What Herbs Keep Chickens Healthy?

Can herbs keep chickens healthy? Does herb use increase the immune response in the flock? The answer to both questions appears to be, yes! Chickens love herbs, so dosing them with these natural compounds is an easy task.

My Top Herb Choices For Chicken Care

If I could only grow a few herbs I would choose Mint, Oregano, Basil, Thyme, Lavender and Sage. As far as chicken keeping and animal care needs, Sage and Oregano are great for intestinal health and to ward off infections from Salmonella and Coccidiosis (cocci). Lavender is an all around great herb for infections, relaxation, odor control, and repels pests. Mint repels insects and rodents, is a stimulant for egg laying, and
the chickens love it. Thyme and Basil are aromatic herbs so they also repel pests.

Thyme and Basil are good for mucus membranes and Thyme is great for keeping the respiratory tract healthy or aid in recovery from a respiratory illness. Knowing that herbs keep chickens healthy is empowering. When I notice a potential health problem, I can immediately start supportive treatment by visiting my herb garden. All in all, most herbs are beneficial and growing them to add to the nest boxes or daily feed is a great idea. Of course humans benefit greatly from herbs too.

I recommend the top six I mentioned because they are great culinary herbs, in addition to being good for your health. Chickens love to eat herbs but we can still use them in our cooking and health care. In the event of illness, making a tea and adding dried thyme to it, can help loosen a cough and make breathing easier. Thyme is great for respiratory health. I grow quite an assortment of all herbs and dry them in the dehydrator. If I am going to make a lotion or salve, I make an herbal infusion in olive oil. Continue reading to find out how to make an easy herbal oil infusion.
Adding Herbal Care Into Everyday

**Sage** - internal parasites, general health

**Oregano** - internal parasites, antiseptic/antibiotic

**Lavender** - calming, repels pests, antiseptic, odor control

**Fennel** - relaxing, laying stimulant

**Comfrey** - promotes healing

**Nasturtium** - antiseptic/antibiotic

**Marjoram** - egg laying stimulant, reproductive health

**Parsley** - laying stimulant, high in nutrients

**Mint** - laying stimulant, odor control, repels flies, as a treat

**Basil** - immune support, repel pests, mucus membrane health

**Thyme** - respiratory health, antiseptic

**Dill** - respiratory health, antioxidant

**Cilantro** - antifungal, antioxidant

**Lemon Grass** - fly repellent (add vanilla)

**Chamomile** - calming, general health

**Lemon Balm** - repels rodents, antibacterial

**Bee Balm** - aids digestion, respiratory health

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**Other Beneficial Herbs**

Yarrow
Chives
Echinacea
Lemon Verbena
Feverfew
Rosemary
Calendula

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**Wild Herbs and Other Plants**

**Wild Violet** - aids circulation

**Garlic** - control of internal parasites

**Dandelion** - immune support and rich colored egg yolk, high in calcium

**Nettle Leaves** - dried - high in minerals, calcium, protein

**Plantain** - wound care, inflammation, anti-diarrhea

**Chick Weed** - natural pain reliever, good source of nutrition, high in vitamins and minerals

**Pumpkins** - seeds and fruit thought contain natural worming properties

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Most of the ways I use herbs takes only a few minutes a day. Snipping an assortment of herbs from the kitchen garden, and putting them in a basket to take to the coop is an easy task. I can even perform this job with a coffee cup in one hand! Years ago, I was only growing mint and basil. I had little idea of all the creative and healthy ways to use herbs. Cooking and baking our food with fresh herbs is one reward from growing herb gardens. The other rewards are seeing how healthy and strong my flock of chickens is, since I began incorporating herbs in their regular treats and diet. I have no trouble stating that herbs keep chickens healthy.
Simple Herbal Oil Infusions

When I need an infusion of one or more of the herbs, I start gathering the herbs by snipping some each day. It’s better to use the herbs dried so you don’t add excess water to the oil infusion. It won’t take long to dry out a cup of herbs on a drying rack or pop them on the dehydrator tray.

Using the charts below, you can customize mixtures of herbal infusions for specific issues. Or simply make a fresh herb blend of some of the herbs and add to the coop or feed pan. If you use a chicken feeder, I would suggest adding the herbs to your hens diet separately. Pieces of herbs left behind in the feeder can get soggy and even mold. Be sure to clean up any fresh herbs that are not eaten by the flock.

Drying herbs from your garden is the best way to have a ready selection for winter herbal flock care. Herbs dry easily in a well ventilated area. Electric dehydrators speed up the process and allow you to keep a constant supply of dried herbs for nest boxes, infusions, salve making and cooking.

