



# COCCIDIOSIS: POULTRY

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## Pathology description

### Symptoms

Clinical signs of coccidiosis can range from none to bloody droppings, watery diarrhea (flushing), weight loss, paleness, sick bird appearance (ruffled feathers, huddling, depression). Affected birds do not eat and will sometimes march from feed pan to feed pan, vocalizing a high pitched cry. Mortality can range from mild to severe, depending on the species of coccidia involved. All ages of poultry are susceptible to infection, but the disease usually resolves itself around 6 – 8 weeks of age. The birds are most sensitive between 3 – 5 weeks of age, when the coccidia are the most numerous in feces or litter. Many times the disease is subclinical and the flock may only show poor weight gains or feed conversions at the end of grow-out.

### Costs of the disease

- Increased feed cost
- Mortality
- Less weight gain

### Vectors

- **Environment**

Initial exposure takes place when birds are placed on a site that has been contaminated previously and they ingest oocysts. Spread of coccidiosis between sites by man, animals, or wild birds

- **Material**

Contaminated equipment

- **Animal**

The main source of infection is the birds themselves, which contaminate their own environments.

- **Feed and drinking water:**

Coccidiosis is spread between birds by the consumption of food or drinking water contaminated by faeces containing the infective stage of the coccidia which are known as oocysts.

- **Working method**

Insufficient cleaning

→ MAIN VECTOR: contaminated birds

### Preventive action

Coccidiosis is prevented through good sanitation and litter management.

- Clean the barn properly after every hatch, remove all the faeces
- Avoid wet litter conditions, especially under drinkers: place water vessels on wire frames to eliminate a concentration of wet droppings, in which the chicks can walk to pick up or spread the disease.
- Keep chicks, feed and water away from droppings.
- Keep litter dry and stirred frequently. Remove wet spots and replace with dry litter.
- Avoid overcrowding.

## Controlling action

A wide variety of drugs is available for the treatment of coccidiosis, frequent use of drugs has led to widespread drug resistance.

## Advised Protocols

For every possible vector, a hygiene protocol must be implemented. See these Specific Purpose Protocol:



PERSONAL  
HYGIENE



TRANSPORT



HOUSING  
HYGIENE