

# Healthy Guts... Healthy Birds...



Healthy  
Families!

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Raising backyard chickens or other poultry can be a rewarding family experience. But it requires daily attention to keep your chickens healthy and to protect your family. Starting from the day you bring home your new chicks through the rest of their life, your birds are under constant exposure to harmful pathogens and internal parasites that can wreak havoc with their digestive system.

The digestive system is the first layer of defense against intestinal disease. Ensuring your bird's digestive system is in tip-top shape and able to fight off disease can help reduce medication costs, improve survivability, increase growth rates, and boost egg production. In addition, a healthy digestive system is also important for an active immune system.

Spring is on the way and chicks will be arriving soon. That means it is time to start thinking about how to keep your new arrivals and your current flock healthy and happy. Since prevention is the best approach to intestinal health, it is important to not only know what can cause problems in your backyard flock, but to keep up on the latest proactive thinking to help your birds battle harmful pathogens and internal parasites.

## What Pathogens?

Numerous organisms can cause intestinal disease, including salmonella, E. coli and clostridium. In fact, salmonella can also impact you and your children's health by causing illness in humans too. While salmonella is causing disease in your birds, they are also shedding the organism into the environment where other birds and people, can become infected.

According to the CDC, in 2012, there were more than 400 cases of salmonella in humans (more than 37% were children) that were attributed to backyard poultry raising. Focusing on improving digestive health is a key step to keeping your backyard flock and your family healthy.

One of the best ways to help your flock stay healthy is to establish key management steps to prevent and control pathogens from causing harm in the first place.

First let's focus on potential external sources of infection. Disease can be transferred between birds with the introduction of new chicks or new adult birds into the flock. It is recommended to quarantine new arrivals from the rest of the flock for four to six weeks. This gives you time to determine if they get sick and prevent them from infecting your flock.

Your backyard flock can also be exposed to pathogens via their water. While providing fresh, clean water may seem like enough, taking the extra step

of sanitizing the water and waterers can eliminate unseen pathogens that could cause harm. Ask your local feed dealer or online supplier for the newly introduced Oxy E-100 to begin sanitizing your poultry's water in one easy step.

After sanitizing the water, look for all-natural supplements that, when added to water, provide a comprehensive approach to improving intestinal health. Research has shown that adding targeted proteins (to address salmonella, E. coli and clostridium), probiotics, prebiotics, enzymes and yucca to your flocks' water every day can dramatically improve intestinal health and improve your birds' ability to fight off harmful disease. Newly launched HealthyFlock™ Tabs includes all the above ingredients and with just one tablet in each gallon, can help target pathogens and aid in improving intestinal health.

## What Internal Parasites?

Internal parasites, better known as worms, can impact your birds' health and performance while leading to an unsightly discovery in the poultry yard or coop. Roundworms, tapeworms, thread worms, hairworms and cecal worms are the most common in backyard flocks. Any time your birds are out on dirt (after the last frost and until four weeks after the first hard freeze), they are at risk for picking up a worm infestation.

This means it is critical to establish a routine program to address worms and reduce the impact worm infestations can have on your backyard poultry flock.

Currently there are no commercial dewormers that are approved for water administration in laying hens. Fortunately there is now an all-natural alternative. Zyfund™ A, is a safe, non-synthetic water supplement that has been proven in large organic and natural layer flocks to offset worm related issues without the need to discard the eggs.

Remember, a healthy digestive tract leads to healthier, happier backyard flocks. Focusing on these areas can contribute greatly to your desire to produce healthy, wholesome food for your family and make poultry keeping a rewarding experience for all.

*For more information on innovative Backyard Chicken™ products and backyard chicken raising tips, go to [www.dbcagproducts.com](http://www.dbcagproducts.com). (Updated 5/2014)*