



16 **common** **chicken illnesses**

A Practical Guide to Chicken Illnesses & Diseases

**A comprehensive guide on how to spot
symptoms and treat or prevent common
chicken illnesses**



by **John White**



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Introduction

(Stop here and read)

THIS MEANS YOU!

Hey folks, John here. I know, I hate reading introductions and forewords like just about everyone else, but there is some important information tied up right here so I'd like to ask you to stop and read this section before continuing with the 'exciting' parts. I promise it won't be boring and I PROMISE it's useful!

A while back I wrote about chicken diseases and common illnesses on my blog. It seemed to be so helpful to people that I decided to expand it and write an easy to download guide. But before I get too far into that, I wanted to address something here based on several emails I've received:

I'm not a doctor or a vet. I know, big surprise! With that obvious statement made, I need to advise you all to speak more with your vet if you suspect a serious problem. Sure things like garlic, oregano, cayenne, yogurt, and vinegar are going to help keep your chickens healthy and can reduce the severity of many common illnesses. But how can you tell the difference between a common illness and a serious disease? Even experienced chicken farmers can't do that sometimes so getting a vet you trust will help out enormously in the long run. Remember, if they recommend a course of treatment it doesn't mean that you have to follow that exact protocol if you feel another way is right. But you do need to get a good idea of what you're working with first. If it's something serious you may be legally required to destroy your flock to protect the people and animals nearby. Or if your vet starts prescribing a bunch of antibiotics for your chicken's cold, well...you can probably treat that as you see fit. It all has to do with using common sense (which they say isn't common, incidentally). Sometimes you have to bite the bullet and accept a treatment, which would otherwise be something you wouldn't use. Perhaps if I describe to you the term 'allopathic medicine' then you will better understand what I mean.

Allopathic medicine is the type of medicine most commonly practiced in Western countries for humans and animals. It was originally meant only for emergencies, then it became used for all situations. Think about it like this: if I break my leg I'm definitely going to the ER and I'm going to be thankful for the allopathic medicine the doctors use there such as x-rays and pain meds. However if I have a cold I'm not going to call in the AMA's S.W.A.T team. I'm going to treat it myself instead of proverbially dropping napalm to kill a squirrel in the forest.

One of the best things to do is to grow some gentle medicinal plants in the area where your chickens are. Things like oregano, holy basil, calendula, nettles, etc. are great for birds to self-medicate themselves with. Have you ever noticed your dog or cat eat grass for no apparent reason? They're self-medicating. Animals have an instinct of what they need to make themselves better so if you give them the materials they'll often do the work themselves and save you the trouble.

Lastly, before I get to the meat of this guide, I'd like to ask you to not believe everything you read on the internet or even in books when it comes to herbs and natural healing. When my wife took a course on herbalism she was told to cross check everything among at least 3 separate sources but preferably more. A lot of forums will have information that is very helpful but is usually incomplete and written by folks that are hardly experts. On the internet, knowledge gets passed around like kids playing Telephone. D Mannose might be great for people with UTI's, for example, and it prevents bacteria from sticking to the urethra which eliminates them and usually cures the UTI. But if you rush right out to treat yourself with it and happen to have diabetes then you might wind up in the hospital since it also raises blood sugar levels. See what I mean? Do your homework. I know too many people who just accept something they read on Dr. Google (or hear from Dr. Oz or Dr. Phil) as fact without further research. Your chickens (and you) deserve better.

John White

Anemia

There is a Chicken Anemia Virus, which I do not refer to here. Instead I am talking about the more common general anemia hens get. But please keep in mind that your hen could have either and it is up to a vet to determine which it is if the treatments below don't work for you.

Symptoms:

Orange or pale combs, listless, poor balance, weight loss.

Treatment:

Tonic water, nutritional drops, ground or chopped liver, nettles, pumpkin seeds, diatomaceous earth, garlic.

Prevention:

Generally, the common form of anemia among chickens is caused by parasites. If your hen is very weak then you don't want to de-worm them first thing. Try adding pumpkin seeds and remove any corn or soy (non-nutritive foods) from their diet. This is a gentle way to encourage worms to evacuate while you strengthen the chicken itself.

