

Use Chick Starter Feed for Growing Healthy Chicks



The top concern for new chick owners is choosing a chick starter feed. With so many choices on the market now, there is a lot of information regarding feeding chicks.

It's natural to want to feed [the very best choice](#) for your fluffy newcomers. Every backyard chicken keeper searches for the healthiest chick food available. Many of us also want to feed an organic, whole grain, non-gmo feed, but wonder if it's available locally and is it necessary?

Chick Starter Feeds are Not Created Equally

In addition to seeking a healthy choice in [chick starter feed](#), you don't want to waste feed or money. Take a look at the difference between a national brand chick starter feed and a premium feed like Scratch and Peck feed.

The first thing you will notice when comparing the two types of feed is the appearance. [Scratch and Peck](#), whole grain, organic, non-gmo starter feed looks delicious! The whole crushed grains are obvious, the ration is clean, and it smells fresh. Stand back because your flock will notice this too. Chicks and chickens will rush to the feeder when you feed a whole grain, raw, unprocessed diet. They know what good is!



The Widely Available Option

In comparison, large brand name chick starter crumbles are tan, like the color of sand. A lot of research and development goes into the making of these recognizable brand name feeds. They are designed to deliver the basic nutrients to your flock. Oftentimes though, a quick comparison of where the nutrients come from will speak volumes. By products? What are those? Is corn the first product listed? Corn is a good nutrient for chickens but is it the best? Often more digestible protein can be found in a mixture of lentils and whole grains, such as oats and barley.

Think of it this way. Kids cereal is fortified with vitamins, has many of the daily nutrient requirements for children, and

tastes great due to sugar being one of the top ingredients. Compare that to a homemade breakfast of whole grain, pancakes and fresh eggs. Which would you rather feed your family every day? It's best to feed your chicks a nutritionally superior chick starter feed, too.



**CHICK STARTER FEED
FOR GROWING
HEALTHY CHICKS**



While we might not want to put the same thought into feeding chicks and chickens, remember this. [We are what our animals eat.](#)

What Does a Premium Chick Food Offer?

Whole grain [organic chicken food brands](#) consist of balanced mixtures of whole grains or slightly cracked grains. The feed offers the protein, carbohydrates and fats along with balanced vitamins and minerals. A high quality food allows the bird to eat all the nutrition they need without wasted by products they don't.

Eating food closer to it's natural state provides nutrition that is easier for bodies to digest. Nutrients are lost during processing and have to be replaced with supplements or synthetic forms of vitamins.



Long Term Benefits From a Premium Feed

Chicks that are fed the best nutrition from day one are going to be healthier and more resilient as they mature.

Here are some other factors that will help you grow healthy chicks from the very start.

- Provide consistent, age appropriate warmth [in the brooder](#). Have the brooder ready before bringing the chicks home.
- Don't over crowd the brooder. Make sure there is plenty of space for the chicks to move around and also stay under the heat source.

- Provide clean water and chick starter feed 24/7
- Keep the brooder clean and dry. Clean up any spills quickly to avoid chicks getting damp and chilled.

[6 Easy Brooder Ideas to Start Chicks](#)

Nutritional Requirements for Chick Starter Feed

It's important to feed a starter feed to your chicks because their nutrient requirements are different than grown chickens. First, a protein percentage 18% or higher is necessary for growth. Also, look at the ingredients that are listed first. In a whole grain, organic ration the first ingredients are often wheat, peas, barley and flaxseed meal. Less expensive rations are often highly concentrated on corn.



A higher calcium percentage is not necessary for growing chicks and can be hazardous to their health. Not only will too much calcium put a strain on the kidneys, it can also cause accelerated bone growth leading to weaker bones. Calcium should be offered to the flock, free choice, and to chicks after 18 weeks of age.

What about Coccidiostats or Medicated Chick Feed

Medicated chick feed is often used when feeding chicks to [prevent illness](#) from coccidia. The medication is a coccidiostat that prevents coccidia from increasing to a level that causes illness. Healthy chicks will develop an immunity to coccidiosis if they are not stressed, fed a good diet. A healthy whole grain diet supports a strong immune system and the birds will overcome challenges to their immune systems.



Occasionally, weather conditions will cause the environment to become a perfect breeding ground for cocci. Supporting your flock's immune system with a good diet and [supplements of herbs](#), apple cider vinegar(a natural probiotic) and garlic (a natural herb with antibiotic properties) can help them fight off the coccidia in the environment.

[What Herbs Keep Chickens Healthy?](#)

Calcium and Grit

Both Calcium and grit should be offered free choice. I do not mix it into our feed because not all chickens require the same

amount of these two supplements. Roosters do not need any added calcium and non-laying hens don't either.



The Cost of Feeding Chicks a Premium Food

Yes you will spend more, pound for pound, feeding an organic chicken feed or chick starter feed. The [benefit will be in the better health](#) you will see in your flock. Three years ago, we switched our flock from a large national brand of regular layer feed to an organic, whole grain food. Here are my observations after three years.

- We can feed less feed because the chickens are getting their nutritional needs met on less feed.
- less waste in the bowls at the end of the day
- My flock is hardier and healthier, even my older laying hens look robust and are producing.
- less digestive tract issues such as vent gleet, sour crop, and messy poop butts.
- Less loss of life due to failure to thrive.



[Fermenting a whole grain feed](#) is easy and a great way to further increase the availability of nutrients and save money. Poultry fed fermented feed will often eat less than when fed non-fermented feed. They fill up faster and receive even more of the nutrients from the grains.

Support the Fast Growth with the Best Nutrition

As chicks grow from [hatchling to hen](#), their bird bodies travel a road of quick transitions. When feeding chicks the best chick starter feed, you are providing the nutrition they need to grow strong and healthy. Join the program A Flock's Journey for support and information as you wind through the journey of raising chickens.

Healthy chicks fed premium, high quality chick feed from day one will have the best nutrition provided to grow through all the phases of development until switched to Scratch and Peck whole grain layer feed at 18 to 20 weeks of age.