

### Overview

Coccidia is a tiny parasite that infects various parts of the intestine. It breeds very quickly and can cause sudden and severe illness within just a few days. Severity can range from mild diarrhoea and wasting, all the way to bloody, watery diarrhoea and sudden death. How hard it hits depends on the strain of coccidia, the age of the bird, the immune system and how stressed the bird is with other issues.

### Developing immunity

When the birds are young they will pick up the coccidia eggs (oocysts) from the ground and carry small numbers. Young chicks are generally fed a crumble called "Chick Starter" that has a drug in it to slow down the growth of coccidia, thereby allowing them to develop immunity. Immunity will decrease the risk of being affected again but does not eliminate risk altogether.

It is important that the bird is allowed to pick up some coccidia, because the body will then mount a good immune response as it gets older, protecting the bird.

### Our high-risk animals are:

1. **Young chicks** not being fed Chick Starter
2. **Chicks that are raised in a sterile environment** then moved off the Chick Starter diet and put outside at the same time
3. **Battery hens coming from cages.** These birds have lived in stacked, wire cages, and never had the opportunity to pick up coccidia or mount an immune response. Their immune system is essentially as naive as a chicks
4. **Stressed or immunocompromised** birds of any age.

### Management/ Prevention/ Treatment

Remember, it is important that the bird is allowed to pick up some coccidia, because the body will then develop immunity as it gets older, protecting the bird.

Feed Chick Starter, (containing a coccidiostat), to young chicks until they move on to a grower pellet. It is crucial that they are fed the Chick Starter, while



## A GUIDE TO Coccidia in Poultry

they are outside in the environment. i.e. there should be a cross over between putting them outside and changing the diet.



NRM Chick Starter

### Monitor droppings and behaviour

especially during environmental and diet changes, or at the turn of the season, when environmental and nutritional stress is high.

### Treatment

If your chicks have an active infection, you will need to treat with Baycox Avian, which will kill the coccidia.

**Baycox is not recommended for laying hens** as residues can remain in eggs for a long time. If you are concerned that your hen has an active coccidia infection, call your local vet for advice. If they are acting sick, then often a vet visit is crucial in saving them, as they may need anti-inflammatories and antibiotics to cover secondary infections, fluids and correction of electrolytes.



Baycox Avian

**Dosage:** The recommended dose rate is 7mg per kilogram bodyweight of the avian Baycox (Toltrazuril 25mg/ml). This works out as 0.28ml per 1kg bodyweight once daily for 2 days.

**Administration:** Baycox Avian is mixed in the drinking water before use. Only make up sufficient drinking water for requirements. For treatment, combine 1ml of Baycox Avian per 1 litre of drinking water for continuous medication over 48 hours OR combine 3ml of Baycox Avian per 1 litre of drinking water given for 8 hours per day, on 2 consecutive days.

You can supplement Vitamin A and K at home, to aid in recovery. Offer foods such as rockmelon, carrots, dark greens (e.g. kale, dandelion greens, collard, spinach), and egg yolks.

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