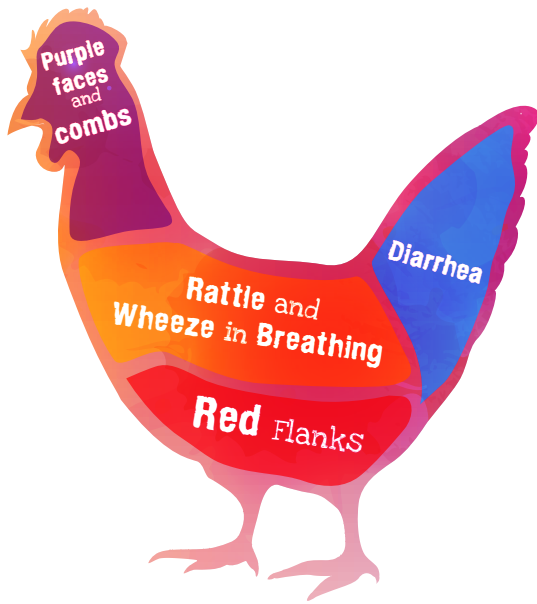
Look the bird over for any external parasites while you build it up internally with doses of ground or chopped liver, nettles, and vitamin drops. Ticks, lice, mites, etc. are all culprits. Powder all of your chickens with DE (diatomaceous earth) to get rid of lice and mites. You can also make a juice from raw garlic cloves and water to bathe the chickens in. This helps get rid of most parasites. Look each affected bird over for ticks by hand and remove any you find by placing a freshly extinguished match head on the tick so it'll drop. Use protective



clothing and gloves since you don't want to bring home the same friends you helped your chickens get rid of!

Surprisingly, giving a hen too much garlic can also lead to a type of anemia. Don't feed large amounts of fresh garlic to your flock daily as there is no need. Once a week or when they look unwell is usually sufficient. There is a really great article about garlic and chickens, more than I can write here. Please go here to read: <http://www.the-chicken-chick.com/2014/05/raising-chickens-naturally-garlic-with.html>

Avian Flu



Symptoms:

Sometimes with Avian Influenza as well as other diseases like Exotic Newcastle Disease (also called HPAI and END respectively) the only symptoms you'll find are dead birds. If you're sharp-eyed or there are more obvious symptoms before the end then you'll notice diarrhea, red flanks, purple faces and combs, and a sort of rattle and wheeze in their breathing.

Treatment:

Unfortunately there really is no cure for this.

Prevention:

Prevention methods are difficult other than the obvious measure of not introducing ill birds into your flock. Usually wild birds will bring this disease to your fowl which is very hard to stop. Netting over the run if you have a small one will help, but truly pastured birds... it's just not practical. Another method is to bring their feed inside the coop to discourage any wild birds from partaking, which will help reduce the instances of your flock meeting their wild cousins. Any ill birds you must quarantine and have them tested, then humanely destroyed. This illness can spread to humans!

Avian Pox

Symptoms:

Also called Fowlpox, this is a virus that can spread easily amongst fowl through bits of dead skin from the chickens rubbing up against each other and from mosquitos. It spreads and develops very slowly, over several weeks. You'll probably first notice that your chickens seem depressed with a lack of appetite and their egg production will probably start to drop. Then you will see little nobby wart-type nodules start to form on the combs, legs, and skin of the face. Although the actual pox aren't dangerous and morbidity for it is fairly low, it often leads to secondary infections which do cause serious complications.

Treatment:

Since this is a virus then obviously no antibiotic will cure it. Elderberry and astragalus given as a tonic daily in your chicken's water will help prevent viral infections of all kinds, but stop giving astragalus at the first sign of an actual virus since it will strengthen the virus as well as the chicken's immune system.

Prevention:

If you live in an area with a lot of mosquitoes you might consider getting your flock vaccinated for this disease. Same advice goes if you have a lot of wild birds in your area. If you live in the country this is almost guaranteed.



Botulism



Symptoms:

Unfortunately this is another one where you might notice a dead chicken before you notice symptoms since it kills so rapidly, in only a few hours sometimes. What you probably will see first would be trembling and shaking, feather loss, and eventually paralysis before death.

Treatment:

There is no natural cure for botulism. I've heard that you can give them water with epsom salt if you notice symptoms quickly but it didn't work for me when I had a bird who died of this a few years ago. I just made sure to bury the raccoon carcass that fell in their feeder and scrubbed it within an inch of its plastic life. We snapped the bird's neck so it wouldn't suffer any more needlessly. There is an anti-toxin that the vet carries, but it is pretty expensive and when I called they said sometimes it didn't even work. Again, it comes back to prevention here by paying attention and keeping things clean.

Prevention:

Just as in humans, botulism is deadly to fowls so don't ever give them or any animal food that you don't think is safe for a human to eat. Improperly canned food, food from dented cans, etc. I remember my Grannie going out to feed the hogs and chickens food she had canned that didn't seal properly with a shudder. But more often chickens ingest the botulism spores from water or food that has a dead animal in it or from eating insects that fed on a dead animal.

