CHICK CARE GUIDE

Chicken Town Hatchery & Hen | Cowichan Valley, BC

BROODER BASICS

Temperature: Week 1: 90–95°F (32–35°C). Week 2: 85–90°F. Week 3: 80–85°F. Week 4: 75–80°F. Reduce heat gradually as chicks feather out.

Watch the chicks: Tightly huddled under the heat means they are too cold. Spread far away from the heat or panting means they are too hot. Active, eating, drinking and comfortably spread out means the temperature is right.

Water — available 24/7: Fresh, clean water must always be available. Use a chick-sized poultry waterer. Check it morning and night, keep it free of bedding, and avoid deep dishes where chicks can drown.

Feeder: Use a chick feeder and provide chick starter/free-choice feed at all times. Keep feed dry and clean.

Bedding: Soft wood shavings or other clean, absorbent poultry-appropriate bedding. Avoid slippery surfaces such as newspaper or smooth cardboard. Remove wet or heavily soiled bedding regularly.

Ventilation: Good airflow is essential. **Do not brood chicks in fish tanks or poorly ventilated enclosed containers.** Animal cages, puppy pens, stock tanks with proper ventilation, or purpose-built brooders work well. Avoid drafts directly on chicks.

Heat: Brooder plates or heat lamps may be used. **Brooder plates are for INDOOR USE ONLY.** Secure heat lamps safely and keep them well away from bedding and flammable materials.

CHICK HEALTH

Daily health check: Healthy chicks should be bright, alert, eating, drinking, moving normally and growing. Watch for weakness, isolation, inability to stand, refusal to eat or drink, or abnormal droppings.

Medicated chick feed: Medicated chick starter may help prevent coccidiosis. Follow the feed label because not all medicated feeds contain the same medication.

Poultry vitamins: May be useful during transport or other stress. Use according to product directions. Vitamins do not replace proper heat, water, nutrition or veterinary care.

PASTY BUM — CHECK MORNING AND NIGHT

Gently pick off loose, stuck-on poop. If it is very pasty or firmly stuck, use **warm water** to gently loosen it and clean **the bottom/vent only**. Do not pull hard. Dry the chick completely and return it immediately under heat.

COCCIDIOSIS — WATCH FOR

Lethargy, fluffed-up appearance, poor appetite, weight loss or poor growth, weakness, diarrhea, bloody or dark droppings, and sudden death. Coccidiosis can progress quickly in young chicks.

Amprolium: Can be used when coccidiosis is suspected and may be appropriate depending on the situation. It can be purchased at Top Shelf Feeds, or you can ask Chicken Town Hatchery for information. Follow product directions or veterinary advice for dosing.

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TRANSPORTING CHICKS

Transport chicks in a secure box with clean shavings and adequate ventilation. A wrapped hot-water bottle can be used if additional warmth is needed.

Food and water during the trip: Chicks are generally fine without food and water for a normal short trip home. Once home, place them in their warm brooder with fresh water and chick feed.

If a chick is not perky when you get home: Get it warm and offer water. A temporary energy boost can be provided with **½ teaspoon molasses per 1 cup of water** or sugar water. Fresh plain water should remain available.

WHEN TO MOVE OUTDOORS

Most chicks can move outdoors when they are **fully feathered, around 6 weeks**, but this is weather dependent. Check your forecast and make sure the area is dry, sheltered and predator-proof.

Larger broods: Can often stay warmer together. **Smaller broods:** May need a heat source if overnight temperatures drop significantly or frost is expected.

Do not move chicks outdoors based on age alone. Consider feathering, overnight temperatures, wind, rain and shelter.

INTRODUCING CHICKS TO ADULT CHICKENS

Do not put very young chicks directly into an adult flock. Adult birds can seriously injure or kill chicks. Introduce gradually when they are old enough, with plenty of space, food and water, and places to escape bullying.

OTHER IMPORTANT TIPS

- Keep wet bedding cleaned up promptly.
- Do not overcrowd the brooder; chicks need room to move away from heat.
- Keep dogs, cats and other pets away from unsupervised chicks.
- Wash hands after handling chicks, bedding, feeders or waterers.
- Check individual chicks daily — one weak chick can be missed in a large group.
- Young chicks can deteriorate quickly. Contact a poultry veterinarian if you are concerned.

CHICK REPLACEMENT POLICY

We stand behind the health of our brooder-raised chicks. If a chick dies from **failure to thrive or an apparent health issue related to the chick itself**, the chick will be replaced when reported within **5 days of purchase**, subject to availability.

We use the **honour system**. Replacement does not cover deaths caused by circumstances outside failure to thrive, including incorrect brooder temperature, overheating or chilling, accidental dropping or handling injuries, drowning, predation, or other preventable environmental or husbandry issues.

Replacement policy applies to brooder-raised chicks only. Hen-raised chicks are sold without replacement.

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