

ALASKA MILL FEED & GARDEN CENTER

GUIDE TO RAISING CHICKS

BABY CHICK MUST HAVE CHECK LIST

- Temporary Shelter/Brooder Shield
- Permanent Shelter
- Brooder Reflector and Infrared Heat Bulb
- Bedding (*straw, white or pine shavings - NO CEDAR shaving as cedar is toxic to poultry!*)
- Feeder
- Chick Starter Feed
- Waterer
- Vitamins/Electrolytes (*water soluble*)
- Thermometer

Chicken Vocabulary

- Chick: baby or young chicken
- Poult or Pullet: immature female chicken or turkey (0-20 weeks)
- Broiler/Fryer: chicken being raised for meat
- Layer/Hen: adult female Chicken producing eggs (4-5+ months old)
- Rooster: adult male Chicken

Before the Chicks Arrive

1. Thoroughly clean and disinfect the house and all equipment. Let dry and put down 3-5 inches dry litter (*pine or white shavings, straw, or newspaper*).
2. Place thermometer at chick level.
3. Pre-heat brooding area with either a brooder or infrared heat lamp to 98° F. If a lamp is used, provide one 250 W lamp for each 25-50 chicks.
4. Place an 18 inches high brooder shield around the brooding area. The shield should be 2 to 3 feet from edge of the brooder heat source. During cold weather, a solid guard should be used to prevent straying and to prevent drafts. In warm weather, a wire guard should be used.
5. Provide fresh feed and water just prior to chick arrival.
6. Chicks need clean fresh air.

Brooding Baby Chicks

1. Maintain 95-98 °F at chick level the first week, and then drop 5 °F per week until you reach 65 °F.
2. Allow a minimum of 7 square inches of brooding space under the brooding light.
3. Gradually increase space under brooding light guard area. Guard may be removed between the fifth and tenth day depending on room temperature. Observe frequently to ensure correct temperature. Chicks should be loosely spaced under hover when bedded down. Chilling or overheating can cause severe respiratory, digestive and leg problems.
4. Keep litter dry. This helps prevent coccidiosis and other diseases.
5. Provide adequate ventilation.
6. Start with 1 gallon of water of each group of 25-50 chicks. Do not medicate water on the first day. Dip their beaks in water.

Baby Turkeys and Wild Game Birds

- Use the basic instructions for chicks.
- Turkey poults tend to chill quicker
- Slower to learn where feed and water are. Make sure to monitor for consumption. Baby chicks will teach baby turkeys where to eat.
- It is helpful to put colored marbles in water founts to minimize spilling.
- Do not use newspaper, it is too slick and they lack strong leg muscle early on.
- Use Turkey/Wild Game Starter and then switch to Turkey/Wild Game Grower at 10-12 weeks.

Ducks and Goslings

- Use the basic instructions for chicks.
- Ducks and goslings need extra heat because of their rapid growth.
- They will require more care as they are messier.
- **DO NOT MEDICATE!**
- They can go in water once they have their feathers at 2-3 months.
- **DUCK & Geese should be raised SEPARATE from chicks, turkeys, and other birds.** Once they are grown, they can free range with other birds as long as there is enough room.

Pasting Up

Pasting up is when fecal matter sticks near the vent. To prevent or correct pasting, feed Chick Starter. It is important to remove daily. Pull pasting off gently using a warm wash cloth.

Mixing Birds of Different Ages

Since baby chicks are susceptible to disease, it is best not to mix birds of different ages or bring outside birds into your flock. If outside birds are purchased, isolate for a 30 day quarantine period to determine if any diseases are present.

GENERAL CARE OF CHICKENS

Housing

- Protect from moisture, draft, extreme weather.
- Protection from animals (cats, dogs, rodents, other birds) to prevent killing, spread of diseases, and consumption or contamination of feed.
- Provide proper ventilation.
- Put down 3-5 inches dry litter (*straw, newspaper pine or white shavings, NO CEDAR SHAVINGS*).
- Inside area for your birds should be a 2-5 square feet per bird, depending on type of bird.
- Outside area for your birds should be a minimum of 4 square feet per bird.
- Chicks can go outside once they have their adult feathers at 5-6 weeks.

Lighting

- Continuous light produces maximum growth of Fryers but is harmful to egg production.
- Do not use dim all night lights on Pullets or Laying Hens.
- During winter, use artificial light to maintain 15 – 17 hours of light per day on Layers.

Water

- 1 gallon fount per 25 chicks
- Use fresh, room temperature or warm water
- Double water capacity at 6 weeks

Nests

- Provide 1 nest each for four birds prior to start of egg production
- 7" x 8" opening for light type hens, 10" x 12" for heavy type hens
- Use 2-3 inches of clean, dry shavings or chopped straw as nesting material.

FEEDING GUIDELINES OF CHICKENS

Alaska Mill & Feed's Poultry Rations are formulated with high quality ingredients to meet the specific needs of chicks, pullets, layers and broilers. All of our rations are balanced and formulated by a Ph.D in animal nutrition.

Layers

For baby chicks feed our Chick Starter ration from the first day:

- Keep the chicks on the starter for 6-8 weeks.
- Chick Starter ration is a 'mash' (*finely ground*).
- Contains 20% protein.
- Provides nutrients for optimum skeletal growth and development for young bird
- Additional water soluble vitamins and electrolytes are available.

After 6-8 weeks switch to our Pullet Grower:

- Keep on Pullet Grower until ready to start laying, usually 4-5 months of age.
- Crumble form (*in between a mash and a pellet*).
- Contains 15% Protein.
- Non-Medicated.
- Formulated to promote steady developmental growth until ready to lay.

Once birds start laying eggs, gradually switch to our Layer:

- In two forms, crumble and a small pellet
- When switching from pellet to crumble, it is important to mix until the bird is accustomed to the pellet.
- Two rations of 16% or 20% Protein with extra Calcium and Vitamins for laying production.
- Non-Medicated.

Broilers

For meat birds, use our Broiler Ration from the first day through the day of butcher.

- Contains 20% Protein
- Non-Medicated
- Formulated to gain rapid weight efficiently
- Broiler Ration is a 'mash'

Ideally, egg layers and meat birds should be segregated. If separation is not possible, start the birds on Chick Starter then to Pullet Grower to ensure proper development of the egg layers.

Other Feeding Notes

- None of our Chicken Feeds require the purchase of Grit for birds. If supplementing rations with Whole or Cracked Grains or Scratch, grit should be purchased. Oyster shell adds extra calcium for eggshells but is not necessary when feeding birds our Layer ration.
- Provide clean, fresh water at all times and keep cages and feeders clean. Feed is perishable and should be kept in a clean, dry and cool location.