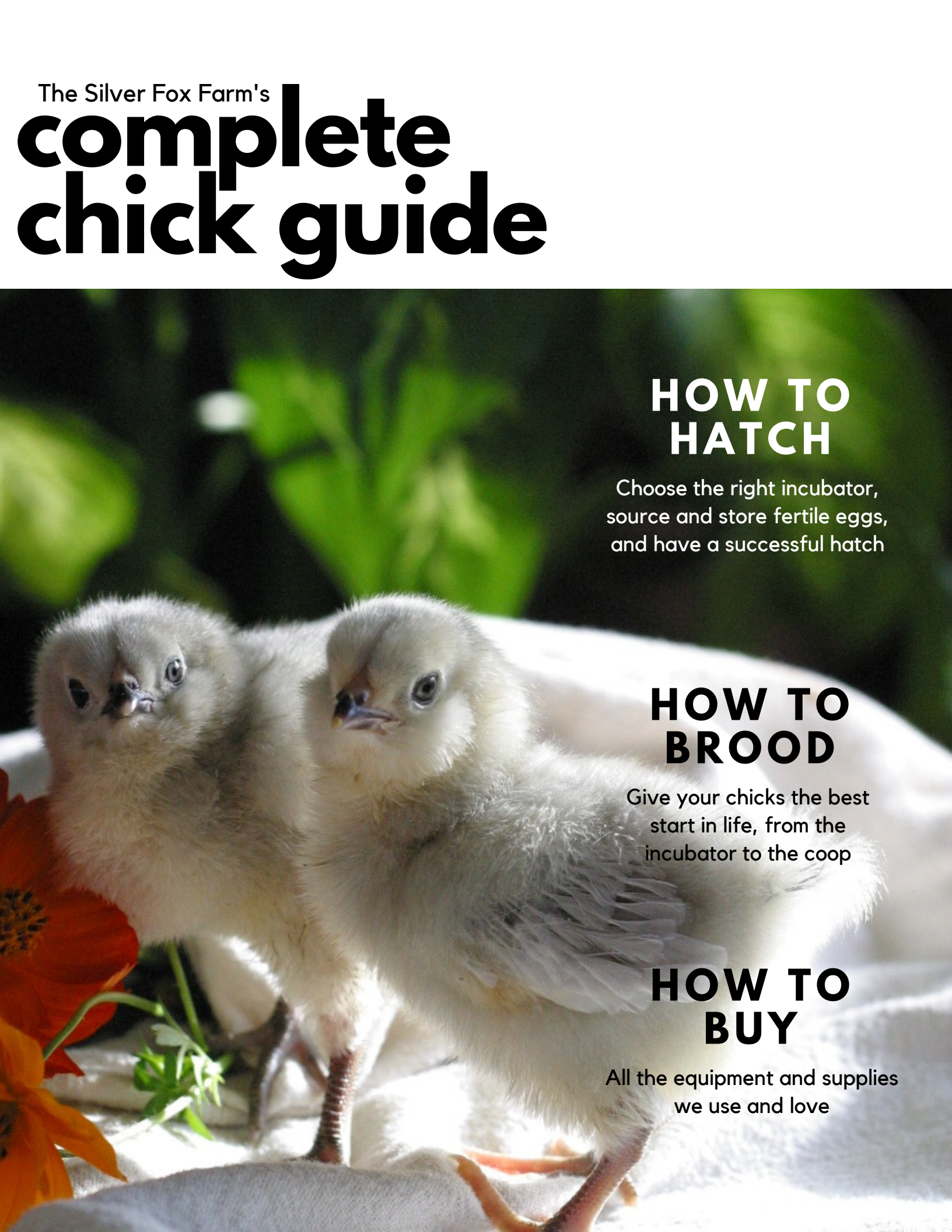




The Silver Fox Farm's

complete chick guide

HOW TO HATCH

Choose the right incubator,
source and store fertile eggs,
and have a successful hatch

HOW TO BROOD

Give your chicks the best
start in life, from the
incubator to the coop

HOW TO BUY

All the equipment and supplies
we use and love

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HOW TO HATCH CHICKS



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SUPPLY GUIDE



HELLO@THESILVERFOXFARM.COM



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welcome to the complete chick guide



Hi there! My name is Maeg.

My wife, Sarah, and I started Silver Fox Farm in 2017. After raising chickens for several years, we became passionate about helping other folks raise their own flocks and produce their own food, too. We offer hatching eggs and chicks, and breed with a focus on health and temperament.

We've learned a ton over the years about both hatching and brooding chicks, and I've gathered all of that knowledge in one place in this guide.

It's my hope that this guide helps you start hatching and raising chicks with confidence, or if you already have experience, gives you a new tidbit of useful information.

Everything I share here is from our own research and **experience**--how we do things on our farm and the exact equipment we use. And while there are certain universal best practices when it comes to chicken keeping, there are also many different ways to do it right, and in your experience and research you may find something that works even better for you!

Enjoy the guide and, of course, enjoy your chicks! Contact me anytime with questions or comments, I would love to hear from you!

Yours in chicken keeping,
Maeg

email: hello@thesilverfoxfarm.com

website: thesilverfoxfarm.com

instagram: [@thesilverfoxfarm](https://www.instagram.com/thesilverfoxfarm)



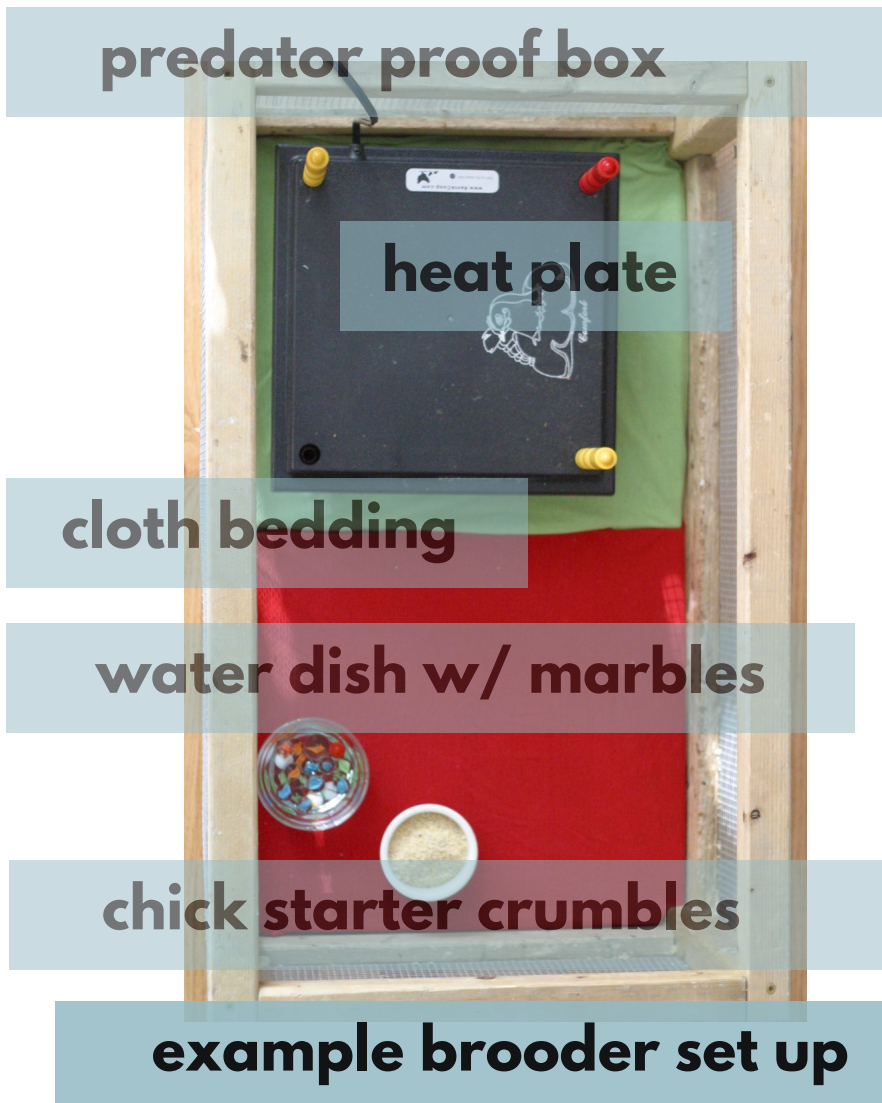
HOW TO BROOD CHICKS

In this portion of the guide, I will show you how we care for our chicks at Silver Fox Farm, from their first day of life until they are ready to move outside to their coops. I'll also share with you ALL the equipment we personally use to keep our birds happy and healthy.

prepare the brooder

Whether you purchase your chicks or hatch your own, your feather babies will need a heated area (aka brooder space) as soon as they arrive or are ready to leave the incubator.

Prepare your brooder well before you need it to be sure you are ready. Chicks don't need much--but what they do need, they really need. Items such as the proper heat source can be a matter of life or death to a young chick.



Before your chicks arrive, prep your brooder space.

You will need:

- A heat source
- Food and feeder
- Water
- Electrolytes (recommended but not mandatory)
- A brooder box
- Bedding

choose a heat source

You have two choices for a heat source: a heat lamp made for brooding poultry (not just any old lamp), or a brooder heat plate.

