

Handling and Incubation of Chicken Eggs

These instructions are intended to serve as basic guidelines, please follow the manufacturer's incubator instructions carefully to achieve the optimum results.

Fertility- What to Expect:

- Fertile chick eggs are shipped direct from the hatchery to ensure optimum viability.

Prior to Incubation:

- Fertile eggs may be stored at 60-degrees. Storage for longer than one week usually results in lower percentage of fertility.
- Fertile eggs should not be washed; the shell is porous and may permit the passage of contaminants.
- Handle the eggs slowly and gently. Sharp movements may damage the egg internally although the shell remains intact.

The Incubator:

- The incubator should be positioned in a spot where the temperature is constant. Sunlight, radiators, and drafts near windows should be avoided.
- Proper incubation temperature should be accurately established by a 12-24-hour trial run before the eggs are placed in the incubator. Temperature reading should be taken at egg level.

Incubation:

- Bring eggs to room temperature before placing in the warm incubator.
- Eggs should be positioned on their sides with the smaller end pointing slightly downward. Do not crowd the eggs.
- Eggs must be turned during incubation to prevent adhesion of the membrane. (A small pencil mark on each egg is helpful.) On day two, eggs should be turned once. On day 3-18 the eggs should be turned twice a day. Extreme care must be exercised when turning the eggs. Sharp movements may rupture blood vessels in the developing embryo.
- Best results are obtained if the incubator is not opened after the eggs are turned on day 18 until the hatch is complete on day 21.
- Eggs may be candled to determine the ontogenic age on day 3 or 4.
- If the eggs must be removed from the incubator at any time, be sure to hold the eggs in the same position as they were resting in the incubator. This procedure will keep the blastoderm at the top and the heavier yolk underneath.

Hatching:

- When the chicks start hatching on day 21, let them hatch on their own. Do not attempt to help.
- Chicks can take up to 24-hours to hatch completely.
- Let the chicks dry in the incubator, which should be set at 95-degrees. Once they have dried completely they can be moved to the brooder.
- If there are still eggs that haven't hatched at day 21, don't worry- give the eggs until day 23. Candle any unhatched eggs to see if they are still viable before discarding them.

Hoover's Hatchery® guarantees safe delivery of the eggs, but due to factors outside of our control does not guarantee hatch rates.