

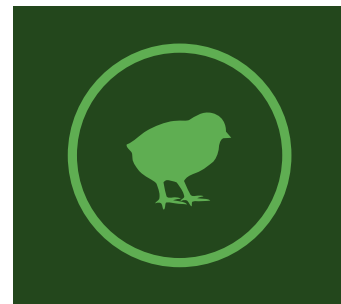


**Nutrena®**

What's inside counts.

# Poultry Care Guide

Keep your whole flock healthy and happy.  
**We'll show you how.**



# Let's get started.

Raising poultry is a fun and rewarding experience—whether you do it for the enjoyment of having birds in the backyard, for the eggs they lay, the meat they produce, or all 3.

Being prepared can make the whole process even more enjoyable. This guide from Nutrena® feeds will teach you everything you need to know from start to finish to get the best results.

First and foremost, your project's success is built on good care and quality nutrition. That's why we designed our [NatureSmart®](#), [NatureWise®](#), and [Country Feeds®](#) poultry feeds to meet your needs and your birds' unique nutritional requirements.

Be sure to talk to your Nutrena feeds retailer, and if you have any questions, you may contact us at [nutrenaworld.com/contact-us](https://nutrenaworld.com/contact-us).



A close-up photograph of a person's hands holding a small chicken chick. The chick has black and white patterned feathers, characteristic of a Bantam breed. The person is wearing a light blue shirt. The background is a blurred green field.

# Birds of a feather flock together.

## CHICKENS

There are many different breeds of chickens within 4 general categories: laying, meat-producing, dual-purpose, and ornamental breeds.

**Laying breeds:** No surprises here, these breeds are known for laying eggs. Healthy hens lay eggs for several years, starting around 16 weeks. They lay about 21 dozen eggs the first year. They usually begin to molt at 14 months, dropping their old feathers and growing new ones. After molting, hens lay larger but fewer eggs per year: about 17 dozen. [Learn more here.](#)

**Meat breeds:** These breeds convert feed to meat efficiently, producing approximately 1 pound of bodyweight for every 2 pounds eaten. Meat-producing chickens are broad-breasted and larger than the laying breeds. They grow and feather rapidly and weigh 5 pounds or more at 8 weeks. Broilers and fryers are harvested at around 4 pounds, while a roaster is harvested at around 7 pounds. To learn how to maximize meatbird potential through nutrition click [here](#).

**Dual-purpose breeds:** The classic backyard chicken lays eggs while offering a substantial amount of meat. Most lay large brown-shelled eggs. Some laying and dual-purpose hens can get broody, which means they prefer to sit on and hatch eggs versus laying eggs. Keep that in mind when estimating egg production.

**Ornamental breeds:** Known for their unique and sometimes flashy appearance, many bantam and miniature breeds fall into this category. They can be very rewarding to raise because of their history and exhibition potential. However, these breeds can be very broody and produce a modest egg supply.

## TURKEYS, GEESE, DUCKS, AND PHEASANTS

These types of birds are often raised as pets or for their egg and meat-producing qualities. They can be a great way for children to learn responsibility and animal-raising skills firsthand. Ducks are fun, messy water lovers. Their tasty eggs make them a popular choice to raise.

For more information about choosing the breeds and species that are right for your goals click [here](#), or for nutrition and feeding guidelines, visit our website [here](#).

# Helping chicks grow healthy and happy.

Once you know which breed is right for you, choose a reputable hatchery or retailer to buy your chicks from.



## How to prepare for your new arrivals:

- Get a brooder for warmth and protection
- Clean, disinfect, and dry it at least 2 days beforehand
- Cover the floor with 4 – 6 inches of dry pine shavings to aid in disease prevention
- Place in a draft-free location with an incandescent bulb about a foot above the box floor for heat

Newly hatched chicks will move closer to, or further from, the heat source to stay at a comfortable temperature. You'll want to make sure they have space to roam. Check on them regularly to be sure they aren't huddled together for warmth, which can suffocate them. Raise the height of the lights as they grow, as they need less artificial heat when they produce feathers.

A constant supply of clean, fresh water is also extremely important for your chicks. Make sure the waterers are clean, and check water levels every day to be sure the chicks are consuming enough.

Ask your Nutrena feeds retailer to help you [choose a feed](#) with the right amount of protein, vitamins, and minerals. Start by sprinkling feed on the brooder floor, but switch to a chick feeder when the chicks are a few days old.

With a comfortable brooder, fresh water, and quality feed, your chicks will soon be big enough to move into their coop.