Bronchitis

Symptoms:

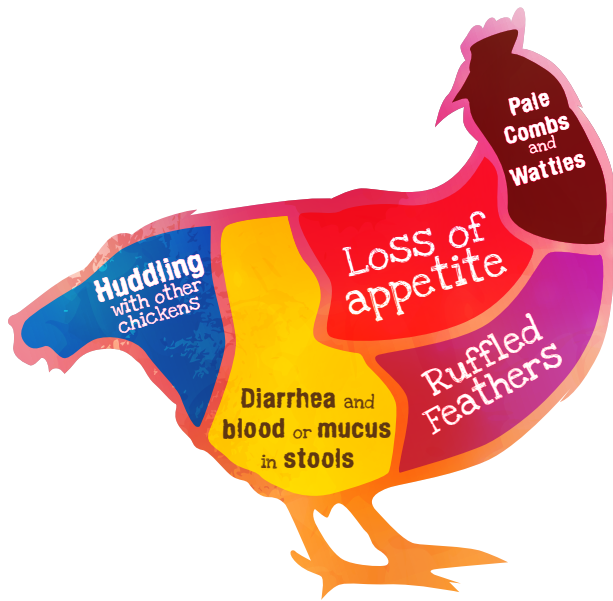
As with humans, you'll notice sneezing, watery eyes, coughing, etc. in affected hens. The mortality rate can be quite high in young hens and chicks usually die from this common illness.

Treatment/Prevention:

The best prevention is a clean, warm, dry living space and a good strong immune system so build your hens up with things like garlic and oregano in their feed weekly. A bit of cayenne or holy basil (tulsi) if they do have bronchitis wouldn't go amiss.



Coccidiosis



Coccidiosis is a disease caused by a parasite family called Eimeria, of which there are several types that can affect different parts of the GI tract. It is important to treat this quickly so the infestation does not become too severe and kill the chicken. It particularly affects young chicks because they're immune systems are so vulnerable.

Symptoms:

Loss of appetite, pale combs and wattles, ruffled feathers (especially toward the rear), diarrhea and blood or mucus in their stools, huddling with other chickens as if they're cold (especially if it's not cold outside).

Treatment:

Olive leaf, mustard seeds, oregano, cloves (whole or ground), good ol' garlic and raw apple cider vinegar, etc. can help treat and prevent this incredibly common illness.

Prevention:

The eggs of the parasites, called oocysts, are found in the soil and in feces, especially where it's moist like near your feeders and waterers as well as if you have any roof leaks in the coop which is why it's so important to check for these twice a year. Some of the best prevention is just to keep everything in your coop really clean.

Frostbite

Symptoms:

In wattles, combs, and legs you may notice areas that are hot and red to the touch before later turning purple-black. Chickens may not want to use their legs and instead hop around with one held up under them, for example. This is an indication that they have frostbite in that leg and it is generally permanent unless you catch it before it's full blown.

Treatment:

Watch to ensure the other chickens don't peck at the frostbitten areas or blisters. Cover the areas with cocoa powder or Vetericyn if needed to deter them from the redness. Provided that you and the other chickens leave the affected chicken alone, the blackened areas will heal up and fall off on their own without any intervention. Also toss some extra greens in their feed when it gets super cold and put a little more vitamins in their water to help them stay healthy. Frostbite takes a lot out of the poor things. Keep an eye out for infection (redness, swelling, hot to the touch around the shrivelled area, oozing). You might try putting some fresh oregano in with the chickens' greens as this is naturally anti-bacterial and will help them resist infection.

Prevention:

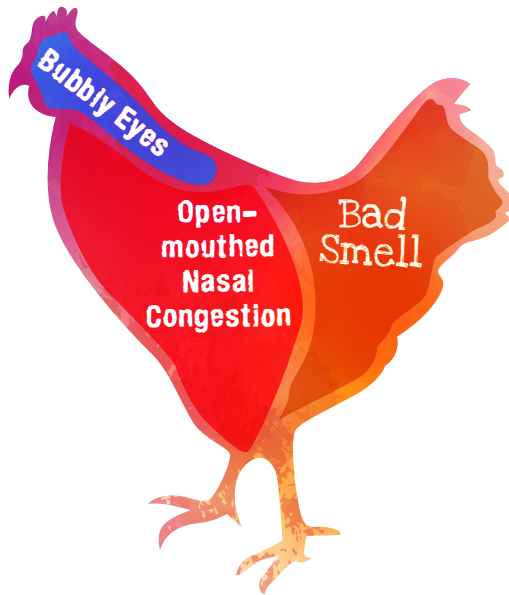
For frostbite, prevention is the best cure since people rarely notice their chickens have it until it's too late. If I know it's going to be freezing then I'll go out and take some balm my wife makes that is like a non-petroleum Vaseline (although you could use Vaseline if you want, or Burt's Bees makes this great baby salve that works a treat) in texture and dab it on the birds that have large combs and



wattles like my Leghorns. Usually the pea comb type are all right since they are bred to be cold-hardy. Think Wyandottes for this as the most common type that can handle the cold well.

