

Chicken Droppings Visual Diagnostic Chart

Clinical comparison based on University of Minnesota Extension & Merck Veterinary Manual

KEY PRINCIPLE: NEVER DIAGNOSE ILLNESS FROM A SINGLE SAMPLE

Droppings vary naturally throughout the day. Track repeated changes paired with appetite and posture.

1. Ordinary Formed Dropping (Normal)

HEALTHY BASELINE

APPEARANCE: Firm, greyish-brown to dark green cylinder capped with chalky white urates.

PHYSIOLOGY: Normal daily metabolism. Foraging greens or high-protein feeds create slight shade shifts.

KEEPER ACTION: Maintain flock diet and clean water access. No keeper intervention required.

2. Periodic Cecal Dropping (Normal Variation)

NORMAL 1 IN 8 SAMPLES

APPEARANCE: Pasty, caramel to dark chocolate, foamy consistency with a distinctly pungent odor.

PHYSIOLOGY: Normal periodic emptying of the cecal pouches. Occurs naturally every 7 to 10 droppings.

KEEPER ACTION: Do not medicate. Frequently mistaken for diarrhea by new keepers, but entirely healthy.

3. Watery / Loose Droppings (Monitor Closely)

DIETARY OR THERMAL

APPEARANCE: Excess clear liquid surrounding formed feces, or loose unformed watery puddles.

PHYSIOLOGY: Increased summer water consumption during panting, high-water treats (watermelon), or stress.

KEEPER ACTION: Check water shade/temperature, reduce water-rich treats. Monitor flock for 24 hours.

4. Urgent Warning Patterns (Red Flags)

VETERINARY ESCALATION

APPEARANCE: Fresh red blood, intestinal tissue shedding, neon green bile, or foamy yellow sulfur.

PHYSIOLOGY: Indicates Coccidiosis, acute Blackhead (Histomoniasis), heavy worm burden, or liver failure.

KEEPER ACTION: **Immediately isolate bird in a warm recovery area. Contact a licensed avian veterinarian.**

EMERGENCY CLINICAL RED FLAGS — CALL VET IMMEDIATELY

- Fresh red blood visible in droppings combined with puffed feathers and lethargy (Coccidiosis)
- Bird is collapsed, sitting on hocks, or unable to stand (Severe systemic toxemia or trauma)
- Comb is pale, ashen, or cyanotic purple, paired with open-mouth gasping or wheezing
- Multiple flock members showing identical severe diarrheal signs within 24 to 48 hours