

# Erysipelas



Fig 1 Turkey with Erysipelas (swollen snood)

A sudden-onset infection with the bacterium *Erysipelothrix insidiosa* (*E. rhusiopathiae*) seen in turkeys and increasingly in free-range chickens, rarely in geese, ducks, pheasants. It is also seen in some mammals. It may be transmitted by faecal carriers for 41 days, in soil, water, fishmeal and semen and by cannibalism.

The bacterium is fairly resistant to environmental effects or disinfectants and may persist in alkaline soil for years. There is likely to be an increased risk if housing or land has been previously used by pigs or sheep.

## Signs

- **Swollen snood.**
- Lack of appetite
- Depression.
- Sleepiness.
- May be diarrhoea and respiratory signs.
- Perineal congestion.
- Chronic scabby skin, especially snood, from microscopic haemorrhaging.
- Sudden death.

## **Prevention**

Good biosecurity to prevent spread from other susceptible species, vaccine at 16-20 weeks if the condition is enzootic.

## **Treatment**

Penicillin - a combination of the procaine and benzathine salts may be injected, often along with bacterin. Tetracyclines in feed may also be helpful.

All housing should be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected prior to restocking. Erysipelas is a particularly resistant organism. A 2% solution of sodium hydroxide has been found to be effective whilst phenols and related disinfectants are less effective. Ensure that all disinfectants are used at the most concentrated levels recommended.

## **References**

<https://thepoultrysite.com/disease-guide/erysipelas>

<https://poultryhealthcentre.com/erysipelas/>