Mycoplasma

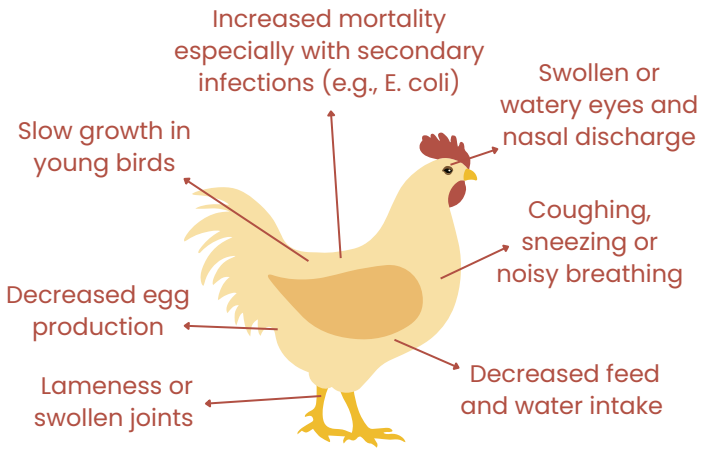
SMALL FLOCKS COLLABORATIVE

***Mycoplasma gallisepticum* (Mg) and *Mycoplasma synoviae* (Ms)** are bacterial infections that affect chickens, turkeys, and other birds. Mycoplasma spread through respiratory droplets, direct bird-to-bird contact, contaminated equipment, and even infected hatching eggs These diseases are common in backyard flocks. Once infected, birds can carry the bacteria for life. Antibiotics may reduce clinical signs but will not eliminate infection. Biosecurity and flock management are the best ways to prevent and control disease.

Signs to Look For

Mg: Mainly respiratory signs. Usually more noticeable in chickens and turkeys.

Ms: Often no obvious signs, but can cause swollen joints, lameness, or breast blisters, especially in turkeys or stressed birds.



Quick Facts

- Mycoplasma is a **bacteria**
- The bacteria is **hard to eliminate** in a flock
- Infected birds may look healthy but **spread disease** for life
- Does **not** spread to or infect humans
- Affects **chickens, turkeys, and gamebirds**

How Mycoplasma Spreads

- Can spread from hen to chick through the egg.
- Spreads between birds through direct contact.
- Shared equipment, wild birds, and insects can carry it between flocks.
- Infected birds stay carriers for life, making flock-to-flock spread common.

Even birds that look healthy can carry and shed Mycoplasma for life.

Prevention

1. Practice Biosecurity

- Always limit contact with birds from other flocks to prevent disease spread.
- Wear coop-dedicated shoes to keep out germs.
- Wash hands and keep coop/equipment clean.

2. Buy From Clean Sources

- Choose hatcheries and breeders that test for Mycoplasma.
- Do not buy birds from swaps, auctions, or unknown sources.

3. Limit Visitors and Shared Tools

- Limit visitors. Require boot covers.
- Don't share or borrow tools or equipment.

4. Don't Hatch Mycoplasma

- Mycoplasma can pass from hen to chick through the egg.
- Selling or hatching eggs from infected flocks can spread the disease to new birds and new flocks.

When Birds Get Sick

1. Work with a Veterinarian

- Mg may be reportable to your state animal health officials, depending on the state.
- Your veterinarian can help confirm the disease and guide next steps.

2. Isolate Sick Birds

- Separate sick birds from the flock.
- This limits the chance of spreading the bacteria.

3. Don't Spread Disease

- Do not buy or sell birds during or after an outbreak.
- Even healthy-looking birds can shed this bacteria.
- Mixing age groups allows older carrier birds to infect younger birds. Keep age groups separate or practice all-in all-out management.

4. Manage a Flock Long-Term

- Infected birds remain carriers, so some flocks may choose to depopulate their flock.
- If Mycoplasma is reportable in your state, there may be additional management requirements.

Find out more at
www.healthybirds.info