A heat lamp hangs above the chicks, and you adjust the height of the lamp weekly to get an optimal temperature in the brooder for each stage in the chick's life. A brooder plate has a heated underside that keeps the chicks warm when they go underneath it, just like a mama hen, and you adjust the height of the plate as the chicks grow.

Which is best, heat lamp or plate?

I highly recommend heat plates over heat lamps, for a few reasons. First, heat lamps get so hot that they are a potential fire hazard. They also take more effort to get the brooder to the correct temperature for the chicks in the bottom of the brooder. Some heat lamps are coated with Teflon, which can be toxic to chicks.

The heat plates are easy to adjust (simply raise them as the chicks grow) and safer for your home or outbuilding. In my experience, heat plates are safer for the chicks, too. Heat lamps heat up the whole brooder, causing chicks to fall asleep at random—including in their water dish where they can potentially drown.

With heat plates, chicks tend to only fall asleep under the plate, where it is warm, which reduces their risk of drowning.

If you do use a heat lamp, here are some tips:

- Heat lamps come with a clamp to attach them to the side of the brooder, but I recommend securing heat lamps TWO ways for safety, in case one attachment fails. A great method for hanging a heat lamp at home is to use ceiling hooks made for hanging plants.
- For the first week, hang the lamp so that the brooder floor temperature is 90-95 degrees. Use a thermometer placed at chick level to measure the temperature in the brooder box. Each week drop this temperature by 5 degrees.
- Observe the chicks. If they are clustered under the heat lamp, they are too cold. If they are clustering far away from it, they are too hot. If they are moving all over the brooder, peeping softly, they are comfortable. They will also alert you to any discomfort with loud cheeping.
- Place marbles or small stones in the reservoir of their waterer to prevent drowning.

If you choose to use a brooder plate, keep in mind:

- Remember to raise the height once a week or so--have the underside of the heat plate level with a chick's back while they are standing.
- The brooder plates take about an hour to heat up, so make sure to plug them in well before you place chicks in the brooder.
- Make sure you have the correct size heat plate for the number of chicks in your brooder. One potential hazard with heat plates is that the chicks could smother each other while sleeping under it at night. The heat plates linked at the end of this guide come in 20 chick and 50 chick sizes. Use multiple heat plates in your brooder if necessary to give your chicks plenty of room to sleep safely.
- They will also benefit from a night light to help them navigate the brooder (in my experience, they cheep so loudly without the nightlight that I can't forget it!)

food

You'll have quite a few choices for chick food, but the most important thing to remember **is to get the correct food for your bird's age.**

Make sure you purchase a chick starter. Each type of chicken feed--starter, grower, or layer--has the correct formula for each stage in a chick's development. For example, layer feed has the right amount of calcium for a hen laying or on the verge, but that same amount of calcium can cause kidney or liver damage to young chicks. We give our birds organic chick starter for 6-8 weeks, then switch to grower feed until the birds are old enough for layer pellets (around 18 weeks).

Another consideration is whether to buy medicated or unmedicated feed.

Medicated feed protects against coccidiosis, an intestinal disease caused by certain parasites. Chicks can contract coccidiosis by ingesting parasite eggs in soil or chicken poop. Typically, young birds are able to develop a natural immunity to these protozoa through gradual environmental exposure. However, if their systems are overwhelmed due to stress or another illness, or if the birds are exposed to a new strain or large amount of parasites (they flourish in wet, warm weather), they can get sick even under excellent care. Still, keeping the brooder clean and changing the bedding daily goes a long way to prevent coccidiosis. Medicated feed offers another layer of protection.

If your chicks have been vaccinated against coccidiosis, do not give them medicated feed as the combination of medicated feed and the vaccine will

render both ineffective. If your chicks have not been vaccinated against coccidiosis, medicated feed will give them some protection while they build up their natural immunity to these parasites. Note: medicated feed **ONLY** protects against coccidiosis, not other avian diseases.

If you choose medicated feed, a good rule of thumb is to use it for the first 2-4 weeks. Know that Amprolium, the active ingredient in medicated feed, inhibits thiamine (Vitamin B1) absorption, which coccidia need to reproduce inside the bird's body. If you use medicated feed, give your birds a B vitamin boost (such as Durvet's Vitamin and Electrolyte blend) **after** their course of medicated feed is done.

Feed and vaccination choices are personal. It's up to you to decide what's best for you and your flock. Since our breeding program is focused on health, we want as much insight into the immune systems of our birds as possible. To that end, we don't vaccinate or use medicated feed. That makes sense for us and our goals, but it might not make sense for you. There are many valid approaches to chicken care, and I encourage you to make the best decision for you and your birds, whatever that may be, and do your own research.

In the case of coccidiosis, regardless of what feed you choose, make sure to keep your brooders clean with fresh bedding. And observe your birds! Symptoms of coccidiosis include decreased appetite

and activity, a hunched appearance, and bloody droppings. Corid is an effective treatment for coccidiosis and a must have in your chicken medical kit, as coccidiosis can kill quickly.

Our chick feed of choice is unmedicated Organic Chick Crumbles from Green Mountain Feed just north of us in Vermont. (Locals, you can get this at the Greenfield Farmers' Co-op--we love them, they are knowledgeable, and their prices are great.)

You'll find a variety of chick feeders at the feed store or use something you have around the house. Just make sure that whatever you use as a food container at this stage is shallow enough for those tiny peeps to reach their feed!

Chicks grow fast--it's vital that they have free choice food available at all times to support their rapid growth. For a healthy treat, you can also give chicks scrambled eggs in addition to their feed.

water

I like to make sure the water I give the chicks, is roughly room temperature, to help them regulate their internal temperature. During the first couple weeks, I use a chick waterer with a small reservoir so that the chicks can't fall in and get wet. Make sure to add marbles or stones to their water reservoir, especially if you are using a heat lamp, to prevent drowning. Placing the waterer on the

opposite side of the brooder from the heat source also reduces the risk of drowning.

electrolytes

I like putting electrolytes in the chick's water during the first week or two to give them a little boost. You can purchase chick electrolytes in powder form at your local feed store.

brooder box

You can use a number of things for a brooder in the first couple weeks. A large plastic tub or a cardboard box will do the trick. If you're handy and plan on brooding chicks on the regular, I recommend taking the time to build a brooder. We have several made from wood and hardware cloth. You can also purchase "brooder kits" at your local feed store or online that come with a brooder box and all the supplies you'll need.

Whatever container you choose, there are three important things to consider:

Space: make sure your chicks have enough space. For the first two weeks, the brooder should have about ½ sq. ft. of space per chick. Once the chicks get bigger, they'll need more space and will graduate to a bigger brooder (we'll cover that in the next section!)

Location: Even with a heat source, make sure the brooder is away from cold or drafts, especially in the first couple

weeks. During the first two weeks, we brood chicks inside our home. It's warmer and gives them a chance to get used to us, but if it's not your cup of tea, a heated outbuilding, attached garage, or basement works, too. (Note: if you do brood inside your home, please keep in mind that birds have sensitive respiratory systems. Exposure to Teflon fumes from non-stick pans and other household items and essential oil fumes from diffusers can both be fatal).

Predators: If you place chicks in an area that is not completely predator proof, like your home, make sure that the brooder itself is predator proof. Ours are framed with wood, covered in hardware cloth (not chicken wire), and have a lid that can be secured with bungee cords. Don't underestimate the strength and smarts of predators!

bedding

Bedding material in the brooder serves two purposes: to absorb waste, and to give the chicks a surer footing, preventing issues like splayed leg. In the first two weeks of brooding, we recommend using either paper towels or fabric such as old t-shirts or sheets for bedding material. Both of these choices will give the chicks what they need from bedding, safely.

Pine shavings are a common bedding material, but we wait until the chicks are two weeks old to introduce shavings, as young chicks can choke on shavings. In

addition, if shavings get kicked by the chicks into the water reservoir, they can draw out the entire contents of the waterer through osmosis, leaving no water for the chicks to drink. Once the chicks hit two weeks old, they are big enough to drink from a plastic nipple and this is no longer an issue--we'll cover that in the next section.

Now that your brooder space is ready and stocked, you are ready to add the best part: baby chicks!



chick care weeks 1 & 2

If you've hatched your own chicks at home, make sure they are dry and fluffy before removing them from the incubator.

Whether you've hatched your own or purchased your chicks, your first steps are the same. Introduce the baby chicks to the brooder by filling the role of mama hen and showing them their food, water, and heat. Take each chick and, one by one, gently dip the tip of their beaks into the water reservoir and food dish before placing them underneath the brooder plate.

You may notice that for the first day or two of life your chicks spend a lot of time snuggled underneath the brooder plate. This is perfectly normal--had your chicks hatched under a broody hen, they would be spending a good deal of their first couple days underneath her soft, warm feathers.

However, it's a good idea to check your chicks daily, as issues can arise. Your daily brooder cleaning is the perfect opportunity to handle and check each chick in the first couple weeks.

BABY CHICKS: HEALTH ISSUES TO LOOK FOR

Here are a few common chick issues to look for daily in the first week or so of brooding. Treatment details begin on the next page.

