

What to feed a baby pigeon or dove

WARNING : Never give a pigeon dairy milk, they can't digest it. Please don't feed them worms either!

Please make certain that the baby is warm before feeding it. If it is cold then it won't be able to digest its food and feeding it could kill it.

A baby pigeon will put its gaping beak inside the parent's mouth and the parent will pump its crop contents into the baby's mouth. During the first three days of its life the baby will receive what is known as "crop milk" , created from the lining of the parent's crop . This is nothing like dairy milk.

A hatchling will need very thin food, about the consistency of skimmed milk...this should be gradually thickened over the first 10 days to the consistency of ketchup.

[Kaytee Exact Hand Rearing Formula for Parrots](#)

Kaytee Exact recommend the following proportion of Exact to water when hand raising baby pigeons:

Hatch - Day 2 : 1 part formula to 6 parts water.

Days 2-5 : 1 part Exact to 2 or 3 parts water.

Day 5 to weaning: 1 part Exact to 1 1/3 - 2 parts water.Hatch - Day 2 : 1 part formula to 6 parts water.

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Nutribird A21

Nutribird Recommend the following proportions:

Age	NutriBird A 21	Water
Hatching - day 2	1 part	6 parts
Day 2 - day 3	1 part	5 parts
Day 3 - day 4	1 part	4 parts
Day 4 - day 5	1 part	3 parts
Day 5 - weaning	1 part	2 to 2,5 parts

Tropic Hand Rearing Formula:

This video shows Tropic preparation and feeding techniques:

Chick rearing crumbs (these are available from poultry suppliers and corn stores in the UK) soaked in hot (not boiling) water for half an hour, liquidised and sieved.

The products listed above are suitable for raising hatchlings as they contain the enzymes required to digest food during the first three days of a pigeon's life.

Don't heat food in a microwave, that can leave scalding pockets of heat that can burn the crop. The correct temperature for baby pigeon food is 39 degrees Centigrade...that is a bit warmer than our body heat.

In an emergency and for babies that are over 3 days old you can use [Ready Brek Original](#) or **Quaker Oats Original** made up with warm water if the other products are not available. Outside England Nestle's **Nestum or**

Cerelac without milk solids and mixed with warm water (not milk) can be used.

Puppy biscuits soaked in warm water until they are fluffy , can also be used in an emergency.

Babies that are **2 weeks old or over** can be fed **defrosted corn and peas**, served warm . They can be popped into the beak one at a time, feeding until the crop feels squishy like a bean bag, the kernels sliding against each other NOT forming a solid mass. Check the crop with your finger several times during each feed.

This recipe was created by someone at a rescue centre for **young woodies**, unless they are drinking on their own the mixture should be quite moist, tolled up into little balls and popped inside the woodie's mouth one at a time. Dip the bird's beak in clean warm water after feeding to encourage it to drink.

wild bird seed

frozen peas

finely chopped apple

finely chopped peanuts

finely chopped fat balls

finely shredded greens

wholemeal bread crumbs

You can roll the ingredients into a little "pea" shape and feed as you would defrosted peas.

It is important to check that the crop is emptying properly before giving another feed so touch the crop area gently after feeding and again before the next feed by which time it should be flat. This is because baby birds can develop crop stasis or sour crop if the food is too thick, or too cold or if they are too cold when fed. Adding new food to the crop would just mean that it sits on top of the old food and there will be a gradual build up of bacteria which could be fatal.

[Please see here to find suggestions on how to deal with crop stasis.](#)

- [Warmth](#)

- [Calculating A Baby's Age](#)
- [What to feed](#)
- [How to feed](#)
- [How much to feed](#)
- [Bedding and Housing](#)