



GOSLING CARE GUIDE

The Brooder

Your brooder is the place your goslings will call home for the first weeks of their life and it is important that it is set up properly for them. Goslings grow quickly - make sure your brooder provides enough space or they will quickly outgrow it. You will want to allow at least 1.5 square feet per gosling in your brooder.

Use an appropriate bedding in your brooder. Paper towels are great for the first few days while they are learning what to eat and what not to eat. After the first few days, you can switch to something like pine shavings. Make sure to replace soiled and damp bedding regularly. **NEVER** brood on newspaper as the slippery surface does not give them any grip and can lead to them developing splayed legs.

They will also need a source of heat. A heat lamp is most commonly used to provide this. Keep the temperature under the lamp at 85 to 90 degrees for the first week and lower it five degrees after that. Their behavior will tell you if they are warm enough. If they are huddled under the lamp they need it to be warmer. If they are as far away from the lamp and each other as possible and panting, they are too hot and the temperature needs to be lowered.

Feed

Goslings will require feed different than what poultry eat while they are young. A waterfowl starter is recommended for the first 3 weeks, then a waterfowl grower. Never feed medicated feed! It is a good idea to add supplemental niacin if your feed does not contain enough, which most feeds don't. You may do this by either adding Brewer's Yeast to the feed, liquid B to water or adding a supplement such as Poultry Nutri Drench to their water. If they do not get enough niacin, they will develop leg problems such as bowleggedness.

Grass is also greatly beneficial to goslings. They are vegetarians! Just like adults they are made to eat grass. If temperatures allow it would be excellent to allow them access to grass to graze for a little while each day. If it is too cold to allow them outside, giving them fresh greens in their brooder will suffice.

Water

Goslings will need access to water at all times. Being waterfowl, they will be messy with it. The best solution to this is to make sure you have a very thick layer of bedding in the brooder to absorb what they splash out and use a waterer that cuts down on the mess. Traditional chick waterers will allow them to splash all the water out and make a giant, stinking mess. A simple solution is to use an old one gallon milk jug. Cut a hole just big enough for the goslings to reach their heads in to drink and cover the edges with duct tape to smooth out any sharp edges. Fill the water level to a little below the hole. This will greatly reduce the amount of water they can splash out into the brooder. Check online for examples

Geese need to be able to fully submerge their nares (nostrils) in water to clear them, so make sure your waterer is deep enough to allow this.

Swimming

Nothing is cuter than a gosling taking its first swim, but some precautions do need to be taken. They can have their first swim within a week of hatching as long as they are being brooded indoors where temperatures are regulated. For the first week, just let them have access to a shallow pan with warm (not hot!) water just deep enough to reach the top of their legs. You can let them play for about 5 to 10 minutes to start with. **Don't leave them unattended at this time.** After their swim, pat them dry. A mother goose would have applied her oil to her babies to waterproof them, but incubated babies do not have this advantage and they could become chilled, so drying them is a good practice. After patting them off, put them back into the brooder to finish drying. At 3 to 4 weeks old you can introduce them to a small pool that is easy for them to get into and out of. It is very important that they be able to get in and out of it easily or they could become exhausted when unable to get out and drown, or get chilled and die.