Looking for insights for a happy, healthy, productive flock visit our [www.nutrenaworld.com/resources/blog/poultry](http://www.nutrenaworld.com/resources/blog/poultry).

# Healthy hens, happy home.

Raising layer hens to produce fresh eggs? Help them perform their best with room to roam, nutritious feed, fresh water, and a safe, comfortable coop to nest and roost in.

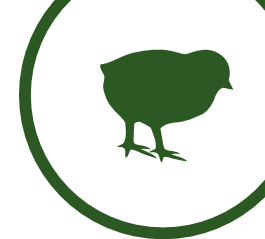


Your coop should have at least 4 square feet of space per hen, 1 perch, 1 nest box for every 4 or 5 hens, and a 6-inch layer of pine shavings on the floor. Make sure the coop is draft-free during winter and well ventilated in summer.

Protect your chickens from predators by confining them with sturdy fencing, such as hardware cloth, and closing the coop door every night after your flock goes to roost.



Providing the right feed is important. Choose one with enough protein, vitamins, and minerals for a complete, balanced diet. After 16 weeks, birds should transition to a complete layer feed and be offered free-choice oyster shell for added calcium and grit as a digestive aid. Always have feed and fresh, clean water available. An occasional treat of scratch grains will fulfill your chickens' pecking instincts and keep them busy.

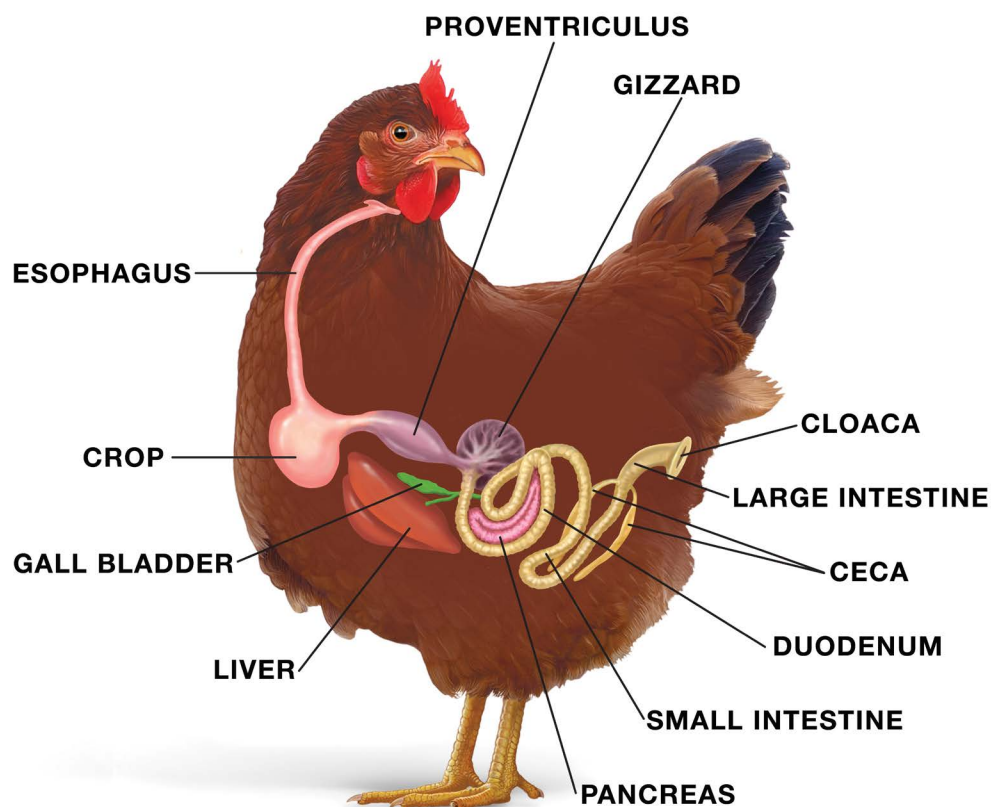




# Know your birds inside and out.

Chickens have one of the most efficient digestive systems, leaving very little to waste.

Here's a quick lesson in anatomy:



For more information about identifying, preventing, and treating poultry diseases and parasites, contact your local veterinarian. Your Nutrena feeds retailer can help you choose the right feed to support the nutritional needs of your flock.

**Mouth:** Everything starts here where the food enters the body.

**Esophagus (gullet):** Transports food from the mouth to the stomach.

**Crop:** A pouch in the esophagus used to store food temporarily before moving it on to the stomach.

**Stomach (proventriculus, gizzard):** The two-part organ where feed is broken into smaller units. Feed is stored in the proventriculus. The gizzard is a muscular part of the stomach that uses grit to grind down grains and fiber.