There many potential chicken health issues that you might encounter--far too many to go into in this guide.

I highly recommend keeping some chicken reference books on hand to consult and help you identify issues and treatment. I've added links to my favorite at the end of this guide.



1

SPLAY LEG

Splay leg (aka spraddle leg) is the result of weakness or injury to the leg or foot tendons, caused by improper positioning in the egg at hatch or incubator temperature. It can also develop after the hatch if the chick spends too much time on a slippery surface such as a slick incubator floor or the wrong brooder bedding. The chick will have trouble walking, and it will appear that their legs are slipping right out from underneath them.

2

CROOKED TOE

A crooked toe is exactly what it sounds like. The condition can be genetic, or caused by incubator temperature fluctuations, a difficult hatch, or a nutritional deficiency. Many chickens lead happy and productive lives with crooked toes, but since it's so easy to treat, it's definitely worth the effort to be sure your chicken doesn't have ambulatory issues later in life.

3

PASTY BUTT

Pasty butt happens when fecal matter gets stuck to a chick's vent* and dries, leaving the vent blocked. If left untreated, the chick will be unable to poop and will eventually die. Pasty butt can be caused by stress from shipping, incorrect brooder temperatures, or overcrowding. Check every chick for pasty butt once per day in the first ten days.

4

SLUGGISH CHICKS

Keep an eye out for any chick that seems off, ill, or noticeably slower than the others. If you haven't already, add some chick electrolytes to the water, or give the chick a drop of Nutridench for support. Note which chick it is, and continue to observe.

*Note: The vent is the opening from which all waste is expelled. In females, it's also where the egg comes from, and in males, it's where semen comes from. Yes, chickens have one orifice for everything and it is identical in both sexes. The more you know!

crooked toe treatment

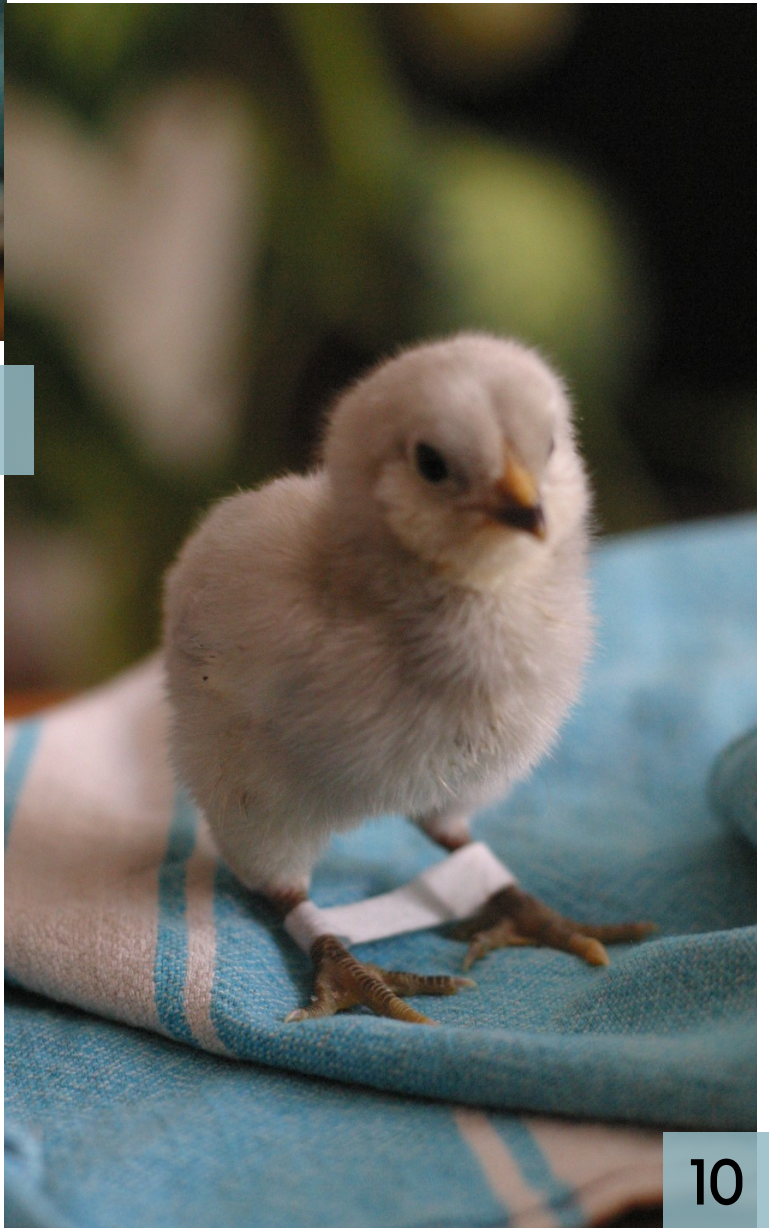


To treat crooked toe, grab your medical tape and cut a piece bigger than your chick's foot. Hold the tape sticky side up and place the bottom of the chick's foot onto the tape--all of the foot except the back toe. Arrange the bird's toes on the medical tape so they are stuck in the corrected, straightened position. Lay another piece of tape over the top of the foot and secure in place. Carefully cut off excess tape, leaving a small border around the foot. Congrats! You've just made your chick a little tape "shoe." If needed, reinforce the bottom of the shoe with a thin piece of cardboard. Since the bones of the foot have not fully hardened at this age, the shoe will allow the toe bones to harden in the correct position. After about three days of treatment your chick's toes should be set in the correct position.

It's important to catch crooked toe and splay leg in the first day or two. If addressed right away, both can be treated fairly easily, while the chick's bones are still soft.

splay leg treatment

To treat, keep the chick's legs in the correct position for several days by making a hobble with VetWrap or medical supplies you have on hand, such as bandages or medical tape. To allow for leg growth, make sure that you change the hobble each day so that the chick's legs aren't damaged by overly tight material. It typically takes about four days of treatment to fix splay leg, but it's okay if your chick needs extra time. To make a hobble, use $\frac{1}{4}$ inch wide strips of your chosen material, wrapped around each leg and joined in the middle as shown in the photo. The chick's legs should be parallel to each other, and the chick should be able to walk (albeit a little awkwardly) with the tape in place. When making a hobble out of medical tape, use a folded over double layer of tape on any areas that touch the chick, so as not to damage the chick's skin or feathers with adhesive material. If you use VetWrap, know that this material only adheres to itself, so there is no danger of it sticking to the chick's legs.



pasty butt treatment

Treatment is easy. Check every chick for pasty butt once a day in the first ten days. If you find poop stuck to the chick's vent, gently and slowly soften and remove it remove it using a warm, wet cloth. Or, if that isn't doing the trick, gently run lukewarm tap water over the chick's vent, taking care not to get their whole body wet. Go slow--peeling the feces away too quickly can injure the chick's skin. Once you have successfully removed the poop, dry the chick until they are fluffy again so that they don't get chilled. A hair dryer on low works great.

chick mortality

On rare occasions, you will discover that a chick has died. Occasionally a chick hatches but doesn't make it. This is normal, don't be hard on yourself.

However, if you have multiple losses of previously healthy chicks, it's time to evaluate your brooder set up. Temp okay? Food and water fresh? Bedding clean? Area draft-free?

Sometimes chicks die suddenly, and sometimes they are beyond treatment and need you to end their suffering for them.

It can be hard to know when to cull, especially if you are a newer chicken keeper. Know that if a chick cannot get to food and water on its own, it should be culled. That chick will not make it and will only be in pain until it dies. Culling is difficult to do, but know that you are preventing suffering.

Cull in the quickest and most humane way possible. There are two ways to swiftly cull a chick. First, you can decapitate the chick in one motion with an incredibly sharp pair of kitchen shears. Personally, I find this to be the quickest and most dependable option, and it's what we do on the rare occasions that we must cull a chick.

Your other option is to stretch the neck, breaking the neck and spinal cord. This causes a quick and painless death. Hold the chick's feet with one hand. With the other hand, hold the bird's head. Position your thumb behind the chick's comb while wrapping your fingers under its beak. Now, tilt the bird's head back while stretching the chick's head away from the feet until you feel a slip or pop as the spinal cord breaks. Chicks are very small, so know that you could accidentally decapitate the bird at this point. In both methods, there will be some involuntary wing flapping at the time of death, don't be alarmed--this is an involuntary nervous system response.

