



Overwhelmed Acres



Located in Kingston, AR



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Recommended Care for your chicks

Temperature

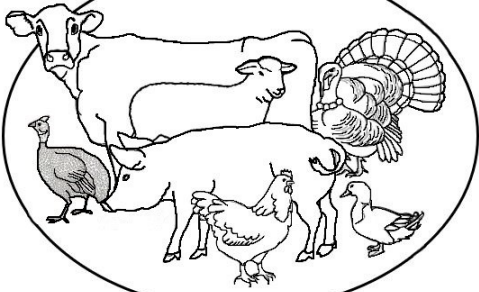
Chicks should be kept at 95 degrees Fahrenheit for the first week, then decrease by 5 degrees per week until they are fully feathered. Most chicks require a heat lamp 24/7 for the first 2 weeks then only at night for the next 2-3 weeks. Heat lamps should be positioned safely so as not to fall onto the chicks and far enough away from other combustible materials.

Determining if your chicks are too hot or too cold can be challenging. If your chicks are staying far away from your heat lamp or are panting, it may be too hot for them. Try moving the lamp further away from the chicks, and recheck them in 15-20 minutes. If your chicks are all huddled directly under your lamp and seem to be smothering each other to get closer to the lamp, they may be too cold. Try moving your lamp closer to the chicks by a few inches. Recheck them in 15-20 minutes to see if they spread apart a little better. Ideally, they will cluster together near the heat lamp, but they will not be on top of each other.

Water

Briefly dip each chick's beak in the waterer when introducing them to a new pen/brooder. This will let them know where to get a drink. Using a water and electrolyte solution such as Sav-A-Chick for the first week is recommended, but tap water is also acceptable. Avoid ice cold water as this can chill the chicks. Depending on the waterer you are using, you may need to place a few marbles in the base for the first few weeks to prevent them from getting wet or drowning in it. If you are using a quail waterer the marbles are probably not necessary.

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Food

Ensure that food is available to your chicks at all times. They are like babies of other species – they will go through the cycle of eat, play, sleep multiple times throughout the day. Chicks should be fed 20-24% medicated chick starter crumbles. You should use medicated feed with amprolium to prevent coccidia, which can quickly kill all your chicks!

Mealworms can be used as a supplement or “treat” starting at about 2 weeks old, but these must be crushed into very small pieces. Wait until your chicks are at least 2 months old to introduce scratch or other seed-based feed.

Habitat / Brooder

The easiest is a storage tub from your local big box store. The larger the better as it will provide room as your chicks grow and become more active. The floor of the habitat needs to be slip resistant, but not something they will be inclined to eat. Pine shaving flakes come highly recommended, but be sure to avoid any type of cedar shavings. Some people even use shelf liners made of grippy rubbery material. No matter what you use, it should be changed at least every 2-3 days. More frequent cleaning may be required as your chicks grow. Placement of the feeder and waterer are a matter of personal choice and logistics, but we recommend placing the waterer away from the heat lamp. This will prevent chicks from getting wet when they are actually trying to get warm. As your chicks grow feathers, they will start to attempt to jump or flutter out. A cover of hardware cloth may be necessary to keep them safely in the habitat.

Older Chicks

Your chicks will eventually be ready to move to an outside coop (depending on the temperature and your situation). You will want to keep them in the coop until they are feathered out completely. Then you can start allowing them to venture out during the day and return to the coop at night. Your coop does not have to be pretty, but it does need to be secure. Build it with all manner of predators in mind.

