



## FACT SHEET - CHICKENS

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Chickens are delightful creatures. The happiest hens are free ranging with a chicken house or shed where they can be shut in at night away from predators such as foxes, but be prepared for your free ranging chickens to scratch up your garden in their quest for tasty grubs and worms. There are many different breeds and sizes and you don't need a cockerel as they can produce eggs quite happily without one. Remember that a lot of neighbourhoods do not like to be woken early in the morning by a crowing cockerel!



### Chickens Need

- Handling from a young age
- Dry warm accommodation with plenty of air space above the perches
- Sufficient number of perches for the number of chickens
- Nesting boxes in which to lay their eggs
- To free-range or have access to a large netted outdoor area
- To be fed a well balanced diet as recommended by your local feed merchant, usually consisting of mixed corn and layers mash or pellets for adult laying hens
- Grit such as ground oyster shell and flint to help digest food and provide calcium for egg producing
- Access to fresh water at all times

### Chickens Health

- Fleas are a continual problem on cats so a regular flea control is necessary
- Any signs of poor health such as respiratory problems, sneezing, diarrhoea etc should be referred to your veterinary surgeon
- Crop binding can occur by careless feeding and the absence of grit as well as eating long grass or hay. It can be treated at home but best to consult a vet first
- Egg binding is usually caused by a broken egg in the oviduct when the hen is seen constantly straining. Immediate treatment is necessary so consult your vet for advice
- Mites, lice and worms can be treated with the appropriate treatments - ask your vet for the best product

### Chickens Facts

- During a moult there reduced egg production. Some chickens will lose nearly all their feathers, some will only have a partial loss
- Hybrid egg-layers produce 4 - 5 eggs each per week on average

This is intended as a quick guide only. Further information should be obtained before embarking on keeping this type of pet.