A note on the word 'culling': This word can refer to killing a bird as well as simply removing a bird from a breeding program. Culling does not always mean killing.

chick care week 3

Once the chicks reach two weeks old, they are ready to move to a bigger brooder where they will stay until they are about 6 weeks old. Their basic needs are the same--food, water, heat--but now they are old enough to enjoy some upgrades.

space

At two weeks old, we move our chicks to a brooder with at least one square foot of space per bird. These brooders are in our garage, so we make sure they are completely predator proof: wood framed, covered with hardware cloth, and with a wood and hardware cloth lid held in place with bungee cords at each corner. If you can scavenge a large cardboard watermelon or pumpkin container from your local grocery store, these are a great free option for brooding, too. Just do your best to predator proof your container or put it in a safe place.

bedding

At this point we graduate our babies to pine shavings. Every other day we completely remove the spent bedding and replace it with fresh shavings. We use the old shavings as mulch around our acid-loving blueberries or add it to the compost pile.

water

When the chicks hit two weeks old, they are strong enough to be nipple trained on a bucket outfitted with plastic drinking nipples. I LOVE using nipple bucket waterers--they keep the chick's water pristine, and you no longer have to change it daily. Training chicks on the nipple waterers is much like introducing them to water as day-old chicks: hold the chick and gently press its beak against the nipple until they get water. Do this for each chick. Most will take to it easily and any that don't will learn from the others. DIY waterer instructions on page 14.

grit

At two weeks old, offer the chicks grit. Grit comes in different sizes, be sure to purchase chick sized grit.

heat

Continue using your chosen heat source, remembering to adjust weekly as discussed in the brooder section.

tagging

We use numbered wing bands to identify our birds, and I've found that two weeks old is the easiest time to apply them. Even if you are not worried about identifying your birds for breeding purposes, I highly recommend using some form of identification if you have more than a handful of chickens. There are many

situations where identification is very helpful, especially if you are trying to track the health or behavior of a specific bird. Tagging--either wing banding, leg banding, or toe-punching--helps you take notes and eliminates confusion. I know you love your babies, and think you will be able to tell them apart always--but trust me, sometimes it's very difficult!

field trips

At about three weeks old, I like to start taking the chicks on what I call "supervised field trips," also known as time outside. We place the chicks on fresh grass in a secure, predator proof area. Make sure the chicks have food, water, and shade, and use an extension cord to bring out their heat plate, depending on the weather.

coop time!

Once your chicks are six weeks old, they are ready to move from the brooder to the coop as long as:

- They are fully feathered.
- Outdoor temperatures stay above 60 degrees, 24 hours a day.
- They are moving into a coop without older birds.

If your chicks aren't fully feathered or your outdoor temps are too cool, you can keep using your brooder, or consider moving them outside with supplemental

heat, if you can provide that safely in the coop. This can be done fairly easily with a heat plate and an outdoor extension cord.

If you are planning to integrate the chicks with older birds, wait until they are closer in size so they won't get picked on--about 12 weeks old. You can find our best practices for integrating new birds into the flock [here](#).



HOW TO MAKE YOUR OWN CHICKEN NIPPLE WATERER

You will need:

- 2-3 side mount poultry nipples
- Drill bit to mount nipple
(check nipple instructions, this is usually 11/32 but can vary by brand)
- 1/8" drill bit
- 5 gallon bucket and lid
- Power drill



Step 1:

Gather your drill, drill bits, poultry nipples, bucket, and lid.

Also, a chicken.

Use 2-3 nipples per bucket. Your flock should have about 1 nipple for every 6-8 birds, or 1 for every 3-4 birds in hot climates. Make extra waterers as necessary.

Step 2:

Drill holes for the poultry nipples 1-1.5 inches from the bottom of the bucket.

Screw in the nipples, leaving a slight gap between the nipple and the bucket so as to prevent your container from cracking.

Step 3:

Take a break and pet a chicken, as all this drilling is very hard work.

And you probably thought I was joking when I said to bring a chicken, huh?



Step 4:

Use your 1/8" drill bit to drill two small holes near the top of your bucket.

These holes are very important. They prevent a vacuum seal from forming in the bucket.

When a vacuum is created, no water will flow from the nipples and your chicks will become dehydrated.

Note:

Some instructions advise putting these small holes in the lid. I always put them on the side of the bucket, near the top, instead of the lid, so that they can't be sealed by things like chicken poop.

I don't know about you, but my chickens LOVE to poop on everything.

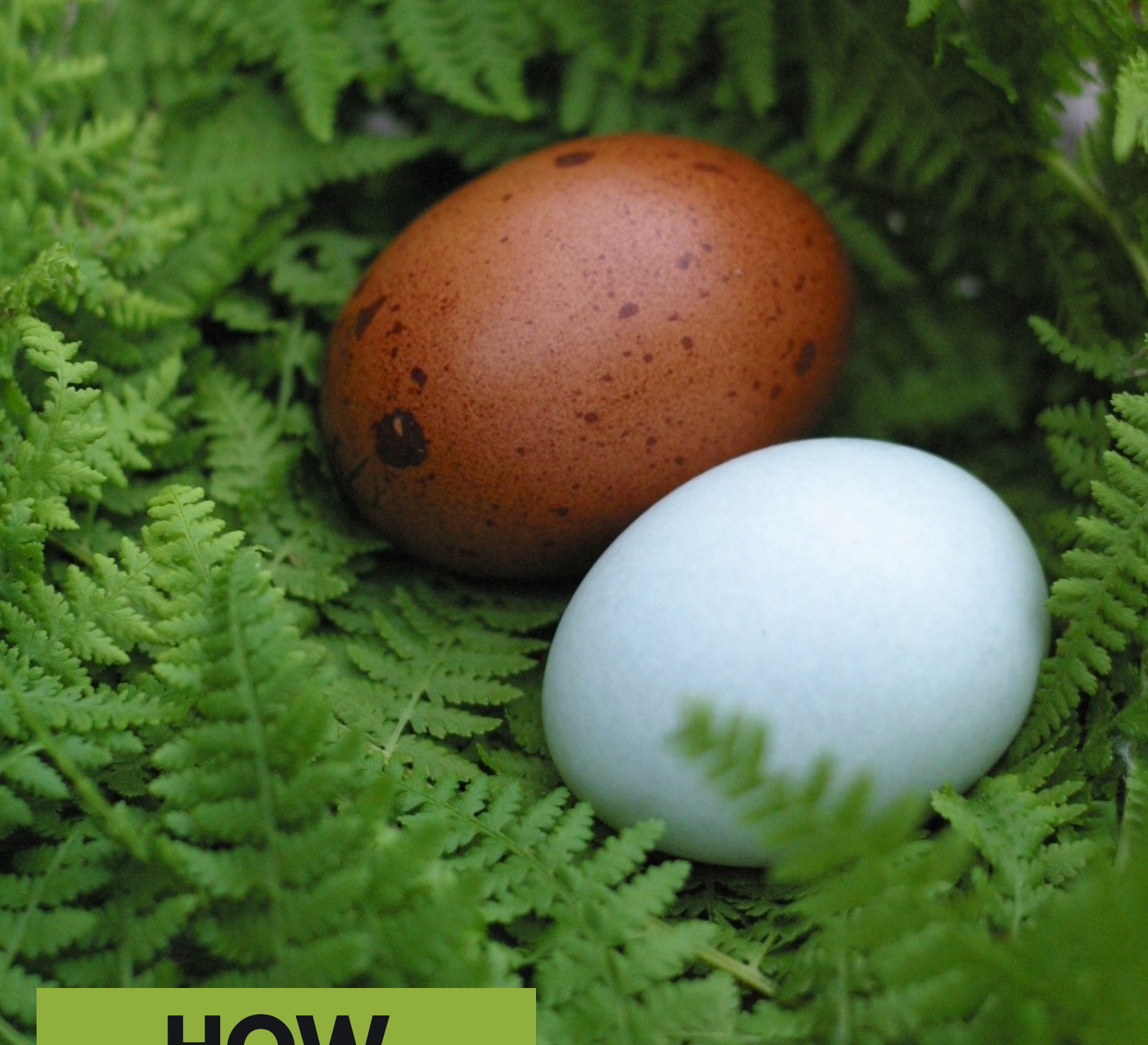
Step 5:

Introduce your chickens to their new waterer! Chicks two weeks and older are strong enough to drink from a nipple.

Train any age chicken on their new waterer by holding them and gently pressing their beak to the nipple until they get a sip of water. Chicks will learn quickly and also teach others.

Enjoy! We love our homemade waterers as they save money and keep our birds' water so clean and fresh.

However, these waterers will break if exposed to freezing temperatures. In the winter months we switch over to heated waterers. Links in our equipment lists at the end of this guide!



HOW TO HATCH CHICKS

In this section of the guide, you'll learn how to source and store fertile eggs, choose and use an incubator, and troubleshoot the hatch. I'll also share best practices for hatching with a broody hen.

hatching chicks with an incubator

**Welcome to the wonderful world of hatching
your own chicks with an incubator!**

This process gives you an opportunity to see the miracle of hatching up close, and a chance to know your birds from the moment they come into the world. We've hatched hundreds of chicks and I have to say, it doesn't get old. Incubation can feel overwhelming at first (I could barely sleep during my first few hatches), but it's also a fairly simple process. With some basic knowledge, quality fertile eggs, and a good machine, you're on your way to a successful hatch!

**Before we get into the details,
here's an overview of the incubation process:**

- Incubation is a 21 day process, although that can vary by a day or two in either direction.
- For the first 18 days, eggs need to be turned about 4-6 times per day, either by hand or in automatic turners.
- During days 1-18, humidity inside the incubator should be 40-50%.
- For the last 3 days, eggs should not be turned, to allow the chicks to get into the proper position for hatching.
- During this period, called "lockdown," humidity should be about 60-70%.
- DO NOT open the incubator during lockdown! The abrupt loss of humidity can cause the chicks to become "shrink wrapped" or stuck inside the egg, unable to hatch.

