

HEDGEHOG

- Hedgehogs are cute, inquisitive, and active nocturnal animals that can be wonderful pets. The hedgehogs quills feel like a stiff bristled brush.
- Hedgehogs are naturally shy. They are solitary in nature and seldom accept the company of another hedgehog.
- They begin quilling at around 8 weeks old.
- A hedgehog's average life expectancy is 5-7 years.

Diet

Hedgehogs are omnivores. You can provide a balanced diet by combining commercial Hedgehog food and a good quality cat food, such as Wellness Lite. Your pet will also enjoy the addition of a few mealworms or crickets and a small amount of mixed fresh fruit and vegetables, chopped up. Remove any uneaten food within 24 hours. Teach your hedgehog to use a water bottle and fill it with fresh water daily. Treats should not exceed 10% of total diet.

Housing

A large open cage with smooth sides will work as long there is nothing inside the cage to climb on since hedgehogs are good climbers. If you do use a wire cage, then make sure the space between the wires is no larger than one inch and there is a solid bottom. Hedgehogs should be kept in a draft-free area between 65-80°F, with low humidity and out of direct sunlight. Hedgehogs do not like any light, so provide an igloo, hut or pouch for it to hide under. An under-cage heating pad may be needed to maintain a warm area. Provide a layer of good soft bedding that is clean, non-toxic, absorbent, and relatively dust free. Recycled newspaper or wood shavings (aspen is best) are preferred bedding. Do not use cedar or pine shavings which can lead to respiratory problem. Change the bedding once or twice a week. Remember to wash, rinse and dry the cage bottom, food dishes and water bottle each week. Hedgehogs frequently will use a litter box placed in a corner. They particularly appreciate a half log, tube or wood nesting box. An exercise ball, with a solid bottom, will encourage your hedgehog to be active.

Handling & Care

Taming hedgehogs is simply a matter of gaining their confidence. Always be patient, gentle, and move slowly. Making friends with your pet and getting him accustomed to you can often be accomplished by offering treats. When frightened, a hedgehog will roll tightly into a prickly ball so be sure to avoid sudden movements and loud noises. To pick up your pet, scoop it up gently from the rear and hold it underneath. When it feels safe, it will unroll and let you pet it. When bonding with your hedgehog, place a t-shirt with your scent in its cage and then pick it up while its in it. It is completely normal if your hedgehog is huffing, growling and balls up tight when you try to hold it. When your hedgehog is around 8 weeks old it will begin quilling, which means the quills will begin to poke through the skin. During this stage it will be extremely cranky and sore. To help relieve the achy skin you may give your baby a warm bath to soften the skin. Quilling usually lasts about 3 or 4 weeks.

Grooming

Hedgehogs do not need to be groomed or bathed since they are very clean animals and will do their own grooming. However, clean with a damp washcloth or unscented baby wipes, if necessary. Trim nails as needed.

Health

Hedgehogs are healthy when they have bright eyes, has well-formed droppings and is active. Contact your veterinarian if you notice weight loss or any of these symptoms:

- Refusal to eat or drink
- Labored breathing, wheezing, sneezing
- Diarrhea/ Change in droppings
- Dull and/or receding eyes
- Inactive / Lethargic
- Head tilt
- Excessive hair loss / scratching
- Rough hair coat



HEDGEHOG CHECKLIST

- Bedding
- Hedgehog Food
- Crickets & Mealworms
- Food Dish
- Water Bottle/Dish
- Cage with Solid Bottom
- Exercise Ball
- Hiding Place
- Toys
- Book
- Treats