

Chick Care

- Select a draft-free place that can be protected from potentially dangerous disturbances such as dogs, cats, (and yes, even small children).
- A card-board box, plastic storage bin, empty fish-tank, or similar container will make a fine home for your growing chicks.
- Spread a layer of paper towels on the floor, to provide traction. Do not house young chicks on newspaper, as it is too slippery and the chicks can develop leg problems.
- Add a thin layer of pine shavings after the first few days (if you add them too soon, they will think of it as food and eat it.)
- Use a heat lamp to keep the temperature at 90° F (33° C) for the first week. Keep a thermometer in the cage to monitor temps. If you hear frequent complaining, peeping and the chicks are huddled together in a pile, they are too cold. Chicks are too warm if they spread out away from the heat source. Happy chicks eat and sleep a lot and mill around the entire brooder.
- Reduce the temperature 5 degrees per week until they are at room temperature (around 70° F/21° C.) In nice weather they can be brought outside to a protected area for short periods.
- For the first two weeks, feed only high protein chick starter feed. After the first two weeks you can supplement with scraps of greens and fruits, grass clippings etc. If your chicks eat a lot of extra food in addition to the chick starter, sprinkle small amounts of #1 grit to help with digestion.
- Always have fresh water available. Keep it away from the heat lamp.
- Some baby birds experience “pasting up”, hardened poop that sticks to the bird’s vent in their first week of life. Check your chicks and if you find it, pry it off gently, or moisten with a damp cloth and wipe. This will disappear as they start to grow.
- Handle your birds gently and often and they will be friendly as they grow older.

IMPORTANT: Wash your hands after handling chicks and chickens. This is especially important for young children.

Resources

Local Forums and General Information	Books
TwinCitiesChickens (Google Group) Twin Cities Coop Tour sites.google.com/site/twincitiescooptour/ Back Yard Chickens www.backyardchickens.com/ My Pet Chicken www.mypetchicken.com/default.aspx	A Chicken in Every Yard Robert and Hannah Litt Ten Speed Press Chick Days Jenna Wogenrich Storey Publishing Storey’s Guide to Raising Chickens Gail Damerow Storey Publishing