Okay--that's the basics. If I told you nothing else, you would be able to grab your incubator manual and hatch some beautiful chicks! However, there are many ways to get more involved in the process, such as candling the eggs to check on the developing embryos, or performing "eggtopsies" on unhatched eggs to troubleshoot the hatch. I'll touch on these later on, but do what works for you. As long as you have a good quality incubator and follow the basics, you're off to a fantastic start.

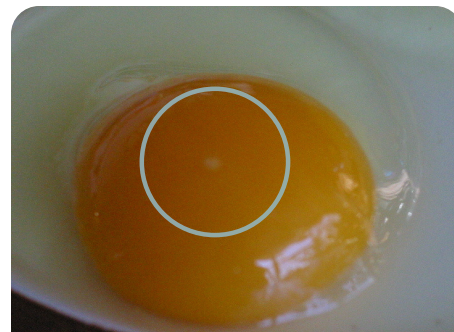
beyond the basics

Let's get into some more details--starting with the eggs themselves. If hatching your own eggs, you'll want to choose clean eggs with a normal egg shape. Nothing overly dirty, and no odd shapes, calcium deposits, or overly porous shells. All of these issues can affect hatchability, and can be passed down through the generations, potentially affecting future hatchability as well. Also, double yolkers will likely not make it to hatch, either--but I wouldn't blame you for trying!

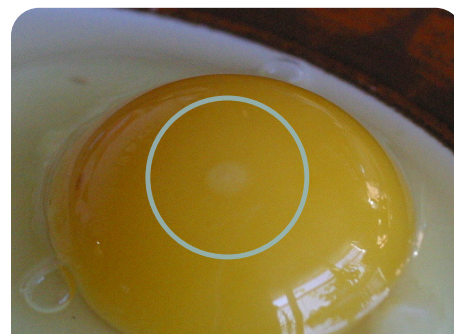
If you are hatching eggs from your own flock, I recommend checking for fertility before you incubate. This requires sacrificing a few eggs to breakfast, but will save you the trouble of waiting for chicks for three weeks only to discover your rooster isn't doing his job!

To check for fertility, take a few eggs and gently crack them open into a bowl, one by one. If the egg is infertile, you will see a small, uneven white dot on the yolk (the blastodisc). If the egg is fertile, instead of a dot you will see a small bullseye (the blastoderm). If you don't see a dot or a bullseye, carefully flip the yolk over with a spoon and check the underside. If this is your first time checking for fertility in this way, it can be helpful to compare your eggs to an egg you know is infertile, if available.

Once you've checked for fertility, start collecting! You can collect eggs for a week--even up to ten days--before incubating. While you are gathering your eggs for incubation, it's important to store them properly.



blastodisc: infertile



blastoderm: fertile

storing eggs

Best practices for storing eggs prior to incubation, if you are collecting from your own flock:

- Discard any dirty eggs and only set aside clean eggs.
- Minor blemishes can be scraped away with your fingernail or lightly sandpapered away.
- Do not wash your eggs! This removes the natural protective bloom. However, if you wish you can sanitize the eggs by spraying or dipping in a warm, diluted bleach solution or a product made for this purpose. You can make your own egg sanitizer by adding 1 teaspoon household chlorine bleach to 1 quart water warmed to 100°F. This is optional, but can keep unwanted bacteria out of your incubator. Important: allow the eggs to air dry--don't wipe or pat dry--so as not to affect the bloom (the egg's natural protective coating).
- Keep eggs in a cool, dark space. 50-55 degrees Fahrenheit is great. We use a space in our basement--the temps are cool and consistent!
- Store eggs large side up. This is key--it keeps the egg's air cell in the proper position. The air cell will be the chick's source of oxygen just before hatch.
- Turn the eggs 1-2 times per day during storage. What this means: You are storing your eggs large side up in a carton or egg tray. To turn, simply elevate one side of the tray with an object such as a book, and switch the

elevated side 1-2 times per day. I usually do this once in the morning, once in the evening. This will keep the interior of the egg from adhering to one side of the shell.

shipped eggs

If you don't have fertile eggs or can't find them locally, then you can have eggs from almost any breed you can think of shipped to you by a breeder.

Keep in mind that once the eggs leave the breeder's hands, anything can happen in transit, from rough handling to high temperatures. Shipping takes a toll on eggs, and on average you can expect a 40-50% hatch rate on shipped eggs, compared to 70-80% for eggs you've collected yourself.

This is not to discourage you, however. We (and our customers) have had some great hatches with shipped eggs, and sometimes shipping is the only way to hatch your dream flock.

A few things that increase the chances of a good hatch on shipped eggs:

- Good packaging. Foam shippers, double boxing, and other methods protect eggs from cracking, shaking, and detached air cells. If the breeder's website doesn't specify how they pack and ship their eggs, if your package is insured, or what happens if your package is damaged, just ask!

- Time of year: extreme heat can kill embryos in transit before they even get to you. For this reason, we don't ship eggs in the hottest part of summer. If you can, have your eggs shipped during the milder parts of the year.
- Less time in transit: Have your eggs labeled to be held for you at the post office. Most post offices honor these requests, or you can ask to pay an extra fee to guarantee your package is held for pickup. This saves your eggs an extra day of travel on the mail truck. Your breeder may already do this--check their website or ask them. (Note: I am writing this during the Covid pandemic--in these times, it's okay to stay home and have your eggs delivered right to your door if that's the best choice for you.)
- Rest your eggs: Yes, you just got your eggs from the post office and yes, you are so eager to incubate them--but not just yet! **Let your eggs rest large side up for 24 hours after you receive them**, and use this time to get your incubator clean and at the correct temperature and humidity.
- Candle your eggs before incubating. Discard any with cracks. Check for detached air cells. You can try incubating any with detached air cells large side up without turning for the first 24 hours of incubation. Set them in egg cartons if needed.
- The eggs should be fresh--about a week old once you set them.
- The eggs you receive from a breeder should be clean. Still, it's not a bad

idea to sanitize your eggs using the instructions in the previous section. Not only does this reduce bacterial buildup in the incubator, but it also helps protect against potential avian diseases that can travel on the eggshell from the farm to you.

npip

Speaking of breeders, if you are having eggs shipped to you, make sure you are ordering from an NPIP certified breeder. NPIP stands for the National Poultry Improvement Plan. The program was started in the 1930's to prevent the spread of poultry diseases.

NPIP certified breeders must meet certain requirements, such as having their flocks regularly tested for disease and creating and following a biosecurity plan. While it sounds complicated, obtaining NPIP certification is fairly straightforward, and NPIP certification is a requirement* for shipping chicks and hatching eggs across state lines.

I highly recommend only purchasing from someone who meets the official requirements to ship hatching eggs. Farms, small breeders, and large hatcheries alike should have their NPIP information, including their NPIP number, on their website. If you don't see it, or are purchasing from an individual, just ask!

*Some states have alternative importation requirements that can be met instead, this varies by state. For more information about NPIP, click [here](#).



choosing an incubator

There are so many incubators on the market, it can be hard to choose one! Some suggestions based on our own experience:

1. Don't buy a styrofoam incubator. They are more difficult to clean, increasing the risk of bacterial buildup in those nooks and crannies, which can affect your hatch and the health of your chicks.
2. Do buy the best you can comfortably afford. The higher hatch rates will make it worth it in the long run!
3. Do buy a slightly bigger incubator than you think you'll need. Chicken math is real, and you'll save yourself money now by not needing to upgrade later.
4. Do buy an incubator with automatic turners. You don't want to be turning those eggs 5 times a day yourself! This is better for you and the eggs, since you won't be continually opening the incubator, which affects temperature and humidity.
5. Do make sure your incubator has both temperature and humidity sensors--almost all models do, but a handful do not, and these are THE key metrics for a successful hatch.

our favorite incubators

Our first incubator purchase was the Incuview, and I highly recommend this model to anyone new to incubating or who is incubating in smaller quantities (the Incuview can hold up to 27 chicken eggs at a time). I researched a LOT of incubators before I bought the Incuview. I was looking for something quality and affordable and we found both in this model. We've had great hatches with it. The Incuview is easy to operate, has automatic egg turners, AND lets you see the hatching process up close with it's completely see-through cover (hence the name).

Brinsea is also a highly respected incubator brand that makes smaller, table top sized machines. For larger, cabinet incubators, I use and recommend the GQF brand. GQF makes both a incubator/hatcher all-in-one model, or you can purchase an incubator and hatcher separately. And if you are a DIY superstar, you can even try building your own incubator! One of our very handy customers had an 80% hatch rate with their homemade model. Google for plans, and purchase parts and kits [here](#).

Whatever model you choose, if this is your first time incubating, get to know your incubator for several days before you add eggs. Set it up, turn it on, and add water according to the instructions to see how it

holds temperature and humidity. You'll quickly get a feel for roughly how much water it needs, how often, and how it responds to temperature fluctuations in your home.

incubator set up

Some tips for setting up and running your incubator:

Set up:

- Place your incubator in a spot away from direct bright sunlight, cold drafts, temperature fluctuations (such as kitchen heat) or intense vibration (not next to the washing machine!).
- Check your incubator's instructions for ideal room temperature. What is the minimum room temperature for your incubator to operate correctly?
- Before you set any eggs, fire up your incubator and make sure it holds the correct temperature and humidity for at least 24 hours.
- If you've been playing with your incubator for a couple of days, and it has an automatic countdown to hatch day, remember to reset your countdown when you place the eggs inside.

