

# Baby Chick Care: What to do once they arrive!

From [purinamills.com](http://purinamills.com)

A chick never gets over a bad start.

## **Before they arrive: Set up the brooder**

Set up your brooder about 48 hours before your chicks arrive. This allows time for bedding and equipment to dry and the temperature to set.

**Brooder:** The brooder is the first home of new chicks. Be sure it is comfortable, warm and draft-free with at least 3 to 4 square feet per chick. The area should be circular and expandable.

- **Heat lamp:** Assemble a heat lamp in the center of the brooder for bird warmth. Hang the heat lamp about 20 inches above the litter, with 2.5 to 3 feet between the lamp and the guard walls. The temperature under the heat lamp, or comfort zone, should be 95 degrees Fahrenheit and adequate room in the brooder should be available for the chicks to get out from under the heater if they get too hot. After week one, gradually reduce heat by 5 degrees Fahrenheit each week until reaching a minimum of 55 degrees.
- **Bedding:** Add an absorbent wood shavings bedding to the floor of the brooder. Place bedding 3 to 4 inches deep to keep the area dry and odor free. Remove wet bedding daily, especially around waterers. Do not use cedar shavings or other types of shavings that have a strong odor because the odor could affect the long term health of the bird.
- **Lights:** Provide 18 – 22 hours of light for the first week. Then reduce light to 16 hours through the growing period or to the amount of light they will receive when they are 20 weeks of age. The amount of light intensity required would be provided by a 40 watt bulb for each 100 square feet (10' x 10') of floor space.
- **Feeders:** Offer 4 linear inches of feeder space for each bird. Clean egg cartons filled with feed make excellent and easily accessible feeders for young chicks. Provide low-lying feeders, or trough feeders, for after the transition.
- **Waterers:** For every 25 chicks, fill two 1-quart waterers with room temperature water and place them in the brooder. To help water stay at room temperature, place the waterers in the brooder, outside the comfort zone (do not position underneath the heat lamp), 24 hours prior to the chicks arrival.

## **Introduce chicks to water**

Once chicks arrive, introduce them to the brooding area. Water, at room temperature, should be available, but wait a couple hours to introduce feed. This gives chicks a couple hours to drink and rehydrate before they start eating, fresh, quality water is essential for healthy chicks. Dip the beaks of several chicks into the water to help them locate it. These chicks will then teach the rest of the group to drink. Monitor the group to ensure all chicks are drinking within the first couple hours.

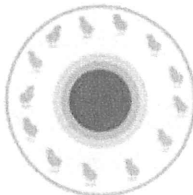
## **Teach them to eat**

After chicks have had a chance to rehydrate, provide the nutrients they need through a complete starter feed. First, teach the chicks to eat by placing feed on clean egg flats, shallow pans or simple squares of paper. On day 2, add proper feeders to the pens. Once chicks have learned to eat from the feeders, remove the papers, pans or egg flats.

## Listen to the Chicks

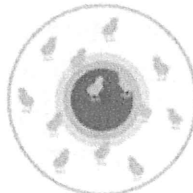


Too Hot



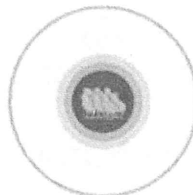
Little noise  
Panting  
Wings extended

Just Right!



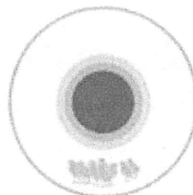
Even  
distribution

Too Cold



Crowding under  
heat source  
Distress calling

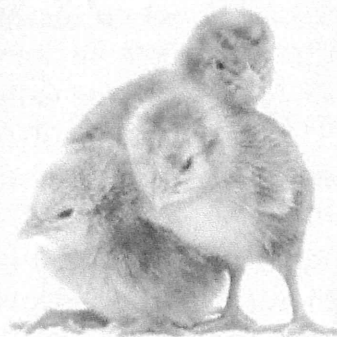
Draft



Uneven  
temperature  
distribution  
Check  
surrounding area



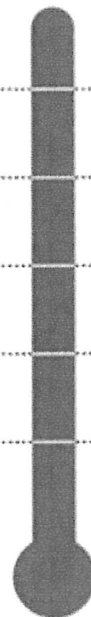
## Temperature chart for your new chicks



### Age of Chicks

Hatch to 1 Week	95°F
1-2 Weeks	90°F
2-3 Weeks	85°F
3-4 Weeks	80°F
4-5 Weeks	75°F

Recommended  
Temperature



Talk with your Purina  
retailer to learn about  
ideal temperatures  
for other poultry.



# **Green Muscle Disease**

## **Aka 'Deep Pectoral Myopathy'**

- Only affects turkeys and broilers
- Pectoralis minor muscle 'breast tender' is damaged

Indicators include

- Swollen tenders
- Pale with bloody surface to yellow-green in color
- Dry-friable
- This is only detected during the de-boning of breast

Causes of green muscle disease

- Vigorous activity of both major and minor breast muscles
- Flock Nervousness
- Flightiness
- Struggle with wing flapping
- Insufficient amount of feed and/or water
- Human activity
- Excessive noise

### **How does this occur?**

During contraction, muscles normally swell with increased blood flow, (to supply needed oxygen and nutrients) The tenders, compared to other muscles, have a rigid muscle cover and are located in a tight chamber (keel on both sides and fillet on top) such that they can't expand to accommodate this increased flow (as much as 20% in weight). The net result is self-strangulation and suffocation of the muscle, and eventually necrosis.

For photos google green muscle disease