Make sure to keep the coop always accessible when snow is on the ground and temperatures are below 30F. Most chickens will choose to stay inside when it's very cold. A small heat lamp set on low in very cold weather is usually good to help keep a coop warm, but I only use it if the weather is predicted to be below 20F for a while. One night of 20F and they're usually okay provided there are no drafts. They can also be at risk if the coop has high humidity due to droppings that haven't been removed.

Infectious Coryza



This is a bacteria called *Haemophilus paragallinarum* and is relatively common but rarely fatal among fowl. It's easy to kill once outside the host and usually dissipates within a few days. A good scrubbing inside the coop will usually get rid of it easily.

Symptoms:

Coryza is really just a dreadful cold with symptoms such as bubbly eyes, open-mouthed breathing, nasal congestion, and a bad smell coming from the sinuses.

Treatment/Prevention:

Garlic is a good preventative for any bacterial infections, such as coryza, as well as properly caring for your flock by cleaning their environment regularly and preventing cold, damp conditions from existing. See previous entries for how to use garlic effectively and safely.

Most experienced chicken farmers will cull all affected birds for a number of reasons:

- affected birds are carriers for life and will infect other birds that are healthy
- birds who recover from coryza, which most do, will suffer recurrent bouts for most of their life and particularly when they are under stress
- you generally can only completely get rid of this by using antibiotics, which is okay in emergency situations, but then your hens are weaker and eventually the whole flock is weaker including weak offspring
- you probably can't ever introduce clean, healthy birds into the flock again because they will also get sick

If you choose to cull the entire flock then this is probably also a prudent option, even if it is a sad one. Make sure to scrub and disinfect (I mean something strong like thyme oil and hot water or even hot bleach water) everything the chickens have used and leave it to dry for a week or two before introducing a new flock.

Omphalitis

Known also as Yolk-Sac Infection or Mushy Chick Disease, this is one of the biggest killers of chicks under two weeks old. Usually this affects chicks that have been artificially hatched, especially in large factories. This is one big reason why if I have a hen go broody I will bring in the rooster and let him take care of it before I set her in a broody box on my porch. She is happy because she gets chicks and I'm happy because they're usually much healthier.

Symptoms:

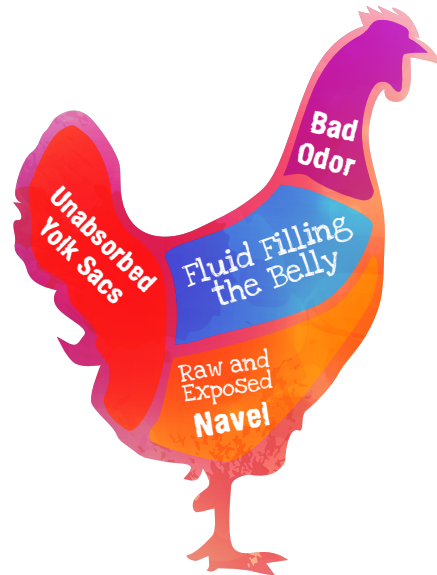
Since just about any bacteria could be the culprit, symptoms vary. Sometimes they're simply lethargic and want to bundle next to the closest heat source. Other times the symptom is more obvious. Unabsorbed yolk sacs, a bad odor, a raw and exposed navel, even fluid filling the belly (abdominal edema).

Treatment:

Generally a chick will die from this infection if it is severe. It is best to humanely cull chicks with the more severe symptoms like edema and large navel holes. You can still treat the minor navel holes with iodine once a day. Make sure to keep infected chicks separate and the temperature steady as over or under heating at this stage can kill. Give them plenty of vitamins in their water and encourage them to drink water as much as possible and some may survive.

Prevention:

If you read my blog at all, you may recall an entire article where I talked about egg bloom and what the purpose behind it is. For those who haven't, you might want to check that out here: <http://>