Humidity:

- Incubators behave differently depending on the season, requiring less water to maintain humidity in a hot humid summer than in winter.

- Open your incubator as little as possible to keep temperature and humidity consistent. If your incubator needs to be opened to add water, see if you can find a workaround. To add water to our small Incuview, I use a large, plastic, needleless syringe combined with a thick plastic straw inserted through a small hole in the cover to add water.



- When humidity begins to drop to the low end of your target, add water but add it slowly and incrementally. It can take time for added water to affect the humidity gauge.
- If your humidity goes too high or too low for a period of time, don't stress, just get back on track. Check your incubator's vent holes. Opening and closing these holes can help you adjust and maintain humidity--consult your incubator manual for more info.

Temperature:

- For the duration of incubation, the eggs need a temperature of 99.5°F for forced air incubators and 101.5°F for still-air incubators. It's okay to see small (.5-1°F) fluctuations in temperature.
- Add room temperature/warm water to your incubator instead of cold to keep temperatures consistent. You can keep a jar of water next to a table top incubator so that this is always available.

just add eggs

Once your incubator is holding a consistent temperature and humidity, add your eggs. Some egg turning trays hold your eggs horizontally, and that is perfectly fine. Others allow you to place your eggs in the incubator vertically--be sure to place your eggs large side up in these trays. The egg's air sac is at this large end. Before hatching, the chick will "internally pip" (aka poke it's beak into the air sac) to breathe before it begins breaking out of the eggshell. If the egg is small side up, the chick could wind up malpositioned in the egg, be unable to access the air cell, and die in the shell.

While incubation officially takes 21 days, you may find your eggs hatch a little earlier or a little later than that, and that's okay. I always like to give my eggs an extra couple days in the incubator just in case there are any stragglers.

CANDLING

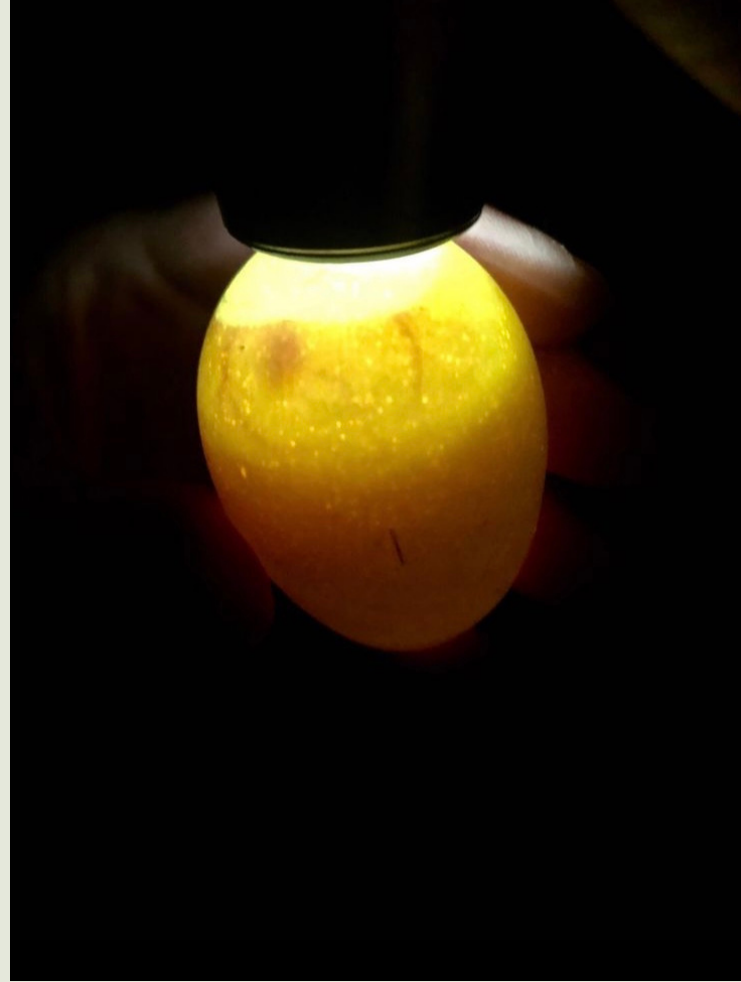
Candling is the practice of shining a light through the egg to check that it is developing. You'll be able to see movement, blood vessels, and other signs of life!

Candling is exciting and can also be confusing. It takes a bit of practice to know what you are seeing and feel confident that you are removing a non-developing egg from the incubator. Egg color also complicates the process, as dark brown and blue pigments make it more difficult to see into the egg.

The best times to candle are on day 7 and day 18 of incubation--most embryo deaths occur after the first few days of incubation or just before hatch. While it's tempting to candle more than this, try to resist handling the eggs more than absolutely necessary to prevent harm to the developing embryo.

You can use several tools to candle: a candler (a light designed just for this purpose (linked in our supplies guide), a flashlight or even a cell phone flashlight. Candle in a dark room, and hold the light to the large end of the egg. [This video](#) is a great visual introduction to candling, and [this is an excellent photographic guide](#) to what candling on each day of incubation looks like.

After candling, any non developing eggs can be removed from the incubator and discarded. This prevents any eggs from going bad and possibly exploding inside your incubator--this would be terrible for you, your incubator, and the other eggs. If in doubt, keep incubating that egg. A rotten egg will typically announce



Candling on Day 4 or 5. Note that the blood vessels are visible, and one of the embryo's eyes appears as a dark spot. Photo courtesy of [@the_olive_egg](#).

itself with a putrid smell and/or a honey like substance oozing from the shell. Even if an egg fails to develop, it's rare for it to go bad and explode. Sanitizing your eggs before incubation and only incubating clean eggs goes a long way to prevent rotten eggs in the incubator. (If you suspect a rotten egg, remove it from your incubator and bring it outside ASAP!)

Since we incubate Marans and Ameraucanas almost exclusively, I've chosen to stop candling since it is hard to see inside our eggs. We also incubate hundreds of eggs at a time, so I prefer not to risk handling so many sensitive, developing embryos at once. Instead, I make a point of checking for rotten eggs by sight and smell.

Whether or not you candle is up to you, but personally I think it's really fun and worth trying at least once!

days 1-18

Humidity levels in your incubator should be around 40-50% for the first 18 days.

During this time the eggs will need to be turned about 5 times per day, manually or automatically, depending on your model.

If you are turning manually, turn your eggs by rotating them on their side 180 degrees each time, and turn them an odd number of times each day so that they are not left on the same side overnight each time. Marking one side of the egg with a grease pencil will help you keep track of which eggs you've turned.

days 19-21

The last three days of incubation are known as the lockdown period.

- Stop turning the eggs during the last three days of incubation, to allow the chicks to get into the proper position.
- You may need to open one or more vent holes on your incubator when lockdown begins to ensure proper oxygen levels for the chicks during hatch--consult your incubator manual to be sure.
- Humidity levels are increased during this time to 60-70%. I aim to get my humidity to 60-65% when lockdown starts, as it will naturally spike when hatching begins and it's best to keep

humidity below 80%. The strongest chicks hatch first, raising humidity and making hatching easier for the others.

- Depending on your incubator, you may be able to adjust humidity during lockdown to keep it at or below 80% by opening extra vent holes. If not, that's okay--don't open the incubator to lower humidity levels--they will go down between hatches and as the hatch slows down.
- Do not open the incubator during lockdown--this can cause the soon-to-hatch chicks to become "shrinkwrapped" in the egg. Opening the incubator during the hatch causes fluctuations in temperature and humidity that can shrink the membrane around the chick (aka "shrink-wrapping"), making it difficult or impossible for even a healthy and strong chick to hatch.

the hatch

Your first sign that hatching has begun is a barely perceptible little pip on the outside of the shell--it will look like a tiny dent or crack. This tiny dent will grow into a small hole, and you'll see the chick's beak pecking through the shell (and taking a lot of rest breaks). After the pip, the chick will start to zip--pecking around the shell in a circle, until it's ready to push its way out into the world.

After seeing that first pip, be patient. It can take hours and even a full day for a chick to go from an external pip (when

you can see it starting to make a hole in the shell) to hatch. It's tempting to help the chick hatch, but most chicks don't need any assistance.

after the hatch

I know it's hard to resist taking the first chick out of the incubator right away, but please wait. Sit on your hands, tape your incubator shut, whatever you gotta do! Removing a chick before it is dry and fluffy can chill (and possibly kill) your chick. Not only that, but opening the incubator can cause the aforementioned "shrink-wrapping"--you can put your whole hatch at risk.

Don't be alarmed if your chick seems to be struggling at first. Hatching is incredibly tiring, and they will rest, flop, and stumble around the incubator looking completely exhausted. This is totally normal and it's okay to leave them in the incubator while they rest. Before you know it, they will be fluffy and active, hopping around over their unhatched buddies. That is normal, too--their cheeping and activity will encourage their friends to hatch.

