

Common Signs of Illness in Poultry

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Signs of Respiratory Infection

A disease-causing organism can affect more than one system, leading to a variety of different clinical signs. There is considerable overlap in the common signs of respiratory diseases, making diagnosis difficult without a necropsy.

Common signs of respiratory infection include the following:

- Coughing
- Sneezing
- Rales (abnormal breathing sounds)
- Gasping
- Shaking head
- Discharge from the eyes
- Conjunctivitis (inflammation of the conjunctiva of the eye)
- Discharge from the nose
- Swelling of the face and/or wattles
- Bluish-purple discoloration of the face
- Retarded growth
- Inactivity
- Dirty wings (birds tend to wipe their nostrils on their wings)

Less common signs of respiratory infection include the following:

- Twisting of the head and neck (torticollis)
- Paralysis
- Diarrhea, which might be green and watery
- Swollen joints
- Lameness
- Red or white spots on the legs and comb
- Warts or scabs

Signs of Nonrespiratory Infection

Common signs of nonrespiratory infection include the following:

- Labored breathing
- Reduced water consumption
- Dehydration
- Reduced feed consumption
- Weight loss or stunted growth
- Emaciation
- Bluish-purple discoloration of the face

- Pale comb
- Small comb
- Abscessed wattles
- Discharge from the mouth
- Blindness
- Enlarged abdomen
- Navel infection
- Swollen joints
- Swollen foot pads
- Lameness
- Tremors
- Paralysis
- Twisting of the head and neck (torticollis)
- Weakness
- Diarrhea, which might be greenish
- White feces
- Bloody feces
- Pasted vent
- Watery droppings
- Thin-shelled eggs
- Shell-less eggs
- Reduced egg production
- Increased mortality
- Helicopter wings (that is, broken or twisted feathers)
- Ruffled feathers
- Foul odor
- Inactivity

NOTE It is not unusual for poultry to die suddenly without showing any signs of disease.