



It's a Hedgehog!

What do I do with it?

Immediate Health Check

- It is normal for a hedgehog to curl into a ball and make hissing and popping noises when frightened or unsure of its surroundings.
- Handle hedgehogs with soft fabric, such as fleece or a T-shirt but do not leave them unattended with terry or other types of fabric with loose strings. They might become tangled and cause injury to themselves.
- When the hedgehog unrolls, check the feet for any signs of hair or loose strings wrapped around paws. If there is any, get immediate veterinary attention in order to avoid serious injury or amputation.
- Look closely at the toenails, if you can, to be sure they are short and not growing into the pads of the feet.
- Put the hedgehog on its back in the palm of your hand. If it will unroll at all, look at the center of the tummy area. If you see a "belly button," you've got a boy. If there's no belly button – congratulations, it's a girl.
- If you can't get the hedgehog to unroll, place them in a glass bottomed container and wait for them to walk. You can peer through the bottom of the container to check sex and condition of feet.
- Do **not** house male & female hedgehogs together.

Housing

- Hedgehogs have delicate feet and toes and require a solid-bottom (not mesh or wire) cage. Recommended minimum space is 24"x24" or equivalent. Hedgehogs can be great climbers. Please use a top and keep cage closed when not interacting with hedgehog.
- Carefresh bedding, recycled newsprint or aspen shavings are preferred choices of bedding. Do **not** use cedar or colored shavings. These are potentially lethal to hedgehogs.
- Provide a hideout of some sort, even if it is just a pile of fleecies. Hedgehogs are burrowers by nature and having a hiding place to burrow to will enhance their feelings of safety.
- Hedgehogs are nocturnal and will usually sleep most of the day in their hiding spot.
- Hedgehogs need a wheel. A solid-bottom 10-11" wheel is ideal, but a wire or mesh wheel can be made to work by lining it with craft foam or a similar solid surface so that hedgehog's toes and legs don't get injured by slipping through the bars.
- Keep your hedgehog's habitat away from drafts and between 70 & 75 degrees Fahrenheit. If the environment is too cold, the hedgehog will go into hibernation, which can be fatal for African Pygmy Hedgehogs.
- Do not house hedgehogs together. Sometimes females can reside together, but only after plenty of supervised playtime to be sure there won't be any aggression problems. **Never** house males together.

Dinner Time

- Provide fresh water in either a crock or a water bottle, but monitor water intake closely to be sure they know how to use what you provide.
- Feed high-quality, low-fat cat kibble. If available, also offer mealworms or store bought crickets (never wild, they can carry parasites and disease). Also offer other cooked proteins such as unseasoned chicken, scrambled egg or salmon. Some hedgehogs can have mouth problems preventing them from eating hard kibble, so monitor their intake.

Cuddle Time

- When possible, just take the hedgehog out and allow him or her to sit on your lap in a quiet area. Cover with a fleecie or other safe fabric. This will allow hedgehog to get used to your smell and associate your presence with comfort and security. Offer mealworms by hand when possible.

Further care instructions can be found at www.HedgehogWelfare.org

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