While a textbook hatch takes 24 hours from first pip to last chick out of its shell, in my experience most hatches aren't textbook. Be patient--it may take a couple of days for the hatch to complete, and that's okay! At the end of the incubation process, a chick absorbs the yolk into its abdomen. A chick can survive off the yolk alone, with no food or water, for up to 72

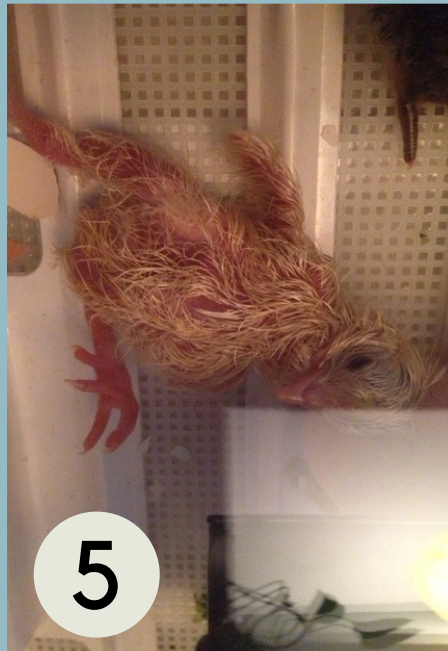
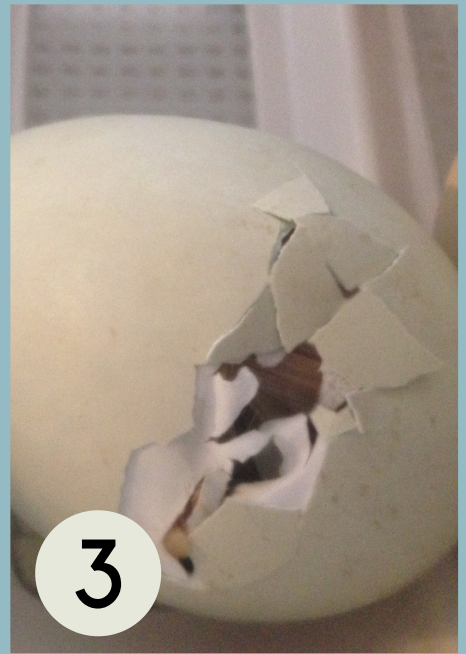
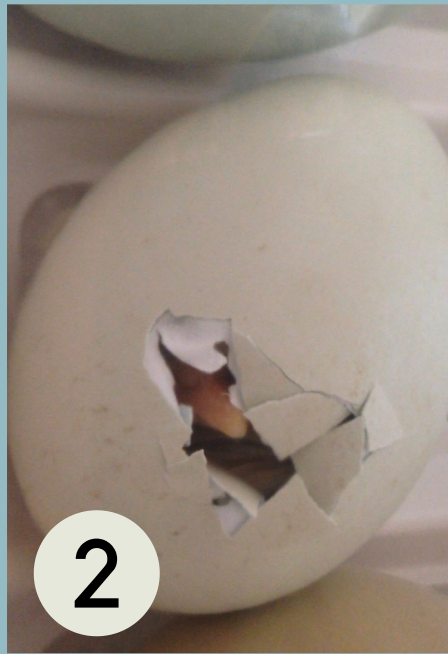
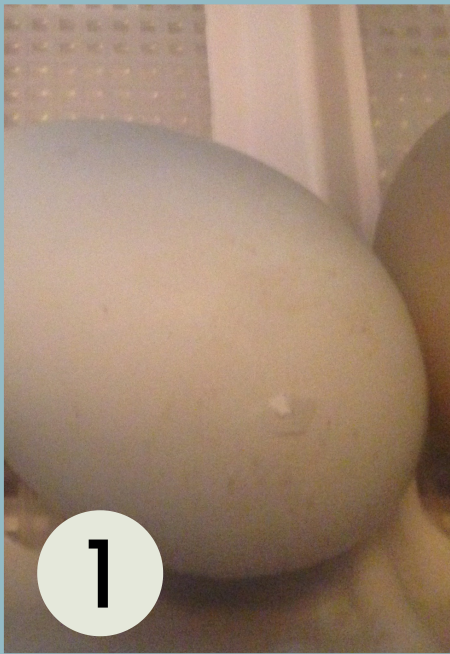
hours after hatching. That's three whole days! This amazing fact is why chicks can be shipped across the country successfully, and why a chick will be just fine hanging out inside your incubator for a couple days, until it is dry and fluffy and its buddies have hatched, too.

Once the hatch is complete (all chicks are dry and fluffy, no chicks are actively hatching or pipping), then it's time to remove the chicks to the brooder. For us, this is typically 48 hours after the first pip. It's totally normal at this point for some eggs to remain unhatched. Feel free to leave these eggs in the incubator for a couple more days, just in case a latecomer arrives.

When you open the incubator to get your new chicks settled in their brooder, you may discover a chick is partially hatched or hatched and still wet. Return these chicks to the incubator quickly. This happens to us occasionally since it's difficult to see inside our cabinet incubator, and the chicks that were interrupted mid-hatch tend to get shrink wrapped and may need assistance later.

when to assist

As I mentioned, most chicks don't need any help hatching. Be patient, and let them do their thing. If you suspect a chick needs help to hatch, wait until after the rest of your chicks have hatched and fluffed out before opening the incubator to assist. You don't want to risk shrink-



the hatch in photos

1. The first, barely perceptible pip
2. Expanding the hole with its beak
3. Zipping begins
4. Fully zipped...and hatched!
5. Tired and taking a break
6. Energized and looking for friends

wrapping strong and healthy chicks in order to help one that is struggling--or possibly just taking its time.

When deciding whether or not to assist, keep in mind that chicks that need help hatching (minus other factors such as shrinkwrapping) sometimes don't survive later on their own or need to be culled. Consider also that hatchability can have a genetic component, and if you plan to breed your birds, assisted hatches now may contribute to more hatching issues in the future.

Of course, this is a personal decision. Should you decide to help out, I recommend first giving the chick a chance to hatch on its own. Allow the bird 12 hours to hatch independently after you see the larger pip hole. If it still hasn't hatched, carefully and slowly chip away at the shell around the hole. Use a wet cloth to moisten the membrane around the chick--peeling away a dry or hard membrane can hurt the chick. If you see any blood, stop and let the chick rest in the incubator for a few hours before trying again, to avoid hemorrhaging.

I choose to assist any chicks that that need help hatching after I open my incubator at the 48 hour mark, since at that point shrinkwrapping may be the issue, not the vitality of the chicks. I want to give them a chance at life, knowing that I will be able to cull them if necessary. At the same time, I keep track of which chicks required assistance and

take care not to give them to customers or add them to my breeding program, just in case there is a genetic component.

dry incubation

If you find you are getting low hatch rates--especially if a large percentage of embryos are making it to day 18 but not hatching, they you may want to give dry incubation (aka dry hatching a try).

In this method, incubate the same way, but keep the humidity levels from days 1-18 at 15-30%. Depending on the ambient humidity of your home, this may mean adding very little water, or none at all, to the incubator during this time. Of course, once you hit lockdown, it's time to get your humidity back up to 60-65%.

Too much humidity during incubation can cause the chicks to drown in the egg around lockdown, and many folks with low hatch rates at the typical 40-50% humidity find that dry incubation improves their hatch rates.

I've experimented with dry incubation and found my hatch rates to be the same as with the standard humidity ranges.

keep it clean

After incubation, make sure to clean and sanitize your incubator or hatcher thoroughly. This will help support your

future hatches. We clean the surfaces of ours with diluted bleach and then leave them to sit in the sun for a few hours, and use a vacuum to carefully remove dust and dander from the fans and computer components inside the machine.

the eggtopsy

An average hatch rate for fertile, fresh eggs from your own yard is about 70-80%, and the average hatch rate for shipped eggs is 50%.

While it's completely normal and expected that some eggs won't hatch, it can still be helpful to perform an eggtopsy, otherwise known as a "breakout analysis".

Performing an eggtopsy for each hatch is a good best practice, because it helps you learn what to look for, and get used to a process that might be a little uncomfortable at first.

An eggtopsy won't help you pinpoint the exact cause of death for each individual embryo, because there are simply too many factors affecting each stage of development. However, an eggtopsy will help you recognize patterns, troubleshoot issues, and hopefully figure out the cause of a particularly disappointing hatch.

A while back I thought it would be fun, at lockdown, to move the eggs I was incubating from my cabinet incubator to our old small tabletop model, so that I could have a better view of all those cute babies. We ended up with a hatch rate of

about 50%. When I performed an eggtopsy, I found that most of the embryos that didn't make it had died around the time of lockdown. My conclusion was that it took too long for the smaller incubator to return to the proper temp and humidity after I had opened it to add the eggs. Lesson learned!

On another occasion, I noticed a consistently higher percentage of eggs with no development at all from one of our breeding groups. Clearly that rooster was fertile, because most of the eggs from this group were developing and hatching. Theorizing that one hen in the group was resistant to mating, I took a peek at all of the hens in this group. Each had some degree of ruffled back feathers--except for one who looked completely untouched. I gave this hen and rooster some quality one-on-one time to break the ice and we've had no trouble since.

