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## **Coturnix Quail Chick Care Sheet**

Congratulations on your new quail chicks! Here are some very important tips:

-The most important factors for keeping your chicks alive and healthy are nutrition, warmth and fresh water. Coturnix quail grow very quickly and will be fully mature in only six weeks. This means they need the best quality care when young or things can go wrong quickly.

-Coturnix quail should be fed unmedicated 26% protein gamebird crumbles or turkey starter. Do not feed them regular chicken starter or seeds, they will become stunted and may not survive. They can eat the gamebird starter all their lives. Give them all they can eat. Baby chicks can eat the crumbles right out of the bag, it's not necessary to pulverize them.

-Chicks need to be kept in a brooder with solid sides to avoid drafts. This can be an aquarium, a cardboard box or a Rubbermaid bin. It should be covered with wire or mesh so that the chicks cannot fly out and good ventilation is maintained. Make sure they are protected from the family cat, dog or small child as they are very fragile when tiny. They begin flying at around one week old.

-They need to be kept under a heat lamp that is on all the time for the first three weeks or so. The temperature near the chicks should be around 38 degrees Celcius if they are under a week old. After the first week the temperature can be gradually reduced by a degree a day until they are fully-feathered at about four weeks old. At this point they can be acclimated to the outdoors and can be housed outside if protected from rain, strong winds and predators.

-Equally important is that the chicks have a cooler area in the brooder to get away from the heat if they need to. A good idea is to place the water container away from the heat so they must leave to drink.

-Chicks will tell you whether they are too hot or too cold. If they are cold, they will peep loudly in distress and pile on top of each other under the heat source. If they are too hot they will also cry out and try to get as far away from the heat as possible. You want them to be chirping quietly and spread out nicely under the heat.

-Water bottles or chicken nipple waterers work best and stay cleaner than bowls. Our chicks are raised on chicken nipple waterers so they will already know how to use them once you get them home. They also figure out water bottles very quickly, especially if you have a good number of chicks. If you must use a dish for water for very young chicks, be sure to add clean pebbles or marbles so the chicks cannot drown. Water in a dish needs to be changed many times a day as chicks will track food and feces through it constantly.

-Use paper towels on the floor of your brooder. Slick coverings like newspaper do not provide enough grip and may cause splayed legs. Sprinkle food on the ground at first so they can figure out where the feeders are.

-At six weeks old, you'll know you have a male if you begin to hear him crow. It is a sound much like a wild bird would make, like a loud trill. Many people find it pleasant.

-You'll know you have a female if you begin to get small speckled eggs. These are considered a delicacy and you will get almost one a day per hen. That's almost 8% of her overall body weight per day!

-If you want to keep your quail happy and healthy, provide them with a dust bath. This can be filled with anything from dirt, diatomaceous earth (to prevent parasites), sand, oyster shell, crushed eggshells or compost. They will most likely sleep in the bathing dish and lay all their eggs in there as well. You can provide this as soon as you see feathers developing.

**Enjoy your new Coturnix quail!**