Simple Wound Salve for Chickens

What you will need:

1. 2 glass jar – quart size recommended but pint can work too.
2. quarter cup of each of – Oregano and dried dried plantain leaves, and a quarter cup of one of the following dried floral herbs-choose from calendula petals, Nasturtium, chamomile, wild violet, or dandelion petals
3. olive oil, sweet almond oil or grapeseed oil
4. mesh strainer
5. 1/2 ounce beeswax
6. 1/2 ounce coconut oil
7. tea tree essential oil  
8. vitamin e oil

**Prepare the infusion**

Add the dried herbs to the jar. (always use dried herbs and botanicals when making an infusion)

Pour the oil over the herbs to cover. The quick method for creating an infusion is to set the jar into a pan with a few inches of water in the pan. Bring the water to a simmer. Simmer for 10 minutes, turn off the heat and let the jar with the herbs and oil sit in the warm water for a couple hours. A crockpot set on low can also be used to warm the water and infuse the jar of herbs and oil.

Strain the oil, using the fine mesh strainer. Add a coffee filter or piece of cheese cloth if you feel it is needed. Save
the herbs! you can feed these to the flock as a treat. Extra oil not needed for the salve recipe can be stored in the refrigerator for future use. Label the jar.

Healing salve pictured on the right. The left container is a drawing salve using charcoal and infused oil

Making the Healing Salve

Using a double boiler method described above, melt the beeswax and coconut oil together in a glass jar. Add four ounces of infused oil.

When the oils and beeswax are completely melted together, add 15 drops of tea tree oil. Add 3 drops of liquid vitamin E or contents of one vitamin E capsule. Vitamin E acts as a preservative.

Have your salve containers ready. Use clean jelly jars, small tins, or other handy containers with lids. Remove the jar from the warm water bath. Quickly pour the mixture into the
containers. The salve hardens quickly.

Use this salve for cuts, scrapes, pecking wounds, bites, and other open wounds. Store in a cool location as the salve will melt if left in the car or in sunlight.

Always consult a veterinarian if the wound is not improving, worsening, infected and not responding to your treatment.

**Herbal Tip:**

Comfrey is an easy to grow herb that can aid soft tissue healing. For sprains, broken bones, and tendon damage, a compress of comfrey salve can be made using the same method. Apply using a compress to the injured area.

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**Knowing What Herbs Keep Chickens Healthy is Simple**

Learning how herbs keep chickens healthy is pretty simple. Knowing what type of problems cause chicken illness helps you remedy the situation. For example, if you know that weak egg shells can be a result of calcium deficiency or a reproductive tract issue, seeing that Marjoram, Parsley, Mint and Dandelions are high in the properties that improve reproductive health helps you know which herbs to use. Of course, make sure to only use wild plants and beneficial weeds from areas that have not been treated with herbicides or weed killers. Here’s a chart that lists common chicken ailments or problems and the herbs that may help.
Helping Chicken Issues with Herbs

No Eggs or Egg Issues
- Marjoram
- Mint
- Lavender
- Fennel
- Parsley
- Borage

Respiratory
- Thyme
- Dill
- Basil
- Bee Balm

Injuries/Illness
- Comfrey
- Oregano
- Cilantro
- Bee Balm
- Nasturtium
- Calendula

Molting
- Dill
- Fennel
- Parsley
- Mint
- Rosemary

Internal Parasites
- Garlic
- Pumpkin and seeds

External pests
- Basil
- Catnip
- Marigold

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out Information

The four page graphic PDF is my way of organizing the herbal information. You are invited to print out the PDF, for your own personal use.

To download and begin referring to How to Keep Chickens Healthy,
Herbs and Chickens

Adding herb gardening to your chicken care routines will result in healthier, happier chickens. Using herbal care along with conventional veterinary medicine results in strong immune systems, healthy digestive tracts, and a long egg laying life for your hens. Herbs boost immunity, increase resistance to pathogens, and improve overall health and appearance.

Herbs are generally easy to grow, harvest and store. With even a small garden or container, you can grow herbs to use in your kitchen and have on hand for health problems in the flock.

Where to Use Herbs

- Nesting Boxes
- Make Healing Balms
- Use in Dust Bath Area
- Add to Feed
- Give as a Treat
- Coop Cleaner Spray

USE FOR STRESS!

Chickens are very sensitive to stressful situations. Attacks by predators, high heat, lack of nutrients, illness, new flock members can all cause stress and lead to illness. Herbs help combat stress and boost immune systems.

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