



Caring for your

Hedgehog

Life Span 4-6 years

Diet Hedgehogs are omnivores that consume a variety of invertebrates, frogs, lizards, snakes, small mammals, carrion, vegetables, and fruits in the wild. Captive diets typically consist of:

- Protein sources such as high-quality, reduced-calorie cat food (2-3 tsp), live insects (5-6 mealworms or 1-2 crickets 3-4 times weekly – avoid wax-worms), bird of prey diet, insectivore diet, or hedgehog diet.
- Produce such as chopped mixed vegetables and/or fruits (1-2 tsp)

**Avoid dairy products and eggs in non-breeding pets.*

Housing Hedgehogs are nocturnal and they prefer a quiet, dim environment. Hedgehogs are generally housed singly, especially males who may fight. House hedgehogs in an enclosure with smooth walls and flooring such as 15-20 gallon aquarium with a secure, wire mesh lid. Provide about 10 cm of soft, absorbent bedding to allow burrowing. Provide visual security in the form of a cardboard box with one open end, a plastic flower pot, hollow tubes, such as PVC piping, plants, or logs. Hedgehogs may also be litter box trained. Supplemental heating may also be needed as hedgehogs can enter torpor if the temperature falls below 65°F (18C).

- Treats & Toys**
- Insects, meats (not raw), fruits, vegetables, and eggs make good treats. They provide nutrients for your hedgehog and are also good training tools.
 - A large, solid exercise wheel is a toy needed by a hedgehog. They also like empty boxes and pvc pipe tunnels as hiding places.

Restraint

- All but the tamest hedgehogs must be handled with light leather gloves.
- Gently extend the rear legs to “wheel-barrow” the hedgehog and place a finger underneath the chin to prevent the hedgehog from rolling up.

Healthcare

Signs that your hedgehog may need veterinary attention include:

- Lethargy
- Lack of appetite
- Reluctance to move
- Dull expression
- Weight loss
- Discharge from the eyes or nose
- Loose stools
- Panting or labored breathing
- Paralysis

It is good to take your hedgehog to the vet for an annual check-up.

Behavior

- “Anting” behavior: normal when a hedgehog is presented with a new object or smell; will lick repeatedly until it begins to drool and then grooms its skin and spines with frothy saliva. May last for several minutes or up to an hour.
- Young hedgehogs will lose their quills at about 2-6 months of age. May have poor appetite and may hiss (this is normal behavior). Usually takes about one month, and then they return to normal.
- Behavior of a frightened hedgehog: snorting, hissing, or clicking; curling up into ball with quills erect to protect face and belly (will slowly uncurl in a few minutes).
- Behavior of a cautious/uncertain hedgehog: only spines on the head are erect.
- Behavior of a calm/comfortable hedgehog: spines lie flat on the body.