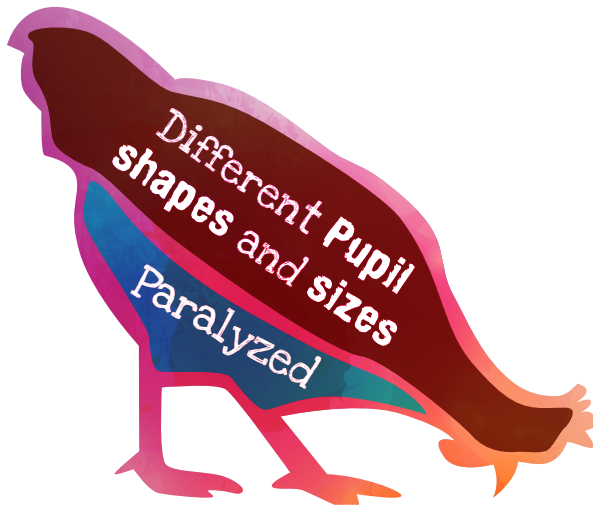


www.chickencoopguides.com/members/egg-bloom-care/

Essentially, the bloom is a thin coating on eggs before they're washed that prevents the porous shell from taking in things like viruses and bacteria. This is one reason that I don't wash my eggs until I use them unless they are visibly dirty (bird poop) in which case I wash and use immediately.

When a hen has the chance to lay and protect her own eggs then this bloom remains intact. When you put fertile eggs in an incubator they've often been washed and/or exposed to filthy conditions. Some may be cracked so if you do use an incubator, make sure to discard cracked eggs. Sometimes one will even explode and coat the incubator in yuck that is full of bacteria, which then potentially infects all of the other eggs. Other causes are dirty incubators and assisting with a hatch (leave them ALONE!). The chicks can get bacteria on their navels which can lead to this very same issue developing.

Mareks Disease



This is actually a viral disease that attacks chickens all over the world. Although sometimes turkeys and quail can fall victim to this, it rarely spreads to other fowl. In recent years there have been some pretty nasty strains of Marek's popping up in North America and Europe. It can also be hard to get rid of and even industrial disinfectants can't destroy it all the time.

Symptoms:

Look out for birds that seem to appear like they've had a stroke. By this I mean that they look like parts of their body are paralyzed, especially in their legs or wings. Sometimes you'll see their necks go floppy like they can't hold them up. Their eyes may look funny as if the pupils are different sizes or a different shape. Usually they go blind if their eyes are affected. Many times you'll have a few birds who show symptoms and many asymptomatic birds so be warned that your flock may be affected more than what is immediately apparent.

Treatment:

There is no cure for Marek's and it's often fatal.

Prevention:

Things that can help prevent Marek's is good hygiene for your flock. If your flock does develop Marek's then you need to probably build a new coop and move all surviving hens. Any new hens you introduce need to have been vaccinated against Marek's disease, even if they are chicks born of mothers who carry the disease since it doesn't pass on from mother to chick. Do not put your hens back in the old area for 3-5 years, if ever, since Marek's is known to be able to survive in open conditions for years.

If you suspect Marek's, call your vet right away so you can have someone walk you through the complicated steps of dealing with this nasty virus.

Moniliasis

Also called thrush and crop mycosis, moniliasis is essentially a fungal infection caused by candida albicans. Ironically, this is usually a secondary problem brought on by the use of anti-biotics (the same as for people).

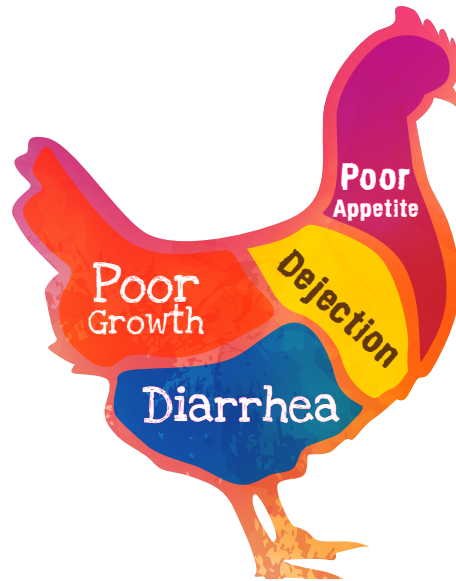
Symptoms:

Poor growth, dejection, poor appetite, diarrhea, but sometimes it's the opposite and the affected chickens will eat MORE and will become obese... just like people with internal fungal problems will do!

Treatment:

You can start by feeding yogurt to mild cases, especially if you know that the chicken recently had a course of anti-biotics. Garlic in moderation as per previously explained. My wife had candida in her gut due to excessive anti-biotic use as a child (have to love the 1980's cure-all: bubble gum medicine). She treated herself with a sugar-free, low-grain diet and oregano oil as well as yogurt and lacto-fermented veggies to prevent dysbiosis. This worked very well for her and after a few months all signs of candida were gone, including nail fungus and fungus on her scalp that wouldn't go away before this.

Fortunately, chickens are much more easily treated and the treatment time is much quicker. A few drops of oregano oil with a spoonful of raw apple cider vinegar and garlic in their water usually does it. I like to give them yogurt once a week anyway, as well as some of the kraut juice that we have sitting around after we've eaten all of the kraut. I'm talking homemade stuff, here. Not the dead stuff from the store.



