

Yes, ...birds are vaccinated too

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As a veterinarian in the poultry industry, one is often faced with questions about the vaccination of the chickens. The term **poultry** encompasses, birds that are used for meat or table egg production ie chickens, ducks, turkeys, geese and quail. In Jamaica **poultry** is more formalized as the broiler chicken and table egg producing industry

Poultry Vaccination is aimed at protecting the broiler (meat) birds and layer (table egg producers) birds against respiratory diseases, such as Avian Influenza, H5N1 (Bird 'flu) and Infectious Bronchitis (yup, birds do suffer from bronchitis too). Vaccination against other diseases which affect the immune system of the bird are also done viz. Infectious Bursal Disease – IBD (Gumboro), Marek's disease and Fowl Pox ("yaws").

In your human world, vaccination is primarily done to the young, with boosters in the older human, using a needle, syringe and oral drops. It is no different in my world of poultry. Baby chicks are vaccinated in the wing and in the neck using specialized needle and syringe equipment. They are vaccinated via inhalation (breathing in) of a 'liquified' vaccine that is sprayed on them as a coarse mist, in a confined area, such as a spray cabinet in the Hatchery or inside a chicken house and can be also administered in the drinking water for the birds or sprayed on the feed.

Most recently, with a very novel innovation, and to help minimise the stress of vaccinating inside a poultry house, the embryo (un-hatched baby chick) is being vaccinated! This process is termed *in ovo* vaccination. Chickens the world over are vaccinated via this method, including here in Jamaica. The chick is now protected against many diseases, such as those mentioned above before it even hatches!

So to answer the question again "can chickens be vaccinated?...of course and we do it very well here in Jamaica, using the latest technology available".