**Small intestine:** Aids in digestion and nutrient absorption. Composed of the duodenum, jejunum, and ileum.

**Liver:** Aids in the metabolism of carbohydrates, fats, and proteins.

**Ceca:** Bacterial action in the ceca helps break down undigested food passing through the intestine. The ceca turns into the large intestine, which connects with the cloaca.

**Large intestine:** Absorbs water, dries out indigestible foods, and eliminates waste products.

**Cloaca:** Where the digestive, urinary, and reproductive systems meet.

**Urinary system:** Consists of 2 kidneys and 2 ureters. The kidneys are located in the pelvic bones. They filter waste from blood and pass it through the ureter to the outside via the cloaca/vent.

**Vent:** The external opening of the cloaca that passes waste to the outside.

Learn more about the [chicken digestive system](#) and how it supports the immune system

## Avoiding disease

Nutrena NatureWise complete poultry feeds include **FlockShield™** immune system support. This proprietary combination of functional ingredients supports birds' immune systems and strengthens the gut wall, where over 60% of their immune system lives. In addition, **essential oils** from oregano and other herbs support your healthy flock, egg weight, and size.

For most backyard poultry enthusiasts, diseases are rare as long as the flock doesn't come into contact with other flocks. The most common disease for young, unmedicated flocks is coccidiosis, which is characterized by bloody diarrhea, poor growth, and loss to the flock. A **medicated chick feed** can help prevent coccidiosis.

Rigid sanitation programs can help prevent parasites. If internal parasites become a problem, products to treat them are available from your feed retailer. Check your flock daily to spot diseases or parasites, so you can start treatment right away.



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## First things first.

Use this project checklist to help make sure everything is ready to go before you pick up your chicks.

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### Healthy chicks

Buy chicks from a supplier you trust. Starting healthy is the first step toward keeping them healthy.



### Brooder

Use one 250-watt heat lamp for every 50 chicks. A low-wattage heat source like the Brinsea® EcoGlow can also be used, and it may be a safer option.



### Brooder guard

Can be made of any stiff material to protect chicks from wind drafts and keep them near the heat source for the first 7 – 10 days. A sturdy cardboard box or livestock tank are commonly used.



### Litter (bedding material)

Clean, dry pine shavings are recommended for bedding. Do not use cedar or redwood shavings.



### Feeders

Use smaller feeders for young chicks and replace with larger feeders as birds grow.



### Waterers

Start chicks on small waterers and replace with larger waterers as chicks grow.



### Fencing

If chickens are allowed outdoors, be sure to install sturdy fencing, such as hardware cloth, to keep them confined and to keep predators and dogs out.



### Feed

A complete and balanced diet, designed for your type of poultry and their life stage, is essential to your success.

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## Your daily to-dos.

Now that your operation is up and running, keep on top of this everyday maintenance checklist.

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### Feed available at all times



### Clean, fresh water available at all times



### Proper temperature and ventilation



### Proper brooder and coop conditions



### Correct litter conditions



### Healthy flock appearance



### Eggs gathered





Inside every bag of Nutrena feed, you'll find quality ingredients carefully formulated for balanced nutrition. Everything we do comes from our dedication to giving you peace of mind when you see our label. You can feel confident knowing that our products are made by like-minded people, inspired by late nights caring for animals of our own. We put the health and well-being of animals above all else because we're dedicated to creating feed that can always be counted on to be reliable and high quality. We're with you for the long haul, standing by our commitment to always do the right thing for you and your animals.

To learn more about all the Nutrena poultry feeds, click [here](#).

COUNTRY FEEDS®

Country Feeds® provide the wholesome nutrition your poultry needs at the price you want. They offer a great value on quality feeds with specialized nutrients for every bird in your flock.

Learn more [here](#).

NatureWise®

NatureWise® poultry feeds deliver premium nutrition to your flock. We start by sourcing only natural\* ingredients along with the right vitamins, minerals, essential oils, and amino acids your birds need.

Then, we build carefully crafted formulas that promote good digestion, support flock health, and effectively deliver nutrients so your flock can be happy, healthy, and productive.

Learn more [here](#).

Nature Smart®  
ORGANIC

Nature Smart® Organic/Non-GMO Feeds are premium-quality options to provide your flock with the natural, USDA-certified organic ingredients they need to produce eggs or meat. Keeping your flock feeling good, looking great, and staying in prime health starts with superior nutrition.

Learn more [here](#).