For severe cases, don't hesitate to get Nystatin from the vet!

Prevention:

Not only anti-biotics can cause a fungal infection, but also just dirty chicken water, dirty conditions, eating rotten food, and a poor diet. Giving chickens nothing but corn and soy makes a SAD chicken. ;)

Mycoplasmosis



Symptoms:

You'll probably first notice some wheezing and sneezing in affected birds. Then watery eyes that some people call 'bubbly' in appearance. If you see these symptoms then you should call a vet right away to have a look.

Treatment:

This illness may require antibiotics, in fact it probably will, in which case you'll want to wait about a week after the last treatment before eating any eggs from affected birds. With systemic infections I've found that anti-biotics are unfortunately required. After this a course of yogurt and/or lacto fermented veggies is best to build up the immune system of the sick birds.

Prevention:

Prevention and treatment for mild cases can use minced FRESH garlic and a bit of RAW apple cider vinegar (that's the cloudy stuff) in their water and feed. But the best method of prevention is to make sure you don't introduce asymptomatic carriers into your flock. If purchasing new chickens take them to be tested first by a vet since once a bird has caught this bacterial disease they are carriers for life.

Newcastle Disease

Also called Avian Distemper, Newcastle Disease is so named due to its first identification in Newcastle-on-Tyne in northern England, 1926. It was later found in the US and has since spread to world-wide bird populations. In the 1970's there was an outbreak in California so severe that the USDA actually enacted regulations to quarantine foreign birds to prevent it from happening again.

Symptoms:

The first symptoms will usually be noticed about 3-6 days after exposure to the virus. You'll see discharge from the eyes and nose, bloody stools, and shortness of breath (it usually looks like the chicken is actually panting or gasping for air). You may also notice balance problems. They might start falling over from this and/or partial paralysis. You may also see tremors of the head and neck. I say 'may' here a lot because there are tons of different strains of the virus and they all affect different birds in different ways.

Treatment:

This is a virus. Therefore anti-biotics don't work and there are no known cures for it. Much like with rabies, there is a serum that can be used with exposed birds before they become symptomatic, but once they start showing symptoms there is no treatment. Mortality rate is about 100% with very few exceptions.

Prevention:

Prevention can be difficult sometimes, but if you follow some basic rules you should be able to avoid this in the US since it's become mostly eradicated here. Reporting suspected cases to the USDA is mandatory, by the way!



Don't purchase birds you know came from another country, especially from smugglers as this is the cause for most spread of the disease in the US. Ask for a health certificate from your bird supplier. It should say that they're born and raised in the US.

Make sure transport cages are disinfected, especially if you purchase them used. You don't know what the other party was doing with them or what the cages were exposed to, so immersing the cages into hot bleach water and then washing thoroughly with hot water and a scrub brush after is the best thing to do with them.

Try to keep wild birds AND pet birds (including their feathers and droppings) away from your flock. This includes what you might carry with you from inside of your house. You'd be shocked at how many of the birds sold in pet stores are actually smuggled into the country from other places.

Last but not least, always make sure your birds are in clean, well-ventilated buildings.

Pullorum & Fowl Typhoid



I've put these two diseases together because they are very similar in symptoms and spring from a related species of bacterium.

Pullorum is caused by *Salmonella Pullorum* while Fowl Typhoid is caused by *Salmonella Gallinarum*. To the untrained person, the symptoms can be mistaken for one another. You can easily use a few guidelines to distinguish between the two.

Take this one seriously, folks. It can wipe out your whole flock quickly. This is another reason I recommend to build several coops versus one mega coop for commercial farmers or those seeking to be commercial farmers. If something like this or Merek's comes along and you have a mega coop then you've lost all of your birds or almost all of them. If you instead have your birds housed in non-crowded conditions spread over a few coop buildings then you have a significantly greater chance of being able to save not only more of your chickens, but your own livelihood as well!

Symptoms:

A little mnemonic phrase can help you to remember which is which: Pullets get pullorum. It doesn't always work that way, but generally the younger birds (usually hatchlings) tend to get Pullorum while the older, more mature birds are more susceptible to Fowl Typhoid.

In younger birds you'll see things like depression, weight loss, heavy breathing or panting, white diarrhea and pasting, or just sudden death in hatchlings. You will probably notice a lot of chicks that are dead in the shell.

Older birds tend to display the same symptoms as above, but also decreased egg production and sudden high fevers (so you'll usually see some sweating, too). The stool tends to be a yellow color versus white as well. If it goes on long-term you'll see anemia, but hopefully you'll notice the problem well before that stage occurs!

