

10 Tips for New Poultry Owners: Promoting Healthy Flocks and Families



Raising domestic poultry can be a fun and rewarding experience. There are several steps you can take to establish and maintain the health of your flock, family, and environment.

- 1 Always wash your hands** after working with poultry, eggs, bedding, and manure. Avoid touching your face before you've had a chance to wash your hands. Young children, pregnant and older adults, and individuals with compromised immune systems should be extra careful to avoid the risk of contracting illness from domestic birds.
- 2 Dedicate one pair of boots or shoes per person for use when caring for poultry.** Avoid taking these shoes off property or using them for other purposes. Change and wash any clothes that have been soiled by manure, dirty water, or broken eggs.
- 3** Once your birds are old enough, **care for them outside in a secure, properly ventilated structure such as a chicken coop.** Keeping adult birds inside can cause a risk to your health.
- 4** **Develop a plan for maintaining the health of your flock,** including proper nutrition and day-to-day care. Learn more about raising healthy birds by visiting: s.uconn.edu/poultry-questions
- 5** **Store feed in a secure location to avoid attracting rodents and other pests.** If you do notice a rodent problem, hire a professional or safely implement pest-control practices.
- 6** **Prioritize hygiene practices by cleaning items used by your backyard flock frequently.** Manage manure properly to keep your birds healthy and to limit run-off. Biosecurity practices can help reduce the spread of disease within and between groups of birds and people. Learn more at: doi.org/10.61899/ucext.v2.103.2025
- 7** **Limit interaction between your birds and wildlife,** including wild geese and ducks, who can serve as reservoirs for diseases that can harm poultry and humans. If possible, minimize interactions between domestic pets and your birds, as well.
- 8** **Know the signs of illness for common poultry diseases.** Avoid consuming eggs and meat from sick birds and work with a veterinarian to provide care. If you notice indications of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI)/bird flu in your flock, such as flu-like signs or sudden death, report your observations to the CT State Veterinarian (ctstate.vet@ct.gov).
- 9** **Prepare eggs and meat properly.** Utilize food safety practices by washing hands after handling raw food and be sure to thoroughly cook eggs and meat to the proper temperatures. Wash and disinfect surfaces that have come in contact with raw meat and eggs.
- 10** **Become connected** with UConn Extension, CT Department of Agriculture, and other industry organizations for access to educational resources and health updates. Learn more at: cahnr.uconn.edu/extension/