



# THE QUICK FIRE GUIDE

## TO TREATING MITES & LICE



**BACKYARD**  
CHICKEN COOPS

## The Quick-fire Guide to Treating Mites and Lice



Big things come in small packages; and for mites and lice, those big things mean big *problems*. These micro-monsters can wreak havoc on your flock, leaving them weakened and susceptible to all sorts of nasty diseases. A serious infestation can even be deadly. So act fast—this could be an emergency!



## How do I know if I have an infestation?

There are many different varieties of mites and lice (you can read more about them in [this article](#)), but most of them match the same basic description: skittery little critters roaming around your chookies' feathers, feasting on their blood or dander! No matter what variety of skin-crawlers you've got on your hands, the treatment is the same. So read on!

The one exception are *scaly leg mites*, but fortunately, the name speaks for itself. If your chook's leg scales are visibly lifting, start slathering petroleum jelly over their legs to suffocate the mites living there. After two weeks, you can stop worrying, but expect to wait for as many as 12 months for the legs to heal completely.



## How do I treat mites and lice?

1. Immediately dust all of your chickens thoroughly with [diatomaceous earth](#), or [Pestene powder](#) (both available in our [hen health kit](#)). Both of these are harmless to chooks, but you should wear a dust-mask to avoid irritating your lungs.
2. If you have a secondary coop or [chicken tractor](#), move your chooks there while you clean out their current one. If you can, give them some iron-rich treats like broccoli or spinach to offset any blood loss and keep them busy.
3. Take everything out of the coop, and clean it thoroughly. Dispose of any bedding, don't put it in the compost: you want to kill the mites, not relocate them! Burn it if you can, or double-bag securely, and throw it in the bin.
4. Do one, or all of the following, depending on how severe the infestation is:
  - Spray the coop down with a high-pressure hose.
  - Pour boiling water into the cracks and joints.
  - Clean with dehydrated lime (wash thoroughly before letting your chickens back in).
  - Wait until everything is dry, then dust with Pestene powder or diatomaceous earth.
5. Once the cleaning is complete, you can bring your girls back home.
6. You're still not done! The mites and lice undoubtedly laid eggs in the little time they had. After 7 days, dust your chickens and coop with Pestene or diatomaceous earth to kill the fresh hatchlings.
7. Check after another 7 days, and dust again if needed. Persistence is the name of the game!

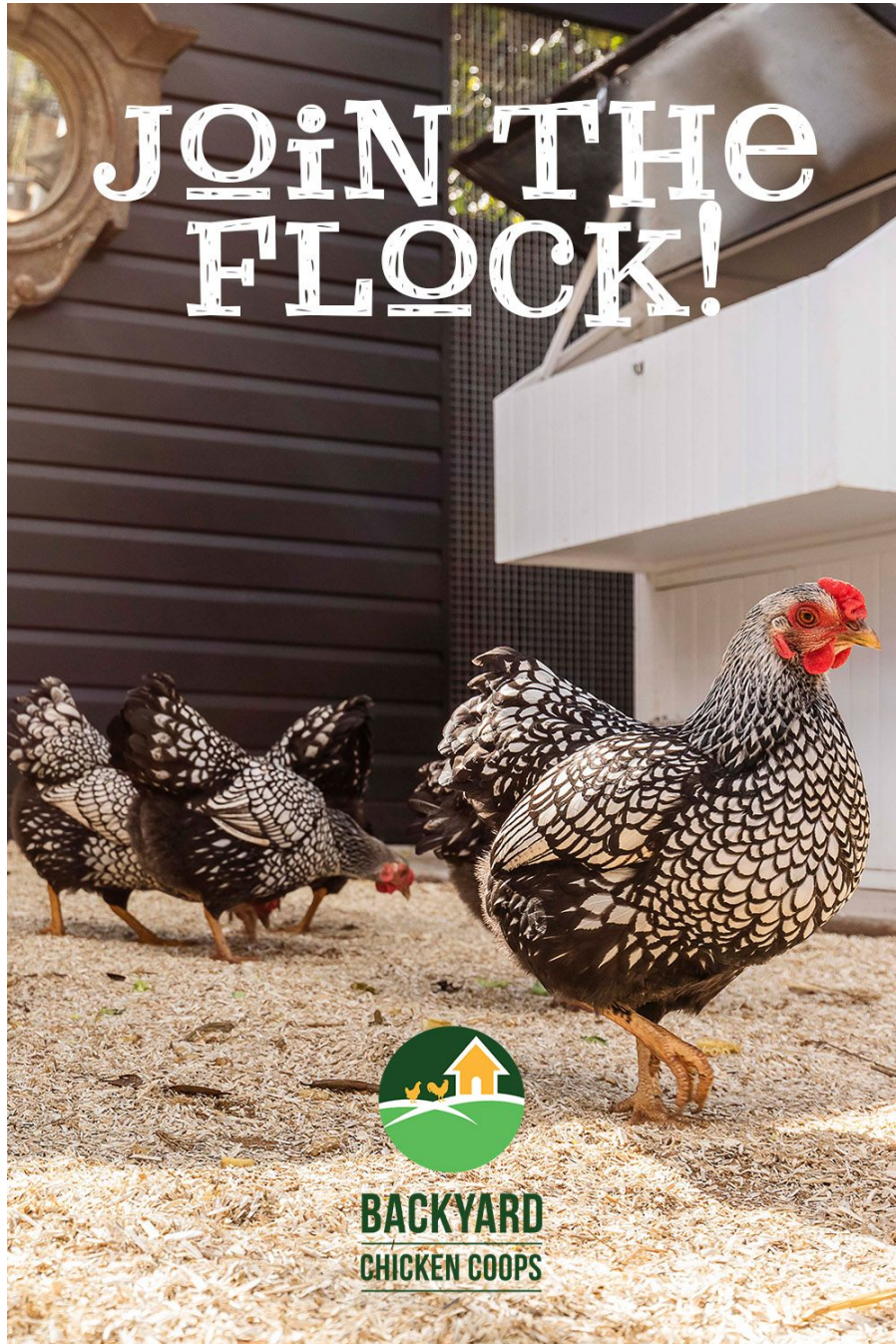
In all this activity, you might get some mites or lice on you, but don't worry—they can't live on humans, though you should avoid accidentally ferrying them to a friend's chickens!

## How do I stop this from happening again?

To prevent mites and lice from taking foot again, take these measures:

- Do what you can to keep wild birds away from your property. Secure your chicken feed, remove wild bird nests, or even build that scarecrow you've always dreamed of!
- Layer your chooks' dust-bathing area with diatomaceous earth.
- Use pest-repellent [hemp bedding](#), and change it every 1 to 2 weeks.
- Layer pest repellent dried herbs, like [mint](#) and [lavender](#), in their bedding
- Mix a little [apple cider vinegar](#), and [garlic](#) into your chickies' water.
- Do a full coop clean every 6 months.

Chooks acting funny? Don't think it's mites or lice? Check out our [healthy chicken checklist!](#)



After some more cheeky chook action? Of course you are! Join the flock on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#) and [Pinterest](#)!