Essential Oils for Chicken Care

How to Start Taking Care of Your Flock Naturally

Did you know that chickens breath differently than mammals? They do not have a diaphragm like mammals, and use the rib cage and breast bone to move the air in and out of the body. In addition, the lungs rely on air sacs to distribute the oxygen to the avian body. Some of the air sacs are also connected to the bones, which makes it really easy to inhale toxic levels of bad air in a short time. The physiology of chickens and how the air flows in one direction, instead of the in and out pattern of mammals, means the chickens will breath in a higher concentration of oxygen and what ever else is in the air (poultrykeeper.com).



A buildup of fumes from chicken droppings, spilled water and cleaning products irritates the delicate breathing system and leads to illness. Using a coop cleaner made with natural products will not only clean but disinfect and deodorize the coop, without irritating the chicken’s respiratory system.

Use Citrus Essential Oils for Cleaning

Lemon and other citrus fruits have natural cleaning and disinfecting capabilities. You can easily make a homemade coop cleaner that is easy on your nose and easy on the chicken’s respiratory tract. When you clean out the old shavings or coop bedding, spray down the coop with something like this recipe for Homemade Chicken Coop Deodorizing Cleaner. Allow the damp

areas to dry completely before adding the clean shavings. You can also use this mixture to clean and disinfect feed bowls, water founts, cages, and the chicken crate used as a hospital for your sick or injured birds. Rinse well before re-using.



Chicken Coop Deodorizing Spray

16 ounce spray bottle
Fill halfway with white vinegar
add 25 drops lemon essential oil
add water to fill
swirl gently to mix
use for cleaning nest boxes, roosting bars, and general coop cleaning.

Wound Care Ointment

You can make a wound care ointment with essential oils for chicken care. Melalueca oil for wounds with Frankincense, Lavender and Coconut Oil, will pack a powerful punch against sores and open wounds. Makes a solid paste that can be scooped out with fingers or popsicle stick to apply to wound. The ointment softens quickly, and smells pleasant too. The important thing to do when treating open wounds is to keep them moist while the open wound heals. When applying the coconut and essential oil blend wound ointment the open sore will not get crusted over while the underneath skin layers heal. This will be more comfortable for the animal and help keep infection away. This recipe is very quick to make and easy to keep on hand in the barn first aid kit. It is great for helping to promote healing. This wound ointment is the one I use for superficial wounds, cuts and scrapes. We recently had a situation where I had a wounded chicken from a fox attack. I used a lot of this ointment to fight secondary infections (Read more on predator attacks here).

Wound Ointment

4 ounce container with a lid

4 ounces of solid coconut oil

12 drops lavender essential oil

12 drops frankincense essential oil

Melt the coconut oil, add the essential oils and mix. Allow to harden in the container. Ready for use! If you leave it in a warm area it will liquefy. To prevent this you can also add melted bees wax to the recipe for a more solid ointment.

Oregano as a Feed Additive for Internal Health

Oregano essential oil – There is plenty of evidence available now that shows results of using heavily diluted oregano essential oil for chicken care. Many types of uses from wound care to intestinal worms, to a replacement for routine antibiotics in flock health care and prevention. A large chicken farm in Pennsylvania, Bell and Evans Poultry, switched to using an oregano oil based feed additive instead of using any antibiotics and had great results.

Bell and Evens Poultry story

How Prairie Homestead Uses Essential Oils on the Homestead

Using essential oils and chicken care can be a wonderful combination in a more natural approach to chicken keeping. As with anything that you are doing to help improve your farming practices, make sure to do your own research and ask questions until you are comfortable that the choice is the right one for you to use.

Some General Guidelines

When you are using essential oils around your animals, always make sure you are using diluted strengths. Some oils, such as peppermint or oregano, are considered “hot” oils and can burn skin. Always research the oil and its uses before using on any animal or child and make sure that you dilute the oil with an oil such as fractionated (liquid) coconut oil or liquid almond oil before applying.



I hope that this information will encourage you to try using essential oils for cleaning, disinfecting and healing around your barnyard too. If you would like more information, you are welcome to leave a comment here, or email me at garmanjanet@gmail.com.

Disclaimer : Please always consult your veterinarian before you use any homemade remedy on your animals if you feel there is any question as to it's safety for that animal. I am not a veterinarian and post these recipes as a way of sharing information that I have had success with for my own animals and farm and home.

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