Treatment:

There is a vaccine for Fowl Typhoid but not for Pullorum since it affects such young birds, sometimes even before they're hatched. Treatment isn't recommended since birds tend to become carriers for these diseases so you usually must cull all the infected birds from your flock and scrub everything down. A course of herbs to build their immune systems (the birds that weren't infected) is a good idea.

Prevention:

Can be transmitted through eggs to chicks and through feces to other chickens. Often spontaneous outbreaks are caused by wild birds, so protect your coop and hens from wild birds as much as is possible. And yet again...proper hygiene, lack of crowding, and clean fresh food and water sources help to keep this one at bay.



Red mites tend to make experienced chicken keepers run in the other direction. The only good thing about them is that they tend to come out in the summertime when it's easier to deal with the problem instead of winter when it's hard to get into the coops.

I can also feel free to call them 'blood-sucking parasites' because that's what they are. My wife gets irritated when I say that about our lawyer or accountant, but I can get away with it here because it's 100% accurate. No offense meant to any lawyers and accountants out there. ;)

Red mites come out at night, much like bed bugs, and latch onto your chickens and suck their blood. I suppose you could also compare them to Dracula, now that I think about it.

These little vampires like to hide in cracks and crevices that are very difficult to reach. Their eggs are tiny, translucent grey and the mites themselves aren't much bigger and are about the same color until they feed. Then they swell up with the blood they've drank and become fat little red dots.

Symptoms:

You'll hardly ever see the actual critters on your hens. Instead you'll see what they've left behind which is itchy, flaky, red irritated skin. Lost

Red Mites

feathers. Lack of egg production. Later if you don't catch it in time, severe anemia.

Prevention/Treatment:

A quick way to check to make sure you don't have any is to wipe a white paper towel or cloth along the underside of your chicken perch and along the inside corners of your nesting boxes. If you have them, you'll see red specks and smears from the blood-filled little bodies getting crushed with the swipe.

Fill all of your cracks and crannies to prevent infestation. I like a non-toxic silicone based caulk that can get down there and seal everything up nice and tight. You can also fill in cracks with petroleum jelly since it smothers the little fiends. You may want to use a pressure washer before you do this, just make sure it's dry again before sealing!

Let your birds dust bathe regularly and add some DE (diatomaceous earth) to their dusting area so the birds will help you battle the mites. Puff some of this into the cracks and dust the roosting and nesting areas with it as well. I'd add some to the coop floor if you have a sand floor. Make sure to clear out all of the old litter and add a bit to the new litter, too.

Tea tree oil and eucalyptus can help to kill mites as well as prevent them. Sometimes when we do our seasonal cleanout I like to add several drops of eucalyptus oil to the spray bottle with the lemon and/or lavender. It keeps them at bay for a long time. If you do a weekly clean as you should, I would also use it then as well during the summer months.

And yet again, keep the wild birds away!

Scaly Leg Mites

Scaly Leg Mites doesn't sound very fun. Kind of sounds like the illness you'd wish on an enemy in a role playing game or something you'd read about in the old choose-your-own adventure novels. 'Perkin Wobbleson gets Scaly Leg Mites and his legs fall off...'

(I told you I was a nerd before, right? I know I did. Just testing you.)

The reality of it doesn't really look much better. I can't imagine what it feels like to the bird. Probably pretty bad. This one can be a beast to kill and I've heard many farmers gripe about it, but I've had success without having to resort to the 'squirrel/napalm' approach like Ivomec.

Symptoms:

This one gets to be pretty obvious pretty quick. You see thickened scales on the birds' legs and it gets thicker and wartier looking as time goes by. It's actually the tiny mite burrowing under the scales and causing discoloration and scale loosening.

Treatment:

This is usually a two or more person operation or it's going to take you two days to do it. Start by pulling all of your birds from the affected coop and giving them all a nice herbal bath. Spray them down with a bottle of water containing citronella, lemongrass, and eucalyptus oils. Several drops of each should do the trick. Spray them all down and then one by one take a soft brush and some soap and dunk them in a tub of water. Scrub and rinse each one. Don't reuse the bath water and disinfect the brush between chickens.

