

PHYSICAL EXAM FOR CHICKENS

Body Part	Healthy / normal	Sick / infested / injured symptoms
Eyes	clear, clean, wide open, alert	dull, discharge, closed, swelling, wound, frothy, inflamed
Face / comb / wattle	clean, soft, blemish free, healthy deep red indicating good blood supply, (some faces are not red)	scaly, hard, dark, bluish or pale, scabs, wounds, bugs, swelling, shrunken, black or white bumps
Posture	head erect, good balance, stand or perch on both feet on extended legs, good grip on perch, facing activity	head tucked into neck or drooping, fluffed feathers, lying on keel, stand on one foot, reclusive, depressed, weak, uncoordinated, wing droop
Odor	none or slightly fermented hay	strong, foul, sour or cheesy odor
Beak / nostrils	clean, uniform, shiny and solid	wet with mucus, crusted with food or dirt debris, cracked or chipped
Legs / feet	clean, shiny, uniform scales and nails, foot bottom soft and blemish free, legs and toes straight and functional	thick and crusty scales, broken toes, sores, unable to grip, swollen or hot joints
Feathers	clean, bright, shiny, smooth or fluffy	dull, dirty, broken or missing feathers, ragged, holes, blanched, clumps of dirt or parasite eggs, moving parasites
Wings	held close to body, symmetrical, smooth movement in joints when flexed, flight feathers intact	wings droop or held out from body, asymmetrical
Skin	clean, soft, pale pink and translucent (some breeds have bare red patches at shoulders and keel)	dirty, sores, cysts, bruising, gangrene, look for moving parasites
Droppings	70% odorless green/ white firm, 30% stinky brown pasty (cecal), watery if stressed	poorly formed, consistently pasty or watery, strong smelling, black, blood, foamy
Keel (sternum)	Straight, good muscle on either side (rounded shape to chest), lump free	crooked or protruding keel with little or no muscle, sharp "V" shape to chest, masses
Crop (on bird's right side of lower neck)	full, contents of consumed food easily palpated	consistently empty, hard or mushy feel, grossly enlarged
Vent	petite, clean, moist, soft, pliant	enlarged, soiled, hard, cracked, sore, lumps of feces or parasite eggs on feathers, moving parasites
Respiration (stethoscope at dorsal midline of back at scapula level)	12-37 per min., inspiration louder and shorter than expiration, minimal chest movement, closed beak	cracks, pops, wheezing, whistling, coughing, sneezing, louder expiration, open beak breathing, head shaking
Heart rate	220-360 per min.	