooder that is clean, dry, draft-free, and away from food preparation or eating areas. Have all equipment set up and running before your chicks arrive so the brooder is warm and ready. This includes your brooder, heat source, feeders, waterers, and feed. Being prepared ahead of time helps reduce stress on your chicks and gives them the best start.

Brooder Supply List:

- Brooder Box
- Feeder
- Waterer
- Chick Starter Feed
- Heat Lamp
- Heat Bulb (125-250 watt)
- Thermometer
- Bedding
- Vitamins & Electrolytes
- Chick Warmer



Bedding

Pine shavings make excellent bedding for chicks. They absorb moisture, help control odor, and keep chicks clean and dry. Bedding should be changed every 3–4 days, or sooner if it becomes wet or heavily soiled. You may also use a brooder liner. As chicks grow, their bedding will need to be changed more often.

Once chicks are at least 2 weeks old, you can switch to a grippable surface with a drop tray for easier cleanup. This allows droppings to fall below the walking surface and helps keep chicks cleaner longer. For best results, continue using pine shavings in the drop tray to absorb moisture and reduce odor.

Additional Bedding Tips:

- Never use slick or slippery surfaces (such as newspaper) as they can cause leg injuries.
- Keep bedding completely dry at all times; wet bedding can quickly chill chicks and cause illness.
- Avoid cedar shavings, as the fumes can harm chicks' respiratory systems.
- Bedding should be deep enough to absorb droppings but not so deep that chicks struggle to walk.
- Stir bedding daily to prevent moisture buildup and clumping.
- Remove wet spots immediately, especially around waterers.
- Clean bedding is one of the most important factors in preventing disease and pasting up.

Elevate your waterers and feeders to keep bedding out and reduce mess. For chicks, place both the feeder and waterer on something slightly raised so the lip is about the height of the chick's back. This keeps them from scratching bedding into it while still allowing easy access.

Heat & Temperature

Chicks need a consistent heat source to stay healthy. Use a heat lamp with a 125–250 watt bulb. The starting temperature should be 90–95°F measured at chick level in the center of the brooder using a thermometer. Lower the temperature by 5°F each week until you reach 70°F. At that point, supplemental heat can usually be removed unless the room or outdoor temperature is below 70°F.

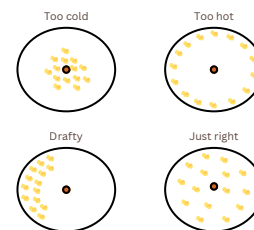
Smaller or more delicate chicks may need slightly warmer temperatures and a slower reduction in heat, such as lowering the temperature only a few degrees each week until they are fully feathered. We recommend separating delicate chicks so they are not crowded by stronger ones and can stay warm and comfortable.

Do not use a heat plate or brooder heater for newly hatched chicks. Heat plates are not warm enough for chicks under two weeks of age and can lead to chilling.

Your chicks will show you if the temperature is correct:

- **Too cold:** Chicks huddle tightly under the lamp and chirp loudly. Increase heat.
- **Too hot:** Chicks stay along the edges of the brooder, pant, or hold their wings out. Reduce heat.
- **Just right:** Chicks are spread out, eating, drinking, and moving comfortably around the brooder.

Temperature Guide by Week



0-1 week 90-95°F
1-2 weeks 85-90°F
2-3 weeks 80-85°F
3-4 weeks 75-80°F
4-5 weeks 70-75°F
5-6 weeks 70°F