

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND EXTENSION

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UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE
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Resources

www.extension.umd.edu/poultry

[https://mda.maryland.gov/
AnimalHealth/Pages/poultry.aspx](https://mda.maryland.gov/AnimalHealth/Pages/poultry.aspx)

[https://agriculture.delaware.gov/poultry-
animal-health/poultry/](https://agriculture.delaware.gov/poultry-animal-health/poultry/)

Small Flock Production in Maryland & Delaware



RAISING CHICKS

- Do not purchase chicks until you are ready for them
- Selecting chicks
 - There are hundreds of varieties
 - Meat, layer and dual-purpose breeds are available
 - Pullets are sexed female chicks
 - Straight runs are unsexed chicks
 - Chicks should be kept in groups of at least 4
- Heat
 - Temperature should be 92-95°F for the first few days of a chick's life
 - Temperature can be dropped by 5°F per week until the chicks are fully feathered
 - Chicks should be kept in a draft-free space with ventilation and bedding
- Feed and water
 - Chicks should be fed starter crumbles in a low-sided object
 - Keep fresh feed and clean water available at all times



HOUSING

- Protection from extreme weather
- Protection from predators
- Proper amount of space
- Consists of indoor space and outside pen
- Have clean nests available
- Housing can be fixed or moveable

BIOSECURITY

- Prevents the spread of disease
- Limit access to the farm
 - Do not allow visitors and animals to enter areas where poultry are housed
- Post biosecurity signs
- Disinfect equipment that enters the farm
- Have designated boots that are worn only in the coop
- Do not wear the same clothes or shoes in the coop that have been worn on other farms or out shopping
- Isolate new birds for 30 days and monitor for signs of illness before adding them to the rest of the flock

FEED AND WATER

- Select feeds based on stage of growth and production
- Layer feeds need to contain adequate calcium and phosphorus
- Keep water and feed available at all times
 - Birds consume twice as much water as feed
- Pasture does not provide a significant amount of nutrition

REGULATIONS

- Backyard poultry must be registered with the Department of Agriculture in your state
- Local zoning regulations may prohibit poultry in certain areas

SICK BIRDS

- Have sick birds examined by a veterinarian
- Veterinarians at your state animal health laboratory can perform a necropsy to determine the cause of death in backyard poultry
- Consult with your extension agent or department of agriculture if you have multiple sick birds or suspicious deaths

Resources and training are available through your county extension office!