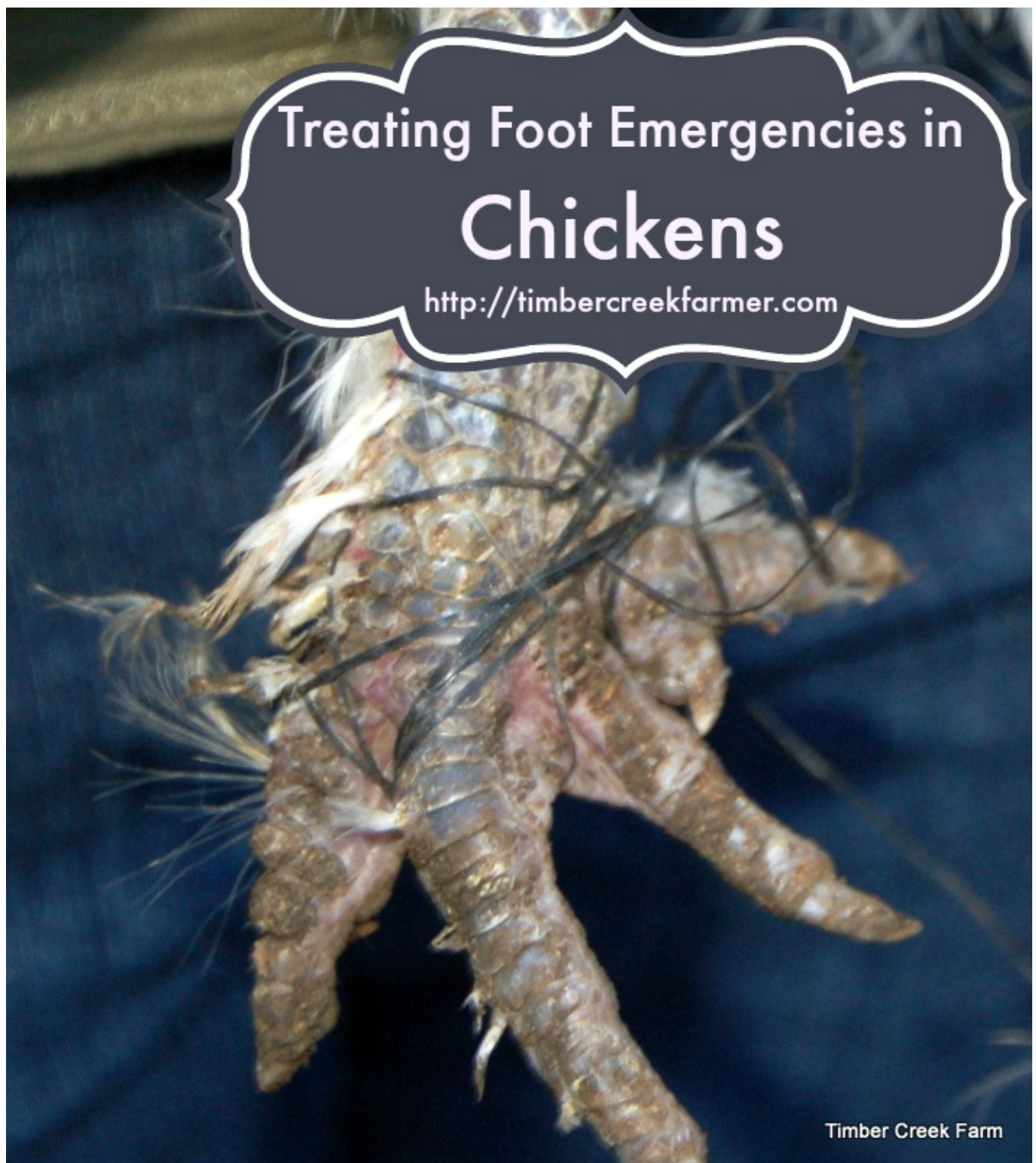


Foot Injuries in Chickens



Lesson 47 in why you need to look at every one of your animals every day. Learning on the homestead never stops. Every day there is a new issue to resolve or roadblock to scale. Knowing all of your animals, and what is normal behavior for each one,

is important and can make a difference in their health or even survival. Properly treating foot injuries in chickens is very important. The chicken may not eat or drink enough if it has a foot injury. This will weaken the bird and could lead to infection and death.

