



PLEASE READ THIS INFORMATION BEFORE TAKING CHICKS OR DUCKLINGS HOME.

The information I provide here is to help you decide if you want to take them home. Please do not ring me for information on how to raise them.

There is lots of information that is easy to access from the internet about all aspects of keeping poultry.

These chicks and ducklings are male and female. Approx. half will be male, and half will be female. You cannot accurately determine the sex of the chicks until they are 5 to 6 weeks old and then you can tell the difference because the males develop a larger and redder comb (on top of head) and wattle (underneath the beak).. Roosters will also start crowing around 16 weeks old usually at 4 or 5 am in the morning, and they can become very aggressive, especially towards children. I strongly suggest that you do not take home these chicks unless you are prepared to get rid of the roosters before they reach this stage.

If you do get stuck with roosters, I offer a service where I will come and pick them up from you when I am in your area for a cost of \$50 for Sydney Illawarra area and \$30 for Canberra area. Please contact me by email Lianer@ozemail.com.au with your home address and ph number if you would like to arrange for us to pick up roosters.

I prefer to do this when they are 6 weeks old. You will need to have them in a cardboard box with plenty of air holes, especially in summer as they will overheat rapidly without good ventilation. If your roosters are fully grown and you have trouble catching them, you can pick them up off the perch after dark the night before.

The hens should start laying at around 22 weeks of age the chickens are crossbred egg laying strains including, Isa Browns, Rhode Island Reds, Australorps and White Leghorns. You can tell the sex of the ducks at around 16 weeks of age when the males will develop a darker head and a curled tail feather. The ducks are Khaki Campbells (Brown) Pekin (White) or a cross of both (Brown and White)

CARING FOR YOUR CHICKENS AND DUCKLINGS

I do not recommend that ducklings are raised with chicks when they are young as the ducklings tend to make the environment very wet which causes chicks to become ill with coccidiosis. Ducks and Chooks can live together happily outside as adults. If raising ducklings be prepared to clean out the litter and top up water once or twice a day.

The period from hatching until the chicks/ducks no longer require supplementary heat is called the brooding period and usually lasts from 3 to 6 weeks depending on seasonal temperatures and the type of housing. They need supplementary heat when

they hatch because they are unable to maintain their body temperatures. The heat can be supplied with an electric lamp and a 60 watt bulb fixed securely at a height approx. 10 to 15 centimetres above the chicks. You may need to raise the height as the chicks grow. As the chicken grows, its downy coat is gradually replaced by feathers, and the brooding temperature can be gradually reduced until supplementary heat is only used at night and then discontinued altogether.

Correct brooding temperatures for chicks

Age (days)	Temp (C)
14 - 21	25
21 - 28	22
28 - 35	18 e.t.c

The best way to adjust the temperature for comfort of chicks is to observe their behaviour. If they crowd near the heat source the temp is too low. If they move well away, they are too hot. They also need fresh air so you will need to ensure your brooder box is well ventilated. If brooding your chicks inside you can use a LARGE cardboard box. Line the bottom with plastic and buy a large block of wood shavings for the litter. If you keep your brooder box outside you will need to ensure your box is dog, cat and fox proof (this also applies to fully grown poultry). Small chickens are also prey to predatory birds. They will need clean fresh water and suitable food at all times. Water, food containers chick food, wood shavings and medications can all be purchased from stockfeed/produce stores. They should be fed chick starter crumbles until they are 6 weeks old, grower crumble from 6 to 16 weeks and then layer pellets from 16 weeks on. These manufactured feeds give the birds a properly balanced diet and should be available to them at all times.

At about 6 weeks old green feed such as grass and kitchen scraps can be introduced but should only form a small part of the diet. Avoid giving them mouldy foods. Growing chickens are susceptible to Coccidiosis which is caused by an intestinal parasite. It generally occurs because of damp ground or litter. Symptoms include huddling, reluctance to move about, ruffled feathers, and sometimes but not always, blood in droppings. It will quickly spread to other chickens. Litter must be kept clean and dry. They will need to be medicated with a Coccidiostat medication. Most chick starter crumble has already got this medication added. Poultry are susceptible to intestinal worms and external parasites such as lice and mites. Medication for this can also be purchased from stockfeed/ produce stores. Wormwood is a great plant to grow in your garden. I have several bushes growing and over spring and summer when parasites become a problem, I cut branches off every few weeks and spread them around in the hen house and yard. It works wonders in keeping parasites away.