

Caring for Chicks

- Ensure your **brooder is big enough** to house the chicks until they are about 6 weeks old and feathered up to join the main flock
- Keep brooders **warm, dry and clean**
- Avoid drafty areas, but keep chick areas well ventilated
- **Keep chicks warm.** In the first week, chicks should be kept at 35°C (95°F). Drop the temperature 5°C (8°F) degrees a week until you reach the surrounding temperature outside the brooder or 15°C (60°F)
- Ensure chicks have appropriate **chick starter feed** and water at all times

For more information and resources visit:
agriculture.alberta.ca/smallflock

Keep Alberta Small Flocks Healthy >



Get new chicks from reputable sources. Ask lots of questions to help you understand the environment the new birds are coming from and what risks they may pose to your home flock.

Protect your flock with simple steps to source and introduce new birds to your flock

Adding new chicks to your flock is an exciting activity! Whether you are adding to a recreational flock or a breeding line or getting layers or broilers, new additions to the flock can bring joy... but also disease. This pamphlet highlights ways you can add chicks to your small poultry flock while you protect the health of your existing flock.



Safely add to your small flock

A healthy start can make all the difference

- You have many choices for bringing in new chicks including:
 - Purchasing chicks from a hatchery
 - Hatching your own chicks
 - Buying from someone you know and trust or
 - Purchasing at a swap, sale or auction
- Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each source with your veterinarian

When new birds arrive at your home



- **Quarantine** new birds for a minimum of 30 days before they meet the new flock
- Watch for signs of disease including:
 - Lack of energy, movement or appetite
 - Swelling around the head, neck and eyes
 - Coughing, sneezing or gasping
 - Tremors or lack of coordination
 - Diarrhea and/or sudden death
- If birds show these signs or die, contact your veterinarian or Alberta Agriculture and Forestry at 403-948-8575 (toll-free in Alberta by first dialing 310-0000)
- After quarantine, allow birds to be penned beside each other for a week to smooth introductions
- Keep track of origin of new birds, time of arrival, length of quarantine and timing of introduction

Quick Biosecurity Tips

Quarantine new birds for 30 days to watch for signs of disease

Even birds that appear healthy can be carrying disease

Buy chicks from reputable sources

Avoid buying at auctions and swaps as mature birds are higher risk for bringing home disease

Effective Quarantine =

- Do not allow direct or indirect contact with home flock
- Use a separate building or space a minimum of 30 feet from home flock
- Use dedicated footwear, outerwear and equipment when caring for new birds
- Care for quarantined birds at the end of the chore schedule

Reputable sources =

- Answer your questions
- Have a disease response plan
- Know their disease status