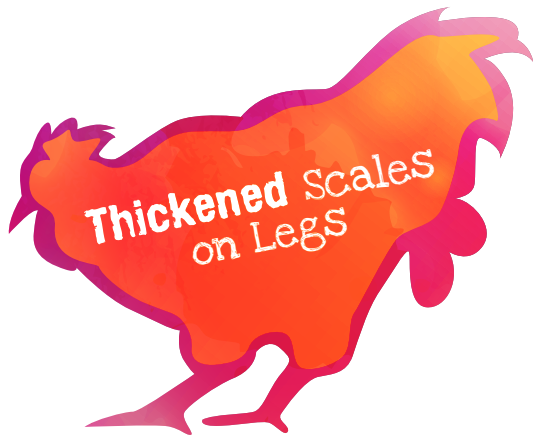
After this, rub each chicken from the shanks down



to each little toenail with Campho-Phenique. Let that dry, then go down the line with a medium-wide paint brush and a small bucket of warm Vaseline that has had some rosemary, citronella, and eucalyptus oils stirred into it and paint this over the legs of all of your chickens. Get every nook and cranny. Save the most affected chickens for last so you aren't spreading things around.

Yes, you are treating ALL of the chickens. Meanwhile, have someone get your coop in order. Shovel out all the old litter. Spray down the walls and cracks with some of the same stuff you are using on the hens themselves. Scrub everything clean with the herbal wash and soap. When it's all dry inside, dust it all down with DE. Toss some more DE in the dust bath. You might as well buy stock in DE right now if you own chickens.

Scaly Leg Mites



Once that's all done, turn 'em loose to go on their merry way. Retreat the infected chickens only with Campho-Phenique once a week for about a month and slather their little legs in your Vaseline mixture after you do that to soften the scales and to smother any remaining mites. Once you've done all of this there shouldn't be any mites any where.

I can hear you saying to yourself: 'is it really worth doing all of this?' The consequences of NOT dealing with scaly leg mites other than pain for your chickens is deformity and permanent lameness. I think it's worth dealing with this problem, but I've known some farmers of the 'old school' to just shoot the chicken. I'm not an old schooler, folks, as we should all know by now. It's worth it to your chicken.

Prevention:

Check over new birds before you bring them home and make it a habit to quarantine new birds for a week or so before introducing them to the neighborhood. Keep it clean in the coop and add anti-mite stuff to your dust bathing area like DE. Wild birds like to bring their friends (mites) along when they come to hang out with their domesticated buddies so keep those wild things out of there!

Quick Comb Color Guide



Orange or Pink or Lacking in the Usual Color

Usually signals anemia in mature hens, but keep in mind that pink is the usual color for hatchlings and pullets in general. In chicken breeds that have combs that are a color other than the traditional red, usually anemia shows by a lightening of the color in the combs and wattle.



Black

If this isn't the normal color for your chicken breed, then it is often a sign of frostbite. You'll notice the black color is in patches and is rarely uniform across an area.



Purple or Dark Red

Again, barring the normal coloration of some breeds, this can indicate a lack of oxygen in the blood, which in turn gives an indication of pulmonary (lung) or heart problems. It can be a sign of these problems on their own, or when combined with other symptoms can be used to determine other illnesses such as Fowl Cholera.



Red and White Spots

Indicative of Avian Flu.



Scabby Brown Nodules

Usually means that you have Fowl Pox.

Further Recommended Reading

<http://www.amazon.com/Complete-Herbal-Handbook-Farm-Stable/dp/0571161162>

http://www.amazon.com/Chicken-Health-Handbook-Gail-Damerow/dp/0882666118/ref=sr_1_8?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1421529547&sr=1-8&keywords=storey+chicken

http://www.amazon.com/Hatching-Brooding-Your-Own-Chicks/dp/1612120148/ref=sr_1_11?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1421529547&sr=1-11&keywords=storey+chicken

http://www.amazon.com/Treating-Injured-Chicken-Amelia-Barrows/dp/147818311X/ref=sr_1_2?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1421529627&sr=1-2&keywords=chicken+diseases&pebp=1421529633890&peasin=147818311X

http://www.amazon.com/Diseases-Free-Range-Poultry-Including-Pheasants/dp/1873580789/ref=cm_cr_pr_pb_t

A Practical Guide to Chicken Illnesses & Diseases

**A comprehensive guide on how to spot symptoms
and treat or prevent common chicken illnesses**

“ Since we’re city people we can’t have chickens where we live. We’re ‘part-timers’ at my mother-in-law’s farm out in the country every weekend. That’s why I’m so glad I had the chance to preview this book on chicken illnesses and diseases. I don’t feel like I’m there often enough to be an expert and this makes me feel like one. I’ve got a 24 hour live chicken cam that we watch sometimes (dreaming of our retirement where we can see them every day) and we’ve been able to use that to get to know the chickens better.

Earlier this week I was able to spot a hen acting funny and based on this I suspected it was a cold and it was. My mother-in-law has been giving her garlic and greens and things all week and I think that chicken is going to be OK. I also love the reading recommendations included at the end. This guide is a jumping point to becoming an expert and it gives you all the tools you need to do just that. Thanks again, John! -

Gabrielle Yoder, KY