See? Eggtopsies can be incredibly useful and give you insight into both the dynamics of your flock and issues with incubation. While a useful tool, the idea of examining a dead embryo can be a difficult one. I was incredibly nervous before I performed my first eggtopsy, but, like most things I am nervous about, it was far easier than I expected. There were no terrible smells or horrific monstrosities--just a chick that didn't make it. I found it to be a tender and fascinating experience. If you are nervous about doing a breakout analysis, that's okay. You got this!

HOW TO PERFORM AN EGGTOPSY

You will need:

- 2 plastic trays (like a large, shallow tupperware or something comparable)
- A small, sharp knife
- Plastic gloves
- Pen and paper
- If possible, another person to take notes for you because your hands **WILL** get sticky.



Step 1:

Use the knife to open the large side of the egg, where the air cell is located. When opening the end of the egg, note whether or not the embryo internally pipped. If it did, you should see the beak poking through into the air sac (this chick did not pip). This is a helpful clue for later.

Step 2:

Begin to gently peel the shell away from the embryo, and the membrane as well. At this point, you might find that the contents of the egg are mostly liquid and you can pour them into one of the trays to explore further. Or you will find an embryo that is fully developed, or close--continue peeling away the shell for a better look.

Step 3:

Examine your findings and take notes (see next page). If you look closely at the previous photo, you can see that the legs are visible--this chick was positioned upside down in the egg and could not reach the air cell (This is uncommon, happening about 2% of the time). In this photo of the same chick, you can see that the yolk is mostly absorbed, a clue that the chick died just before hatch.

OBSERVATION	SOME POSSIBLE CAUSES
No development--all yolk, no embryo	Infertile eggs, Damage due to shipping
Early term death	Rough handling, eggs improperly stored or stored too long, incubator contamination, insufficient ventilation
Mid term death	Improper temperature/humidity, incubator contamination
Internal pip (pipped inner membrane), did not hatch	Inadequate ventilation during hatch, Improper temperature/humidity
External pip (visibly pipped the eggshell), did not hatch	Shrink wrapped, embryo malpositioned

This is just a sample of the many factors that can cause an embryo to stop developing.

Keep in mind as you look at your notes and charts that many issues can cause development to stop at any point. That's why it is helpful to think of an eggtopsy as a way to notice patterns.

You won't be able to determine the cause of death of every embryo, and you might not even be able to troubleshoot one hatch. But the knowledge you gain, if not immediately useful, can help you recognize patterns over time and train your eye. Not only that, but the embryo itself is also fascinating to see.



HATCHING WITH A BROODY HEN

Working with a Mama Hen is by far the least work intensive way to hatch chicks. However, your broody hen still needs your support. This section will teach you everything you need to know to give your broody mama the best chance of success.

what is a broody hen?

When a hen goes broody, her hormones shift, she stops laying, and her entire physiology moves into hatch mode.

Broodiness generally happens in the spring and summer, as it's triggered by day length, although it can be encouraged by clutches of eggs. Broody hens might seem like they are in a trance, sitting on their eggs 24/7, and getting up about once a day just to poop, eat, drink, and take a quick dust bath. That trance will break, though, the second you get anywhere near their nest. If that happens, prepare for pecking and squawking as your broody defends her eggs.

signs you have a broody

- Your hen is always in the same place, like a nesting box or cozy corner, over the course of a couple days.
- She squawks and pecks angrily when you approach.
- She is missing feathers on her underside. This is called the "broody patch"--the hen removes her feathers so that her eggs will be warmer with the close contact with her body.

If you suspect a broody hen, I recommend giving her a few days to settle into her broodiness and prove her commitment before taking any next steps.

Once you are sure your hen is truly broody and you are ready to give her fertile eggs (or continue with the clutch she has), then move her to a dedicated broody abode. If you leave your broody in the coop with other chickens, several things could happen:

- Her eggs may be damaged as other hens fight for prime nesting box real estate.
- She might get up to take a break and sit back down on the wrong eggs, killing her embryos mid-incubation.
- As her chicks hatch, they may be attacked by other hens in the coop. If hatched in the main coop, chicks might eat layer pellets which can kill them or cause organ damage due to the high calcium content.

For these reasons, it's crucial for the mama and her chicks to have separate space through the incubation process and after the hatch.

prepare the broody box

Some folks have dedicated broody coops with multiple stalls for broody mamas to do their thing. If that's you--awesome! If not, check out the ideas below. Whatever you choose, know that your hen will do best in a space that makes her feel secure and comfortable: make sure it's quiet, far from other animals and pets, predator proof, and ideally covered all on the top and all sides except for one.

A very small prefab or DIY coop will do the trick for a broody and a few chicks. While you may find some inexpensive prefab coops on the market, do make sure they are predator proof and make any necessary improvements.

If you've raised chicks before, your old chick brooder box is likely the perfect space for a broody hen! We have several predator proof chick brooders on hand that we've also used for broody hens in our garage or screened-in porch. A brooder box would work in your hen's original coop, too, as long as it was secure from the other adult birds if you had no other suitable space.

My friend Kelsey Jorissen-Olesen of Green Willow Homestead designed a broody mama box that you can build yourself with just one sheet of plywood. Get her plans [here](#) (not an ad, I just really like Kelsey).

Of course, you don't have to be fancy. Your chicken won't be offended if she finds herself in a cardboard box. Just make sure she's safe from predators.

what to put in the broody box

Give mama everything she'll need for herself and the chicks, when they hatch:

- Water: In a chick-size waterer. Perfect for one hen and safe for babies.



- Food: Since your hen isn't laying, you can give her chick starter.
- Bedding: Use hay, as pine shavings can be a choking hazard to young chicks.
- Dust bath: a small tray in the broody box will help prevent lice and mites while your broody hunkers down for three weeks.

moving time

Moving a broody to her own space is a delicate operation. A broody hen needs to feel safe and secure, and a disruptive move can break her broodiness (trust me, I learned the hard way!).

To successfully moving a broody hen into her space:

- Let her be broody for 2-3 days before moving her, to really settle into her broodiness.
- Move her under the cover of night. Your hen will be out of it, far less disturbed by the move, and more likely to stay broody.
- Keep it dark! Use a flashlight, preferably one with a red light.
- Move her slowly and smoothly while getting the job done quickly.
- Carefully and gently slide her eggs beneath her before leaving.

Once you've moved your broody, give her a day to settle in without disturbance. When she's settled on her eggs, a quick daily visit is all you maintain her space until hatch. Give her fresh food and water

and remove her broody poop (you'll see 1-2 big ones per day, you can't miss 'em) while disturbing the bedding as little as possible.

hatch time

Chances are, everything will go smoothly and your broody mama will hatch and raise those babies, no problem. There is a chance she will reject some or all of her chicks, or give up on her eggs.

If you have an incubator on hand and are so inclined, you can try to finish the hatch should the broody stop sitting on her eggs at any point. You may also want to have your heat plate or lamp and a broody box ready near hatch day in case she rejects any of her chicks. If all goes well, however, your broody mama will do all the work of hatching chicks for you, and caring for them in their first weeks of life!





Thank you for reading!

I hope this guide helps you on your chicken keeping journey as you hatch and brood your own chicks. Contact us anytime with questions, comments, or if you'd like to grow your flock with us!

email: hello@thesilverfoxfarm.com

website: thesilverfoxfarm.com

instagram: [@thesilverfoxfarm](https://www.instagram.com/thesilverfoxfarm)

**Yours in chicken keeping,
Maeg**



SUPPLY GUIDE

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO HATCH AND BROOD CHICKS

On the next page you'll find all our tried and tested favorites. We've included Amazon affiliate links where we may earn a small commission at no cost to you if you purchase through these links. If you prefer not to purchase through Amazon, we've also included links to purchase directly from a smaller business. Many if not all of these items may be found at your local feed and seed, too.

Brooding Supplies

Heat Plate for 20 Chicks

[Amazon](#)

[Rent-a-Coop](#)

Heat Plate for 50 Chicks

[Amazon](#)

[Rent-a-Coop](#)

Heat Lamp

[Amazon](#)

[Premier 1](#)

Brooder Kit

[Amazon](#)

[Premier 1](#)

Shavings

[Amazon](#)

I recommend purchasing from
your local feed & seed

Organic Chick Starter

[Amazon](#)

[Premier 1](#)

Chick Waterer & Feeder

[Amazon](#)

[RentACoop](#)

Chick Electrolytes

[Amazon](#)

[Jeffers Pet](#)

Chick Grit

[Amazon](#)

[Premier1](#)

Poultry Nipples for Buckets

[Amazon](#)

[RentACoop](#)

Heated Waterer

[Amazon](#)

[Farm and Fleet](#)

Medical Supplies

Corid

[Premier1](#)

Durvet's Vitamins and Electrolytes

[Amazon](#)

[Meyer](#)

VetWrap

[Amazon](#)

[Jeffers Pet](#)

Nutridench

[Amazon](#)

[Premier1](#)

Incubators

Incuvew

[Amazon](#)

[Incubator Warehouse](#)

GQF 1502 Incubator/Hatcher

[Amazon](#)

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GQF 1550 Hatcher

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