




## Started Pullets Recommended Care Guide

Thank you for purchasing started pullets from My Pet Chicken! We hope you find this guide helpful. If you have any questions or concerns about your new pullets, please visit our website or reach out to our customer service team of experienced chicken keepers:

 [mypetchicken.com](https://mypetchicken.com)

 888-460-1529

 [flockcare@mypetchicken.com](mailto:flockcare@mypetchicken.com)

### Before They Arrive:

Here's how to prepare for your new pullets prior to their arrival:

**Coops** Started pullets are coop-ready, so you will need an appropriately-sized coop and run with several inches of pine shavings or other safe bedding material on the floor of the coop. Please do not use cedar shavings! Cedar is irritating to chicken eyes and lungs. If there were birds in the coop or run prior to the arrival of your pullets, make sure to thoroughly clean and sanitize all areas of the coop/run and let them dry completely before your new pullets arrive.

**More on Coops:** [www.mypetchicken.com/pages/chicken-care-guide#chapter-5-chicken-care-guide](https://www.mypetchicken.com/pages/chicken-care-guide#chapter-5-chicken-care-guide)

**Shop Coops:** [www.mypetchicken.com/collections/chicken-coops](https://www.mypetchicken.com/collections/chicken-coops)

**Feed** Stock your chicken feed. We recommend you use “Starter,” “Grower,” or “Developer” mash or crumbles. Please do not use “scratch” or cracked corn; they do not have enough protein for growing birds. Try not to offer too many “treats,” either. Snacks and treats are great for entertainment in moderation, but the majority of their nutritional diet should come from a well-balanced, “complete” chicken feed.

**More on Feeding Your Chickens:** [www.mypetchicken.com/blogs/faqs/tagged/feeding](https://www.mypetchicken.com/blogs/faqs/tagged/feeding)

**Shop Feeds:** [www.mypetchicken.com/collections/feed](https://www.mypetchicken.com/collections/feed)

**Waterers** Chickens are gravity drinkers, which means they cannot “suck” water up. Instead, they scoop it up and tilt their heads back to swallow. Traditional poultry waterers or nipple-type waterers are recommended.

**Shop Waterers:** [www.mypetchicken.com/collections/waterers](https://www.mypetchicken.com/collections/waterers)

**Poultry Grit** Grit is essential for proper digestion, and we recommend the use of crushed granite. Once the pullets have established their food source, you can offer grit free-choice as they'll only take as much as they need.

**More on Grit:** [www.mypetchicken.com/blogs/faqs/why-is-it-necessary-that-my-chickens-have-grit](https://www.mypetchicken.com/blogs/faqs/why-is-it-necessary-that-my-chickens-have-grit)

**Shop Grit:** [www.mypetchicken.com/products/fine-grit-for-chicks-flocks-8lb](https://www.mypetchicken.com/products/fine-grit-for-chicks-flocks-8lb)

**Dust Bath Areas** Chickens bathe in dust to remove old preen oil from their feathers and to keep themselves free of mites, lice and ticks. They'll usually pick a dry, rootless area of the yard in which to loosen the soil and immerse themselves. If you don't plan to give your birds access to the outdoors, or if their run has a wire floor, you'll want to add an artificial dust bath area and include a mix of dirt, fireplace ash, and other helpful additives like Diatomaceous Earth

**More on Dust Baths:** [www.mypetchicken.com/blogs/faqs/what-is-a-dust-bath-and-do-my-chickens-need-one](https://www.mypetchicken.com/blogs/faqs/what-is-a-dust-bath-and-do-my-chickens-need-one)



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### As Soon As They Arrive:

**On the day your new girls are due to arrive, make sure to clear your schedule so you can monitor and care for them during their adjustment.**

**Opening the Box** Be sure to open your box inside or within a fully enclosed area to help keep your pullets from getting away from you. Keep in mind that your new pullets have just endured a bewildering trip. They may be spooked - and they'll definitely be hungry and thirsty. Have your coop ready, complete with feed and fresh water, and immediately place them inside it. (There's more on feed, water, and the ideal coop setup, below).

**Sugar Water, Just In Case** Have a solution of sugar water ready to feed your birds (one tablespoon of sugar in one cup of warm water), but only offer it if you have a bird who seems lethargic. It will help perk her up! Offer the water solution every 10/15 minutes or so, alongside feed, and keep your eye on all of your birds to make sure they are adapting well to their new home.

**Make Sure They're Drinking** Be sure that each of your new pullets has found their water source and is able to use it before you leaving them to themselves. If using a nipple waterer, training them to use it will only take a few minutes. If you are using a traditional waterer, please be sure to clean it out frequently. Chickens don't like to drink dirty, poopy water any more than we do!

**Give Them Time to Recover** We recommend you let your started pullets rest quietly in their coop for the first two days. Let them acclimate to their new surroundings without visitors, either furred or feathered! Don't let them out into their run or into the yard during this time, in order to teach them that their new coop is "home".

Once they have imprinted on their coop as "home," they will retire on their own at dusk. Thus the saying: "Chickens always return home to roost". Make sure you don't keep them shut inside a hot coop in the heat of summer when they may get overheated, so don't make the transfer during extreme weather, and remember that a shut building can get very hot during the day.