Weird things can happen on a farm, especially when you throw animals into the mix. You may think your fences are pig tight, horse high, and bull strong, you may think that you have built the most secure pen or made the enclosed area extremely safe, but there is always that animal who manages to thwart your best efforts at keeping them safe and secure. Most of the animal keepers I know just seem to have a sense of when things just aren't right. For me, without even consciously thinking about it, I take a head count so to speak. I know my animals habits, behaviors, who hangs out with who, that sort of thing. And here is another example of why this is an important habit to get into.

Finding Foot Injuries in Chickens

One evening, I noticed that Mr.Tweet was not walking normally. I went to pick him up and instead of trying to run away he just waited for me to lift him up. Animals know when they need help. This is what I found.



At first glance I was not sure if it was a wire or thread, but it turned out to be a long shredded piece of plastic from one of the shade covers over the run. It had probably only been on Mr. Tweet's feet for that day. He had been acting normally the night before and had no signs of being picked on by the flock. But, in that short time, he had managed to wrap the thread of plastic very tightly around his feet and individual toes. This was going to take a few minutes to untangle.





Mr. Tweet and I left the coop area to get some help and to find some scissors.

We soon had Mr. Tweet's feet free from the tangled mess. The plastic had tightened so much in some areas that it was hard to get the scissors in to make a cut.

There was some mild swelling on some parts of his feet but nothing serious. I sprayed his feet with [Vetrycin](#) Wound Spray just to be safe. Having a good general purpose antiseptic spray in hand is the first step in treating foot injuries in chickens, or any wound for that matter. I am keeping a closer eye on his feet for now to make sure an abscess is not forming from the tight bands of plastic. I had a feeling he was a little hungry and thirsty since he was not able to run around freely as usual. So I gave him some time with just a few of the hens and some fresh food and water to enjoy without any of the alpha personalities being present.

Soon, he was enjoying the freedom of movement and was acting normally. He seemed ready to head in for the night so we put everyone to bed. In the morning, there were no further issues from the foot entanglement. We are keeping a close eye on his feet to make sure any small cut we may have missed, does not become infected.



Other types of foot ailments include [Bumblefoot](#), broken or injured toes or spurs, or any type of cuts or wounds. You may do your very best to minimize any potential injury but just like with children, animals will find a way to hurt themselves!

Other Foot Injuries in Chickens

Bumblefoot

Bumblefoot is a staph infection of the foot. One of the first signs of this will be the chicken not willing to put it's foot down or put pressure on the foot while walking. It may walk around a lot less or be hopping around on one leg. Mine often become depressed and just sit in one spot in the cases I have had to treat. This is a specialized treatment plan and requires a good antiseptic wash, and antibiotic cream and lots

of gauze and vet wrap to keep it clean. If you are extremely squeamish, this might be one time you need help treating your bird. We have had success following the procedure outlined [here in an earlier post.](#)



(it's hard to get a good picture of a foot injuries in chickens when you are also holding the chicken!)

Broken Toes and Toenail Injuries

Broken toes may need to be splinted. A pipe cleaner, vet wrap and electric tape may be all you need in this case. Watch for pieces of exposed chicken wire where your chicken may get it's toe trapped and need to struggle to be free. Also, if your chickens are very friendly and used to being underfoot while you feed and clean, you could accidentally step on a foot and break a bone.

Cuts and other open wounds can potentially lead to serious infections. Clean the wound with sterile saline, apply a wound dressing and antibiotic ointment. Keep a close eye on it. If it is getting worse instead of better, then a Veterinarian may need to be called for a stronger antibiotic. Keeping the wound clean and dry will go a long way towards not having to call the vet.

Broken toenails and spurs also can lead to limping and further infection. And bleeding can invite pecking at the wound from the flock, since chickens are attracted to the red blood. We use cornstarch to stop bleeding but there are commercial products such as Wonderdust available also. Once the bleeding has stopped, treat the wound as mentioned above. You may need to isolate the injured bird if the injury is more severe and the bleeding recurs.

The ordeal just reinforces a few lessons.

1. Have a first aid kit ready for emergencies
2. Know your animals! Take a good look at everyone every day.
3. Don't panic when an emergency occurs.

For more information on preparing a [first aid kit for your farm check out this post.](#)

A very thorough post on Bumblefoot and a non-surgical treatment can be found on [One Acre Farm.](#)

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