

# Fowl Pox



**Fowl pox** is a viral disease of poultry that is often spread by mosquitoes. The infection leads to the formation of wart-like nodules on the non-feathered parts of the head and legs and occasionally ulcerous lesions in the mouth, nose and throat. Fowls and turkeys are particularly susceptible to fowl pox virus.

## Life cycle

The incubation period of fowl pox is 4-10 days. Nodules appear 5-8 days after infection, and scabs clear in 3-4 weeks in simple cases.

## Symptoms

There are 2 types of fowl pox - wet pox and dry pox. In all outbreaks, wart-like lumps are visible.

- **Dry pox**

Dry pox is the most common and develops as wart-like eruptions. Fleshy pale lumps form yellow pimples that may enlarge and run together to form masses of yellow crusts. These scabs darken and fall off in about a week. They occur mainly on the comb, wattle and face but can occur on other parts of the body.

- **Wet pox**

Wet pox forms as ulcerous cheesy masses in the mouth, nose and sometimes throat areas, which can interfere with eating and breathing. Birds with wet pox can appear unwell and in some cases may die.

## **Impacts**

Mortality is usually low in affected flocks. Reduced egg production and poor weight gains are the greatest impacts.

## **How it is spread**

The virus can be carried and spread by intermediate hosts and also by direct contact with the infectious wounds. Birds in overcrowded conditions have an increased risk of injury, and may result in fighting and pecking. The virus cannot enter intact skin but can survive for a long time in infected material, such as scabs and litter.

The virus can remain in the environment for months, particularly in dry and shaded areas.

## **Risk period**

Fowl pox is more common in the summer and autumn months when mosquitoes are more active.

## **Control**

### **Prevention and treatment**

Prevention of fowl pox is through a combination of vaccination and reducing exposure to mosquitoes, which can be done by screening sheds and removing mosquito habitats.

Treatment of this disease is of little value as lesions normally heal within 4 weeks. In severe cases, it may be necessary to remove scabs and treat with antiseptics. Consult a veterinarian for treatment advice.

### **Vaccination**

The aim of vaccination is to give birds a mild amount of pox so that, after recovering, they are immune to reinfection. Protection becomes effective 2-3 weeks after vaccination.

For best protection, the vaccine should be given twice, once at 1-2 weeks of age and then a second dose at 12-14 weeks old. Yearly boosters may also be useful.

Only healthy, well-nourished birds should be vaccinated. When vaccinating young chicks, husbandry must be excellent or the chicks may suffer severe reactions.

### **Reference**

<https://www.business.qld.gov.au/industries/farms-fishing-forestry/agriculture/livestock/animal-welfare/pests-diseases-disorders/fowl-pox>