After those first two days, you may introduce them into their run, but we recommend you don't free-range them for at least a week. Your pullets will still be quite small, and as such they'll be considered a wonderful snack by a wide variety of predators (including the family dog!)

**More on Protecting Your Flock:** [www.mypetchicken.com/blogs/faqs/tagged/predators](http://www.mypetchicken.com/blogs/faqs/tagged/predators)

**Sleeping on the Roost** After about a week, your new pullets should be sleeping on their roosting pole at night. If they haven't begun, gently place them on the roost in the evening, once they've already fallen asleep. You don't want one left behind on the floor - she'll be poo-bombed overnight!

**Introducing Your Pullets to the Established Flock** If you have an established flock, it would be a huge mistake to turn all the birds out together - warfare will ensue. Our website discusses integration strategies at length:

**Introduction Tips:** [www.mypetchicken.com/blogs/faqs/how-do-i-introduce-new-chickens-into-my-old-flock](http://www.mypetchicken.com/blogs/faqs/how-do-i-introduce-new-chickens-into-my-old-flock)

**Don't forget to check out our FREE Chicken Care Guide:**  
<https://www.mypetchicken.com/pages/chicken-care-guide>



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### Other Important Considerations:

**Assessing Your Flock for Illness** Over time, you'll become familiar with your birds and their normal behaviors. Chickens are social creatures. A chicken who is standing alone and puffed up, perhaps moving slowly instead of energetically scratching and exploring may not be well. Getting to know your chickens is important, because sick or injured chickens are genetically hardwired to HIDE their problem. Their instinct tells them that being perceived as weak could get them munched on.

If you are worried about any of your flock's behaviors, please check out the "Chicken Help" area of our website, where there are over 400 topics covered in a question-and-answer format:

**Chicken Care Frequently Asked Questions:** [www.mypetchicken.com/blogs/faqs](http://www.mypetchicken.com/blogs/faqs)

**Calcium** You won't need any calcium supplements when your pullets first arrive, in fact, you may not need it at all! Most "complete" layer feeds have adequate calcium. However, some flock owners like to offer a free-choice container of crushed oyster shell for birds once they have started laying. (Laying hens with insufficient calcium in their diet will use calcium from their own bones and can suffer from bone fractures as a result).

**More on Calcium:** [www.mypetchicken.com/blogs/faqs/do-i-need-to-give-my-hens-oyster-shell-or-supplemental-calcium](http://www.mypetchicken.com/blogs/faqs/do-i-need-to-give-my-hens-oyster-shell-or-supplemental-calcium)

**Shop Oyster Shell:** [www.mypetchicken.com/products/crushed-oyster-shells-5lb-bag](http://www.mypetchicken.com/products/crushed-oyster-shells-5lb-bag)

**Beware of Clumpy or Moldy Feed** Clumpy feed may be moldy feed, and mold is potentially deadly for your birds. If you suspect mold, inspect your feed bags for signs that they've been damp. We recommend storing feed in a watertight container with a tamper-proof lid. If you find clumps or it smells bad, throw it out and buy your flock fresh feed.

**Mold Dangers:** [www.mypetchicken.com/blogs/faqs/can-i-give-my-chickens-moldy-bread-moldy-leftovers-or-moldy-feed](http://www.mypetchicken.com/blogs/faqs/can-i-give-my-chickens-moldy-bread-moldy-leftovers-or-moldy-feed)

**Heat Lamps In Your Coop** Your pullets were raised in Ohio, and by the time they have reached six weeks of age, they have been either minimally heated (only when nighttime temps drop below freezing), or not heated at all. Depending on your local temperatures, your pullets may not require any additional heat. If the temperatures in your area are at or below freezing when your pullets arrive, we recommend offering a supplemental heat source while they acclimate to the cold.

Traditional infrared heat bulbs are not an ideal choice for heating your coop. Each year we receive reports of fires resulting from heat bulbs, where flocks are horribly lost and family homes are endangered or even destroyed.

**More on Heating:** [www.mypetchicken.com/blogs/faqs/should-i-heat-my-chicken-coop-in-the-winter](http://www.mypetchicken.com/blogs/faqs/should-i-heat-my-chicken-coop-in-the-winter)

**Shop Safe Heater Options:** [www.mypetchicken.com/collections/safe-heater-options](http://www.mypetchicken.com/collections/safe-heater-options)

**Biosecurity** Your pullets have been vaccinated against Marek's disease and MG (Mycoplasma gallisepticum). If you feel you are in a high risk area for other diseases, please contact an aviary specialist to help decide which additional vaccinations or medications may be appropriate for your birds. If there were wild birds in your coop or run prior to the arrival of your pullets, take extra care to sanitize and thoroughly dry all areas before your birds arrive, as wild birds are the main disease vector for your chickens. Finally, be careful to change shoes and/or clothing after visiting a poultry yard or show. You don't want to bring home pathogens to your flock. Learn more about biosecurity in our F.A.Q.s:

[www.mypetchicken.com/blogs/faqs/what-is-the-biosecurity-for-birds-campaign-and-how-can-i-find-more-information-about-it](http://www.mypetchicken.com/blogs/faqs/what-is-the-biosecurity-for-birds-campaign-and-how-can-i-find-more-information-about-it)